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## **Tusk's System, or are we Facing the end of the Polish Postpolitics\*?**

### *Summary*

Based on his own previous publications and on the publications of several other authors (e.g. professor Paweł Śpiewak, Rafał Matyja, PhD, professor Jadwiga Staniszkis) the author develops a model of a peculiar system of government, created in Poland by the Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, after winning the parliamentary elections in 2007, and he reflects on the social and political conditions of the possibilities of this system and finds certain signs of its instability.

### **KEYWORDS**

Tusk's system, the concentration of power,  
the formalization of power, principate,  
republicanism, reforms, depoliticisation

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\* The text is an extended version of the argumentation presented in the article *The decline of Tusk's system* (original title: *Schyłek systemu Tuska*), „Tygodnik w Sieci”, no 52/2013 – 1/2014, p. 16.

SYSTEM POLITYCZNY TUSKA, ALBO DLACZEGO  
MAMY DO CZYNNIENIA Z KOŃCEM POLSKIEJ  
POST-POLITYKI

*Streszczenie*

Opierając się na wcześniejszych publikacjach własnych i kilkorga innych autorów (m.in. prof. Pawła Spiewaka, dr. Rafała Matyi, prof. Jadwigi Staniszkis), Jan Rokita buduje model osobliwego systemu władzy, stworzonego w Polsce przez premiera Donalda Tuska po zwycięstwie wyborczym w 2007 roku, oraz zastanawia się nad społecznymi i politycznymi warunkami możliwości tego systemu, a także stwierdza oznaki jego nietrwałości.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE**

system Tuska, koncentracja władzy, formalizacja władzy, pryncypat, republikanizm, reformy, depolityzacja

THE BIRTH OF PRINCIPATE

Donald Tusk will be undoubtedly remembered most vividly in recent Polish political history as the creator of a peculiar system of governance. Today this thesis has already become a part of the mainstream of diagnoses and analyses, devoted to more than a six-year period of Tusk's rule, though five years ago – after the first year of holding his office as the Prime Minister – it sounded more innovatively and aroused controversy.<sup>1</sup> The impression of the peculiarity of such a political phenomenon as “Tusk's system” comes from the reversal of common categories that describe “a standard” system of power. We imagine – using common sense – that each authority is burdened with some baggage of its own political project. It may be an ambitious plan to reform the state, the ideological vision of political justice, as well as the desire of revenge for wrongs suffered in the past. Over the last quarter century of the Polish independence, Leszek Balcerowicz

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1 This thesis was then formulated by the author in the text *Osobiste rządy Donalda Tuska (Donald Tusk's Personal Rule)*, “Dziennik”, 4 September 2008, <<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/opinie/artykuly/130918,rokita-osobiste-rzady-donald-tuska.html>>.

aimed at the state's economic transformation, Leszek Miller saved the Communist Party's survivors and their heritage, Jerzy Buzek carried out four reforms of the state and Jarosław Kaczyński tried to incorporate his own ideological vision. Nevertheless, we instinctively believe that the government has its eye always on some noble or ignoble goal which it may sometimes hide for tactical reasons and a strong leadership in politics stands for nothing else but for a key tool to achieve this goal. Meanwhile, since 2007, Poland is a peculiar laboratory of a radical political experiment. Tusk's system is at its core the idea of governance which does not carry any baggage of political content, and its main goal is to renounce any – even midterm – plans and objectives, except for the one which thus becomes the nucleus and the sense of the politics of the party and of the state, namely continuous and endless struggle for a personal dominance of the leader. What can be observed between these two features of this system is a clear relationship of proportionality, namely the more content-neutral the authority is, the more susceptible to concentration it becomes. This is a supremely rational dependency: if a man does indeed plan to establish Caesar's model of governance, he must sooner – for his own purposes – undertake a formalization of the sense of authority, i.e. bring vast and intricate mechanics of the modern state to a simple and purely formal “structure of subordination and financial flows.”<sup>2</sup> It is only the authority reduced to the rule over the people and to the disposal of money budget that can be subjected to a far-reaching concentration. It is no coincidence that after removing Grzegorz Schetyna, a recent deputy head of Civic Platform (Polish: Platforma Obywatelska) from the party authorities in Lower Silesia, as a result of undisclosed, protracted and tortuous personnel intrigue, the main pro-government newspaper proclaimed on its forefront that “The leader is only one.”<sup>3</sup>

