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On contemporary conservative opinion weeklies

ABSTRAKT

Współczesne konserwatywne tygodniki opinii

Przedmiotem artykułu są konserwatywne tygodniki opinii wydawane w Polsce po 1989 r. W latach 90. XX w. i w pierwszej dekadzie XXI w. czasopisma te, choć obecne na rynku, nie cieszyły się zbyt dużą popularnością. Sytuacja ta uległa zmianie po katastrofie smoleńskiej w 2010 r., gdy gwałtownie wzrosło zainteresowanie „Gazetą Polską”, a ogromny sukces wydawniczy odniosło czasopismo „Uważam Rze”. Zmiany właścicielskie przyczyniły się do upadku „Uważam Rze”, której miejsce zajęły „W Sieci” i „Do Rzeczy”.

Obecnie konserwatywne tygodniki opinii są trwałym elementem polskiego rynku medialnego. O ich powodzeniu przesądza jednoznaczność i wyrazistość przekazu, obecność w Internecie, ale też stosowanie technik i form dziennikarskich właściwych tabloidom.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: tygodniki opinii po 1989 r., prawica, konserwatyzm, dyskusja

After the fall of the regime of the so-called real socialism, Polish right-wing circles had a serious problem with the launch of the media into the market, which could permanently and effectively influence the public opinion. It would seem that this was a fairly easy task, because in 1989 the audience expected the mass communication to be clearly cut-off from the previous reality, and at the same time conservative and rampant views and opinions to be described as right-wing ones. But when we look at the Polish media-market evolution, we see that both conservative journalists with many years of experience and journalistic youth reported only short-lived, though spectacular successes, which include, among others, Wiesław Walendziak's (1993-1996) and Bronisław Wildstein's (2006-2007) presidencies in the national television, or not very long periods of splendor of successive images of Tomasz Wotek's "Life" and "Republic" led by Paweł Lisicki¹. Definitely much worse situation was observed in the magazine reviews sector.

¹ More on this, see: Bronisław Wildstein Mutineer, a talk of Piotr Zaremba and Michał Karnowski, Fronde, Warsaw 2012.

But before we proceed to the interesting presentation of review-targeted weeklies, it seems right to define what is meant by this term. The analysis of the most important definitions to be possible found in the literature leads to the assumption that the attributes of the press reviews include: unique, opinion-forming personnel of the editorial team, high prevalence of various journalistic genres in the magazine that mostly focus on social, political and cultural issues. The feature that once defined such magazines, and which is currently of historical significance only, were various literary contents².

The review-targeted press is divided into socio-cultural and socio-political magazines. The former has been in decline for many years. They lost their rank and importance in the eighties³. The sterile market became gradually occupied by different socio-political journals, especially the ones of the liberal and center-left profile, such as "Polityka" and "Newsweek" and in the years 2010-2012 "Wprost" led by Tomasz Lis.

In the 90s the right-wing high-volume review-targeted weekly were rare. As a matter of fact at that time there were only two of them: "Tygodnik Solidarnosc" and the "Gazeta Polska". Let me recall that the "Tygodnik Solidarnosc" appeared in 1981 and the first issues of the magazine were edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki and published in half a million copies. After 1989 the magazine was led by Jaroslaw Kaczyński (until 1991), Andrzej Goldberg and Jerzy Kłosiński (since 2002). The interest in the weekly was continually decreasing. The circulation dropped to 20 thousand copies, of which probably only a half was sold. Although the latter in some elements still tries to function as review-targeted weekly, it has been dominated by the problems of workers and trade unions, and is addressed to "Solidarnosc" activists⁴.

Slightly bigger print run had Piotr Wierzbicki's „Gazeta Polska” which has been appearing since 1993. This weekly magazine is published by the Polish Independent Publishing Company. Originally, the newspaper was published in about 50 thousand issues, and 20 thousand of them were sold. In 2005, when the vendition of the magazine was about 10 thousand issues, “Gazeta” was assumed by Tomasz Sakiewicz⁵. The Silver Company, established by former activists of Agreement Centre, contributed to Polish Independent Publishing Company. It was an entity correlated with Law and Justice party, and managed by Kazimierz Kujda. The PIPC, apart from “Gazeta Polska”, also edited “Gazeta Polska Codziennie” (vendition about 18

² In particular: *Encyklopedia wiedzy o prasie*, ed. J. Buttermilk, Wrocław 1976, p. 42, 179 and 186.

³ More on the reasons for the collapse of socio - cultural magazines in the 80s see.: T. Mielczarek, *Czasopisma społeczno-kulturalne lat osiemdziesiątych XX wieku*, „Rocznik Historii Prasy Polskiej” t. XI (2008), no. 1-2.

⁴ In the official history of the writing it was pointed out that the "Tygodnik" had a significant contribution to the development of the program Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność partially implemented by the government of Jerzy Buzek. In the journal there appeared statements of Zbigniew Herbert, and now essays are published of e.g. Jan Pietrzak and Ryszard Bugaj. Cf.: <http://www.tygodniksolidarnosc.com/pl/793/historia--tygodnika-solidarnosc.html> 19.06/10/2015).

⁵ T. Butkiewicz, *Wojna o kasę i władzę w „Gazecie Polskiej”*, „Dziennik” 13.05.2009.

thousand issues), monthly magazine "Nowe Państwo" (declared vendition 20 thousand issues), satirical monthly magazine "Pinezki"⁶ (2010-2012) and still runs portal niezalezna.pl (100 thousand visits per day).

Until the 2009, the sale rate of the "Gazeta Polska" was about 25 thousand issues. Rapid increase of interests about magazine, was after Smoleńsk air crash. In 2010, there were normally sold 50 thousand issues, and in 2011 – 71 thousand issues. Next years, the sale rate was decreasing again. In the first quarter of 2015, 36 thousands issues of the magazine were sold.

The newspaper suggested, the Russians were responsible for the President's plane air crash. They also accused the members of Civilian Platform (PO), especially Donald Tusk and the President Bronisław Komorowski⁷ to be responsible for the Smolensk predicament. The major part of the articles published in the magazine were based on the materials received from the Institute of National Remembrance. The magazine included propagandist campaign of the Law and Justice party (PiS). It strongly supported candidates for President and Prime Minister positions – Andrzej Duda and Beata Szydło. The critics noticed that when PiS governed Poland, the magazine placed advertisements of many national companies⁸.

In 2015 newspaper office consisted of more than 20 people, i.e. Katarzyna Gójska-Hejke (co-executive editor), Piotr Lisiewicz (co-executive editor), Anna Gargas (publicist), Marcin Wolski, Jan Żaryn (history), Tomasz P. Terlikowski (social issues).

Another socio-political magazine which openly presented its political beliefs was "Ozon". This weekly magazine was established on April 21st 2005 by a couple of private people (e.g. Janusz Palikot) and various Polish business firms. First of all, it was assumed that neutral "Ozon" will avoid writing about political and economical affairs. The chairman of the publishing company became Jan Dybczyński and the executive editor - Dariusz Rosiak. The first issues of "Ozon" were published in the number of 500 thousand, but only 70 thousand of them were sold. After the publication of thirteen issues, the management of the newspaper office was changed – Michał Jeżewski became the chairman, and Grzegorz Górny (who came from "Frona") took the position of the editor. In this moment, the magazine became central-right winged, and was targeted to the youth from the generation of John Paul II. "Ozon" published articles written by (among others) Robert Tekiel and Jadwiga Staniszkis. Despite that, the magazine did not gain success. "Ozon" disappeared from the market, even though launching and advertising it supposedly costed 25 million zloties. Its last issues were sold in a number of 40 thousand.

The success of the "Gazeta Polska" made the right wing environment start another high-volume opinion magazine. The weekly newspaper was titled "Uważam Rze. Pisane inaczej" and was implemented onto the market on the 7th of February

⁶ S. Mizerski, *Humor patriotów*, „Polityka”, 2011 no. 24.

⁷ J. Aderman, *Obsługa naziemna*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 20.04.2011.

⁸ C. Łazarkiewicz, *Partia GP*, „Polityka” 2011 no. 19.

2011, with hardly any promotion. The executive editor became Paweł Lisicki and his deputy was Michał Karnowski.