Each of these two characteristic features of Tusk's system has vast implications for contemporary Polish politics. Before 2007 Polish

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2 This accurate phrase comes from Rafał Matyja, see: Matyja, R., 2012, *Następny rząd (The Next Government)*, “Horyzonty Polityki”, vol. 3, no. 5, <[http://www.ignatianum.edu.pl/files/hpolicyki/HP\\_2012\\_vol\\_3\\_No\\_5\\_Matyja\\_Rafa.pdf](http://www.ignatianum.edu.pl/files/hpolicyki/HP_2012_vol_3_No_5_Matyja_Rafa.pdf)>.

3 See: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 28 October 2013, <[http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,14854095,Po\\_wyborach\\_w\\_PO\\_\\_Lider\\_jest\\_jeden\\_\\_a\\_Schetynie\\_trzesa.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,14854095,Po_wyborach_w_PO__Lider_jest_jeden__a_Schetynie_trzesa.html)>.

political relations strongly resembled the disordered republicanism, rooted in the Polish tradition, yet subjected for two centuries to criticism, as *sui generis* national vice. The accompanying factors were as follows: frequently changing governments, a multitude of parties and political leaders opposing one another, but also constantly deliberating the fate of the country. In this permanent political deliberation the country's fate intertwined with ideological doctrines and statesmen became on par with the self-important brawlers. But such is often the charm of the republic. Meanwhile, when in 2007, the Civic Platform won the elections, its leader almost immediately took the entire power and has kept it to this day. With the help of complex, often multi-personal intrigues, he has deprived the party not only of real competitors, but also of any potentially subjective entities in politics. He then transformed the Civic Platform into a new party – unprecedented in Poland before – in which deliberations about the real problems of the state were banned, public meetings were transformed into colourful advertising clips and the cult of a leader and contempt for the leader of the opposition have become an official ideology. Almost no one in Poland was surprised when the former Minister of Transport solemnly announced that Donald Tusk is a genius who derived his mission from God.<sup>4</sup> In this way there took place a significant transformation of the actual function of the major political institutions. The ruling party has ceased to be a place for articulating any interests that could legitimately revise the current politics. The function of the parliament – according to the diagnosis formulated by Paweł Śpiwak – “has been reduced to the role of blatant advertisement of the parties to the conflict,” what is heavily detrimental to the quality of currently enacted law.<sup>5</sup> The function of the Speaker of the Polish Sejm, significant in the Polish tradition, has lost its prestige, while the Council of Ministers has become a group of powerless people who, on the one hand, remain on the total mercy of the Prime Minister and are obliged to preach publicly humiliating mantra that they serve him and they can be at any time removed

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4 Cf. the interview given by the minister Sławomir Nowak for “Polska The Times”, 9 September 2009, <<http://www.polskatimes.pl/arttykul/171936,nowak-tusk-jest-dotkniety-przez-boga-wielkim-geniuszem,id,t.html>>.

5 Cf. Śpiwak, P., 2008, “Dziennik”, 8 September .

by him and, on the other hand, must take great risk of running any politics on their own, because they are not granted by their sovereign with any consistent and clear guidelines as to the direction of state politics. Ministers therefore tread like in a minefield and occasionally one or a few at a time are lost without clear reasons. Moreover, the leader approves the judges of the Constitutional Court, gives personnel instructions to the local authorities (against the laws of the land but according to the logic of the commander's party); he can delete any parliamentarian from the electoral list and he *de facto* appoints the head of state. Yet, most importantly, as a result of these prerogatives, he is treated as "the prime citizen" in all formally independent public institutions, i.e. in the radio and television, at the prosecutor's office, in state-owned companies, often in the courts, as if no authority could be exercised without at least his tacit consent. The opposition is willing to treat this phenomenon as a kind of conspiracy or "secret pact" (as expressed by the opposition leader, Jarosław Kaczyński), but it is in fact a well-known mechanism of power, similar to the Roman principate. Although republican institutions still exist and operate, their officers are convinced that their will – both for their own safety and for the good of the state – should not in any way conflict with the will of the prime citizen.<sup>6</sup>

## HE REIGNS BUT HE DOES NOT RULE

The second specific feature of the system, namely the formalization of power or a reduction of its meaning to the formal "structures of subordination and financial flows," makes it impossible in practice to formulate strategic plans of state policy. The Prime Minister used to describe this phenomenon as "self-restraint and modesty of authority" and "a failure to set great goals for people."<sup>7</sup> In this sense,

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6 Cf. Rokita, J., 2012, *O paradoksie władzy w czasach pryncypatu (On the Paradox of Authority in the Times of Principate)*, "Rzeczy Wspólne", 10 July, <<http://rzeczywspolne.pl/o-paradoksie-wladzy-w-czasach-pryncypatu/#>>.

7 See the interview given by Donald Tusk for "Wprost" 2010, no 39, <<http://www.wprost.pl/ar/209927/Nasza-wielka-stabilizacja-rozmowa-z-Donaldem-Tuskiem/no-text4057836086956353374/>>.

the authority is modest and restrained if it does not create politics, since nobody knows what may happen tomorrow. The nature of power thus consists in a constant and inconclusive deliberation which leads – just to quote one of Donald Tusk’s favourite phrases – to a continuous “long and cordial” dialogue. Isn’t it better to change the constitution? Or to enter Euro zone? No, it is not worth it! In this perspective governance is understood as a flexible response to what exactly is going on. Nevertheless, this lack of “strategic national agenda” is in the long run quite risky for the country since it makes crucial decisions dependent on immediate conjuncture. Even for a careful observer of the politics, the state has become a zone of exceptional opacity. In the Polish reality of 2014 it is not certain, for example, whether the nuclear power plants are being built or not, having in mind the statements and decisions that confirm both pro-nuclear policy as well as anti-nuclear one. It is also puzzling why the authority decides to force baffled parents to send their six-year-old children to primary school when it is perfectly obvious that such changes require multiple well-planned decisions and prior organizational preparations. Zyta Gilowska, once one of the most important figures in the Civic Platform, removed by Donald Tusk under the pretext of nepotism, has characterized this leadership style as “whimsical”: the leader will one day make such a Plasticine political figure as he just wishes.<sup>8</sup> It all means that the actual governance over the state is taken over by “expert-like bureaucracy” which – as pointed out by Matyja – “deprives the process of strategy-making of the perspective of political reason, political thought, with the characteristic diversity and alternatives of approaches.”<sup>9</sup> Some of the key public offices are wound for many years with a certain non-transparent “closeness” of experts – lobbyists. Perhaps the most characteristic example in this regard is the Ministry of National Education which is effectively forcing questionable school reforms. The latter – which is a clear exception to the prevailing rules – still gain political and administrative momentum, even though there is nobody in the world of politics who would openly concede this and who would be willing

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8 Cf. *Tercet Rokita, Michalski, Krasowski (A Trio – Rokita, Michalski, Krasowski)*, 2010, “Miesięcznik Idei Europa”, no. 4.