The preliminary decision of founding the weekly was taken in July, 2010 by the head of Mecom and Presspublika Fund- the publisher of the "Rzeczpospolita", David Montgomery. He accepted the form of reprint edition which contained the most interesting texts from the weekly supplemented with the contents of the supplement to the "Rzeczpospolita", called "Plus- Minus". This decision was protested by the representatives of the State Treasury, who owned 49% of the concern interests. They believed that the planned enterprise is risky and can result in significant trading loss. However, Paweł Lisicki did not agree with this opinion. He calculated the primary newsprint costs at the level of 30-40 groszys per copy. The new weekly would be edited by three full-time journalists only with the remaining costs reduced to lineage ones paid to freelancing authors. The majority of the materials were to be provided by full-time journalists employed by the "Rzeczpospolita"⁹.

Paweł Lisicki estimated the annual value of the advertisement market placed in opinion weeklies should oscillate between 60 to 80 million zloty. According to the calculations of Presspublika marketing department in 2012, "Newsweek" obtained 20-25 million zloty net from advertisements, "Polityka" 15-18 million zloty and "Wprost" 10-12 million zloty. "Uważam Rze" made 6-7 million zloty and, according to Lisicki, the weekly was not only workable, but also profitable for the publishing house¹⁰. However, it has to be remembered that the above calculations did not include real editorial costs carried by self- launching newspapers as well as the so-called press-market paper appearance amount, which entailed the costs of newspaper office design, promotion, etc., what presented viability and profitability issues in much less positive position.

Regardless of these financial controversies, according to the managing editor it can be stated that "Uważam Rze" concentrated the "elite of right- wing journalism". The journalists publishing there were, for instance, Bronisław Wildstein, Robert Mazurek and Igor Zalewski, Piotr Semka, Rafał Ziemkiewicz, Michał and Jacek Karnowscy, Piotr Zremba, Janusz Rolicki, Igor Janke, Waldemar Łysiak, Piotr Gabryel, Marek Magierowski, Cezary Gmyz, Piotr Gociek, Piotr Zychowicz, Andrzej Horubała, Krzysztof Feusette. Paweł Lisicki evaluating the ideological profile of the editorial board, says " So in what sense can they be labelled 'right- wing' ones? Maybe it is about the fact that all had the critical attitude to the miasmas, which are carried by the mass culture, pop culture, or progressive culture roller [...] Maybe the common denominator was respect to Polish tradition, value which was and is Polish character,

⁹ More on this in: "Po prostu. Uważam Rze" Paweł Lisicki, a talk of Piotr Gruszyn, The Facto, Warszawa 2013, pp. 68-81. See also: „Pełna Przyjaźń”. Paweł Lisicki, interviewed by Mariusz Kowalczyk, „Press” 2013, no 2.

¹⁰ "Po prostu. Uważam Rze" p. 123.

but also respect to basic ethic rules grew up from Christianity, even if not all people were faithful.”¹¹

Primarily, the price of the newspaper was only 1,9 zloty, whereas in the third month of the edition it went up to 2.9 zloty, what was only 60 % of prices of competitive weeklies. In November, 2011 “Uważam Rze” with the circulation over 242 thousands of copies was selling 131,6 thousands of copies, what overtook the most popular in this segment “Polityka” by about 1,5 thousand copies.

Regardless of those successes, the future of “Uważam Rze” was doomed in January, 2011. Then, David Montgomery- the owner of Presspublika and “Uważam Rze” resigned from conducting the investment fund of the Mecom. The Mecom published its new strategy which assumed a focus on the regional press. One can only suppose that the negotiations with Grzegorz Hajdarowicz, who was the owner of Gremi Group publishing weekly “Przekrój” and monthly “Sukces” started shortly afterwards. He planned to intensify the activities of the press, and even planned to found a publishing company able to appear on the stock exchange.

Information about the fact that he bought all the British shares of the Presspublika was a big surprise for both his competitors as well as many market analysts. The value of the transaction amounted to 80 million zł, and Hajdarowicz also bought the shares owned by the state amounting to 55 million zł.

Although it was assumed that the new owner will change the ideological line of the weekly, Hajdarowicz consistently denied the speculation. He emphasised that the only thing he wants to improve in the Presspublika was - as he said – the application of new technologies¹². Notwithstanding the assurances right-wing circles feared that they would be deprived of one of the most important channels of political articulation. Therefore, journalists of the “Rzeczpospolita” and “Uważam Rze” wrote a letter to Hajdarowicz in which they demanded to keep the current editor-in-chief in his position. Furthermore, an open letter was written by the President of the Polish Journalists Association Krzysztof Skowroński and Vice-Presidents Agnieszka Romaszewska – Guzy and Piotr Legutko. The letter stated that Hajdarowicz’s journals are “an important pillar of public debate today. The successes of both titles were the result of common work of the journalists and publicists employed there. [...] Respecting your ownership rights we appeal to allow the continuation of the work of the editorial staff in the current line-up.”