9 Cf. Matyja, R., 2012, *Następny rząd*, op. cit., p. 283.

to set the pace. In turn, dramatically increasing number of wiretaps and surveillance in relation to citizens is not at all the result of certain policy but rather the outcome of a continuous, chaotic scattering and increasing number of special services which will be presumably controlled in near future – as it seems – by the new Minister of the Interior. The direction of the state policy is to some extent determined by the agenda of the European Union and by the settlements within the *acquis communautaire*. However, contrary to what is believed by some right-wing critics of imitative politics in relation to Brussels, this area is contemporarily substantially narrower than in the earlier period of intense adaptation of Poland to the EU, and after the Prime Minister's controversial decision to dissolve the office of the Committee for European Integration in 2010, the implementation of *acquis* in Poland is progressing with difficulty, as evidenced by the high penalties imposed on Poland by the European Commission, even for failing to implement telecommunications law (which is, incidentally, clearly in the interest of Poland). What is equally unclear is the political importance of Polish oligarchs that has visibly decreased a decade ago as a result of the spectacular exposure of the hidden mechanisms of their influence by the inquiry committee examining the so called Rywin bribery scandal, and today it is really difficult to reliably assess whether and to what extent some of them have rebuilt their own influence and recognition. What can be nevertheless perceived and concluded with certainty is the fact of a spontaneous and non-transparent distraction and dispersion of authority and, consequently, its obvious depoliticisation. In classical terms of politics, one might say that the price for the concentration of political "*auctoritas*" in Donald Tusk's hands is the degeneration and decay of everyday, ordinary "*potestas*" which – to use Giorgio Agamben's useful language – "is guided by economic and governmental rationality rather than by purely political one."<sup>10</sup> "Donald Tusk prefers to reign, not to rule" – as concluded by Jadwiga Staniszkis.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the price for

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10 Cf. Agamben, G., et. al., 2012, *Co dalej z demokracją* (What is the Future of Democracy?), "Le Monde Diplomatique".

11 An interview given by Jadwiga Staniszkis for "Rzeczpospolita", 27 June 2013, <<http://www.rp.pl/artykul/1024099.html?print=tak&p=0>>.

such a model of exercising power by the chief executive of the state is an inevitable drift of the state.

The above description, being a synthesis of the analyses of many Polish authors, refers to the phenomenon that is treated as a peculiarity in the Polish politics. Within a quarter of a century of independence, even though some of the prime ministers – as Tadeusz Mazowiecki or Leszek Miller – held enormous amount of power, no one came a bit closer to create a similar model. This is why the political change taking place in 2007 in fact divided the latest Polish political history into two clearly different periods. The first was the time of anarchic republic and the great political disputes, while the second was the period of Donald Tusk's principate and "a gradual disappearance of politics." As noted by Paweł Śpiewak, "the space of public speech ceased to be handled by the politicians, with the result of a common deproblematization of the common world."<sup>12</sup> It is hard not to notice that similar diagnoses are frequently formulated also in other European countries and they are sometimes also classified as a part of a broader phenomenon of the so-called post-democracy (or even post-politics), namely the political system in which "there remains mere democratic form without the content."<sup>13</sup> For example, in the period before the elections to the German Bundestag in 2013, there was published a controversial book by Gertrud Höhler, showing Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, as devoid of any ideas, as being in fact a nihilistic leader who destructs all political parties and insidiously eliminates most prominent German politicians, thus fighting only for her own personal hegemony.<sup>14</sup> Without going into details of the state of German democracy, it can be just noted that – due to or rather despite Angela Merkel – both the solemnity as well as the quality of German politics positively form increasingly more popcultural and impotent politics in most EU Member States. The Polish model of Donald Tusk's system probably also differs in many respects from what is referred to by Gertrud Höhler in her book as "M's system." Merkel's authority is based on her ability

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12 See, footnote 6.

13 Rak, K., 2013, *Kanclerz postdemokracji (The Chancellor of Post-Democracy)*, "Rzeczpospolita", 23 September, <<http://www.rp.pl/artukul/1050822.html?print=tak&p=0>>.

14 Cf. Höhler, G., 2013, *Matka chrzestna (Godmother)*, Zysk i S-ka, Warszawa.



to overcome all divisions, while Donald Tusk has built his power on permanent and uncontrollable arousal of fear against the rise to power of right-wing opposition, which is a major factor legitimising his authority. Angela Merkel spectacularly changes views on certain strategic objectives of the state (e.g. nuclear energy), while Donald Tusk used to avoid the formulation of any serious strategies for the state, and if he happens – spontaneously – to clearly declare something (like Poland's rapid accession to European Monetary Union or the construction of nuclear power plants), he blurs these unequivocal statements for a long time, so that there remains only a twisted and obscure trace. Most importantly, however, it is hard to recall any other EU Member State where the subjectivity of politicians, especially parliamentarians, was suppressed to such an extent as in Poland. The great fear looming over every member of the ruling party against expressing their views and assessments, will undoubtedly remain a gloomy Polish invention from the perspective of the countries of liberal democracy. "Civic Platform does not believe that its members have the brains" – as sarcastically summarized by a well-known journalist with undisguised pro-government and pro-Civic Platform orientation.<sup>15</sup>

## THE PARTY IS NOTHING, TUSK IS EVERYTHING

Donald Tusk's system cannot exist in a vacuum. In order for its effectiveness, it requires favourable environment and some crucial conditions that need to be continuously fulfilled. It is only through them that Donald Tusk was able to come into political existence six years ago and then enjoy strong social support for such a long time. If one looks closely at the foundations of this system, it is clear that its durability depends to a great extent on the stability of the three supporting pillars that underlie it. The most important among the latter was the specific state of Poles' collective emotions. It is clear that if the sole purpose of authority is the power of one man, the system can continue only if this man triggers collective emotions

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15 See: Kolenda-Zaleska, K., 2008, "Dziennik", 9 July, <<http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/opinie/artykuly/130056,platforma-nie-wierzy-ze-jej-poslowie-maja-mozgi.html>>.

in the substantial part of the society. Indeed, this is a typical model of legitimisation of power of all sorts of populist leaders, and in extreme forms – even tyrants. The populism of Donald Tusk was based mainly on three collective passions. First of all, it was the fear against Jarosław Kaczyński's return to power. In this respect, Donald Tusk constructed a well-known and effective mechanism to stimulate even the most unreasonable concerns and the primitive collective passions, deliberately creating among his close supporters the state resembling the collective hysteria, intrinsically harmful to democracy, feeding on rationality. Secondly, it was the sense of satisfaction that Donald Tusk, in fact, as the first Prime Minister after regaining freedom, ostensibly cuts off from socially hated ideology of "painful yet inevitable reforms." Antireform doctrine, developed by Donald Tusk, proclaiming that good reforms must be equally good for people, had to delegitimize any efforts aiming at reforms in a society heavily experienced by side effects of the Polish "shock therapy" of the 90's. Thirdly, it was the longing for a leader, being the iron fist for his people, that can ensure that the latter are not idle and they do not steal, or else he punishes them without mercy. In this respect Donald Tusk was perfect, he gave moralizing speeches, ostensibly messed with his cabinet, appointed and dismissed people from their offices for no reason, while the real corruption scandals in his ranks (like the so-called "gambling scandal") were transformed by him into the performances of his despotic power and severity. All this was done to the absolute joy of the society.

It is true that the fear of chaos associated with the comeback of Kaczyński is still a key factor in the emotional adhesive connecting the supporters of Donald Tusk and the stimulation of this factor remains the most important goal of the pro-government propaganda. However, this fear has already diminished, being more of a ritual character over the years, and as shown by the Social Diagnosis of 2013 – this fear is much less likely to be experienced by the youngest voters for whom the conflicts that took place at the time of Kaczyński's government, no longer constitute a reference point.<sup>16</sup> What is more,

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16 Cf. *Diagnoza Społeczna 2013. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków (Social Diagnosis 2013. The Conditions and the Quality of Life of the Poles)*, p. 308, <<http://ce.vizja.pl/en/issues/volume/7/issue/4>>.

the leading showmen within Donald Tusk's circle (i.e. those of the participants of the political spectacle who are able to draw most attention) used to either publicly complain that they were afraid that Donald Tusk was no longer able to "protect the country against Kaczyński" or to break out of a fixed front and – contrary to all the rules – openly praise Kaczyński (as Adam Michnik did during the revolt in Kiev), or even show sudden outbursts of anti-Civic Platform passion (as Agnieszka Holland did when commenting on "the fraudsters from Civic Platform whom she would never vote for"). Such incidents cause irreparable harm to Donald Tusk's circle by reducing emotional tension and thus destroying its strongest binder.

The dispute over the retirement age, which the government decided to extend in accordance with the expectations of the European Commission, caused that for the first time in history the Polish trade union "Solidarity" has become the spokesperson for the majority of the public, which resulted in a decline of social satisfaction with the absence of "painful reforms." Although Donald Tusk himself seems to still believe that his antireform doctrine constitutes the best tool to prevent social conflicts and to strengthen the state of social depoliticisation, this doctrine has for some time begun to lose with the Prime Minister's growing fear against the deep financial imbalance of the state. This results in a chaotic policy of inconsistency in this field, evidenced in an almost universal social belief (though having little to do with statistics) that "life in the times of Donald Tusk becomes increasingly worse." What is nevertheless particularly dangerous for the system is the collapse of social confidence in the fact that the Prime Minister is the scourge of corruption in his own circles. Donald Tusk who has once with great skill transformed political scandals to his own benefit, for some time looks helpless and entangled in such relationships that do not allow him – as before – to take ostentatiously spectacular steps in such cases. This began with the family ambiguities in Ambergold banking scandal and reached its apogee when Donald Tusk publicly admitted that he did not want to (or could not?) do anything with the suspicion of buying votes in the leadership elections in exchange for the positions in state-owned companies in Lower Silesia. A number of scandals in the Civic Platform that were revealed in the recent weeks, like the information systems corruption in two key ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

the Ministry of Interior, start to resemble the final period of Leszek Miller's government and the unprofessional steps taken by Donald Tusk (e.g. the secret meeting with the party activists in Kraków in respect of the corruption in the regional self-government in the Lesser Poland) only make this impression stronger. It is clear that the entire populist foundation of Donald Tusk's system is in crisis.

The second supporting pillar of Donald Tusk's system is the nature of his political base. Its characteristic feature was safety and obedience. This was best revealed in the moments of unexpected crisis (it could be the gambling scandal or the revolt in Kiev), and even the top party leaders and advocates of Civic Platform fled from the reporters not knowing how the party's truth should then look like. The same was true when Donald Tusk – in order to strengthen the fear within the party – was carrying out his next “murder” (to use the term of the Prime Minister's advisor)<sup>17</sup> of any of either real or imaginary internal enemies, and the holders of even the top-ranked functions (e.g., the Marshal of the Sejm) awaited the moment when they could with impunity attack the victim selected by Donald Tusk. In a broader sense, however, the key feature of Donald Tusk's political base was the state of his non-alternativeness, creating guarantees of the security of the entire system. Aleksander Smolar once said that he abhors Civic Platform, but he will vote for it because this is the last defence against Law and Justice (Polish Prawo i Sprawiedliwość).<sup>18</sup> One of the central goals of the system was the assumption that “young and educated people from big cities” would never abandon Donald Tusk because he is their only guarantee of the basic order, almost like a monarch the only alternative of whom is chaos, personified by revolutionary Kaczyński. As the greatest guarantor of order, Donald Tusk should be, by the very nature, the locomotive of the whole political party. Hence the idea of “tuskobus” (i.e., the bus with the Prime Minister on board, which sets off at the moments of the party's weakness) and the well-known scheme of Civic Platform's HR campaigns that always

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17 Cf. Śpiewak, P., 2007, blog, *Moje PO, moje PO (My Civic Platform, My Civic Platform)*, 11 October, <<http://prawdaoplatformie.blogspot.com/2007/10/prof-pawe-piewak-moje-po-moje-po.html>>.

18 See an interview given by Aleksander Smolar for Radio ZET, 18 November 2013, <<http://www.rp.pl/artykul/1065626.html>>.

preached the declaration of Igor Ostachowicz, undersecretary of state in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and public relations expert, that the party is nothing and Donald Tusk is everything. Meanwhile, it appears at first glance that the Prime Minister – at best – is no longer treated as the party's main driving force and – at worst – he draws the excess of bad social emotions, what is visibly an increasing burden for him.

### SOMETHING NEW?

The government's attack on the money accumulated in pension funds caused real havoc in the Civic Platform. At the end of 2013, the parliament, acting in accordance with the Prime Minister's instructions, confiscated more than half of the savings collected by the citizens in private pension funds. Meanwhile, the protection of property and the integrity of deposits are believed to be the values protected by the most ideological electorate of Donald Tusk. It was Leszek Balcerowicz, the key authority in these circles, that appealed to these values when he toured dozens of universities, with the characteristic determination and diligence, and delivered speeches to hundreds of young intellectuals about "the most fraudulent government after 1989," at the same time holding in his hand the issue of the *Wall Street Journal* with the critical commentary that referred to Donald Tusk's politics as "swindle."<sup>19</sup> It was the first time that anyone has conducted such an extensive diversionary action on the back of Civic Platform. The consequence of the latter was not only a multitude of anti-government initiatives, such as the action "Niezaglosuje.pl" (transl. "I will not vote"), organized by "young and educated people from big cities" and the influx of young people into a newly formed political party Polska Razem (English: Poland Together) formed by Jarosław Gowin, but mainly the fall of the morale of the whole political party. It is not

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<sup>19</sup> *Poland's Pension Swindle*, "The Wall Street Journal", 2013, Oct. 17, <<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304864504579141282364296104>>, see also anti-government materials presented on the webpage of Civil Development Forum (Polish: Forum Obywatelskiego Rozwoju), <<http://www.for.org.pl/pl/a/2569,FOR-przeciw-skokowi-na-oszczednosci-Polakow-zgromadzone-w-OFE>>.

without reason that the most earnestly investigated and stigmatised form of betrayal within Donald Tusk's party is now a suspicion of solidarity with Balcerowicz. The picture of the changes within the party is made more complete by the fact that the recent Vice-President of the Civic Platform, Grzegorz Schetyna, turned out to be the first competitor of Donald Tusk, selected to be removed from the party. This was accompanied by the methods of provocation and extensive personal intrigues, such that have been so far used only by the leader when doing away with his competitors.<sup>20</sup>

Low potential of social self-organization and a blocked political scene constituted the third pillar supporting Donald Tusk's system. According to this model, the authority needs emotionally stimulated yet depoliticised society which is thus unwilling to support any forms of self-organization for public purposes. It is true that at first glance it may seem like a paradox. However, in the political practice of Donald Tusk's party, the contradiction to the tactic of supporting populist emotions is indeed the attempt to discourage the Poles from politics. Propaganda campaigns carried out by the government and by the Civic Platform deftly promote allegedly "civic" ideal of the Poles, as being busy with their work and family life to such an extent that they have neither the time nor the inclination to meddle with politics (like the great campaign of 2010 under the slogan "Let's not do politics").<sup>21</sup> Donald Tusk has the same aversion to politics. When speaking of Tusk in this respect we naturally do not mean the real one but the one from the image cleverly created by PR experts. According to this image, Donald Tusk would most gladly take care of his grandson, play football and help people in their life troubles. What is, therefore, most dangerous for Donald Tusk's system are such initiatives which cannot be rated among combating "the forces of darkness" led by Kaczyński and which engage people from the middle class due to the said problems of everyday life. It was precisely the reason why the social initiative of the Elbanowscy family ([Ratujmaluchy.pl](http://Ratujmaluchy.pl)) had

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20 See, for example, the relation given by R. Grochal in "Gazeta Wyborcza", 31 October 2013, <[http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,14873521,Nie\\_będzie\\_poworki\\_wyborow\\_w\\_PO\\_na\\_Dolnym\\_Slasku\\_.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,14873521,Nie_będzie_poworki_wyborow_w_PO_na_Dolnym_Slasku_.html)>.

21 The information on the webpage <<http://www.wirtualnemedial.pl/artykul/po-nie-robmy-polityki-budujmy-mosty-budujmy-polske-budujmy-drogi#>>.

such a strong impact. Elbanowscy, without any help of political parties, managed to collect over one million signatures for a proposal of a referendum against the educational policy of the government aiming to impose the schooling duty on six-year-old children. They also succeeded in creating a viable civic institution that has the potential to serve as an alternative social ministry of education. Neither the two subsequent Ministers of Education (notorious for deafness to social voice) nor the Prime Minister himself recognized the nature and the potential of this movement. They erroneously assumed that by ignoring and ridiculing the lists of professors against the new curricula or hunger strikes in defence of the courses of history in schools they conducted a routine ideological battle against Law and Justice for which the school was just another arena.

The blockade of the political scene was so far guaranteed by radically bipolar distribution of social emotions that developed within 2006-2007 in the period of Kaczyński holding the office of the Prime Minister. It was, in turn, strengthened by the budgetary financing of the parliamentary parties, developed indeed by Law and Justice in its own interest, yet serving also the purpose of strengthening Donald Tusk's system. We are eye witnesses of the collapse of bipartisan political system, which once aroused hopes for the rationalization of then anarchic Polish politics. However, it has brought far more evil than good. It created chiefly political parties, decerebrated parliamentarians, replaced the debate for a squabble, and the necessary state reforms – for unbearable PR. It stirred up bad instincts and primitive passions in the nation. Inclined plane – not too steep yet – where the Civic Platform is now placed is a signal that everyone can now try to put their flag on its former territories. At present it is successfully done by Leszek Miller who in truly amazing way rebuilds post-communist party, thus challenging the passing time. It was indeed difficult to ever assume that a quarter of a century after the fall of communism and a decade after Rywin corruption scandal, the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polish: Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza) and the famous recipient of Moscow's money will be once more on the top! Today Leszek Miller is thinking about becoming a leader of the party opposing Kaczyński and his plans are not entirely unrealistic. Jarosław Gowin is, in turn, also taking smart steps in his attempt to create a new political party

that appeals to the conservative – liberal ideological sources of the Civic Platform. The comeback to baseline values can be a good foundation for new politics thus being a real challenge in the times devoid of any ideas.

Let us repeat, under the Polish conditions, the system of power created by Donald Tusk is at least a curiosity, and perhaps even – a major anomaly. As a curiosity this system could exist in Poland only due to the fact that there simultaneously occurred all the conditions to reveal its possibilities, namely populist emotions, chiefly party and amorphous society. Today, however, it is clear that the environment has become less friendly for Donald Tusk's system, therefore, it began to crackle, and in some places even to crumble. Donald Tusk himself – the constructor, the head and core of the whole system – apparently does not know how to save the system. Paweł Śpiwak, the head of Donald Tusk's team of advisors before the parliamentary elections of 2011, predicts political trends in 2014 with the following words: "One can see the imminent fall of Civic Platform, which is a signal that there approaches the end of an era in the Polish politics. This will naturally entail changes. It is visible that Poland is preparing itself for something new."<sup>22</sup>

*Translation Małgorzata Kiełtyka*

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22 P. Śpiwak, an interview for "Polska The Times", 30 December 2013, <<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Pawel-Spiwak-w-2014-roku-bedzie-wiecej-awantur-politycznych,wid,16290350,wiadomosc.html>>.



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