In an ironic return statement sent to the editor of the portal wirtualnemedial.pl, Hajdarowicz wished the authors of the letter and the SDP under the new management to “get back to the heyday of the era of Stefan Bratkowski, when the organization was the voice of common sense for all journalists.” The new owner also thanked “for the concern and willingness to help run my publishing house. I hope that subsequent letters will contain ready-made business plans enabling the

¹¹ Ibid. pp.154-55

¹² M. Lemańska, *Mam dla Presspubliki plan działania*, „Rzeczpospolita”, 1.07.2011.

financing activities of the Presspublika. Seeing how authentic your concern for the future of the "Rzeczpospolita" and "Uważam Rze" is, I also do not hesitate to beg you help me seek grants and possible advertisers who will help us achieve our common goal which is the development of the publishing house"¹³.

Ceasefire between the editorial staff and the publisher lasted only until November 2012. It was at that time when Cezary Gmyz was fired from the "Rzeczpospolita" for a hard-to-believe article about the discovery of the traces of TNT explosives on the wreckage of the President's plane, what suggested assassination of Lech Kaczyński and his entourage. The publisher's irritation was so great that he refused the customary legal protection for Tomasz Wróblewski, Paweł Lisicki and Cezary Gmyz when lawsuits were brought against them for the texts previously published in the "Rzeczpospolita".

When Hajdarowicz attempted to restore political order in the "Rzeczpospolita", Paweł Lisicki openly protested against his decisions. In return the publisher dismissed him on disciplinary grounds from the position of the chief editor of "Uważam rze", accusing him of giving an interview for the portal wpolityce.pl (i.e. an online periodical run by Michał and Jacek Karnowski), giving permission for publishing Cezary Gmyz's texts in the weekly and insufficient competition with Michał Karnowski's debut of the bi-weekly "w Sieci"¹⁴. Together with Paweł Lisicki approximately 30 publicists and journalists, such as Piotr Gabryel and Bronisław Wildstein, for example, decided to leave "Uważam rze"¹⁵. They produced a statement in which they thanked readers for their support and promised to retain their independence. They also argued with the people who followed the publisher's stance. „(...) And all those our former friends who – as we believe – consciously insist on destroying the leading weekly in Poland, the controversial journal that so many readers trust, are advised to focus on their product even more"¹⁶.

The editing of „Uważam Rze” was taken over by Jan Piński together with a couple of former journalists of the weekly „Wprost”. In the journal, there also appeared the journalists associated with the Congress of the New Right (Kongres Nowej Prawicy), All-Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska) and the National Military Forces (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne). However, neither of them was able help in the possible success

¹³ Hajdaranowicz dziękuje za troskę. Może załatwicie reklamodawców, wirtualnemedi.pl/arttykul/hajdarano-wicz (25.10.2011).

¹⁴ P. Pallus, Paweł Lisicki wygrał w sądzie ze spółką Grzegorza Hajdarowicza. Bezpodstawne zwolnienie dyscyplinarne; In: <http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/arttykul/pawel-lisicki-wygral-w-sadzie-ze-spolka-grzegorza-hajdarowicza-bezpodstawne-zwolnienie-dyscyplinarne> (25.06.2015).

¹⁵ There were also i.a. Sławomir Cenckiewicz, Cezary Gmyz, Piotr Gontarczyk, Jerzy Jachowicz, Igor Janke, bracia Karnowscy, Piotr Kobalczyk, Waldemar Łysiak, Robert Mazurek, Maciej Pawlicki, Marek Pyza, Agnieszka Rybak, Piotr Semka, Łukasz Warzecha, Igor Zalewski, Piotr Zaremba, Rafał Zawistowski, Rafał A. Ziemkiewicz i Piotr Zychowicz. More on this group of journalists also in: M. Janicki, G. Rzeczkowski, Trybuni Ludu, „Polityka” 2012, no. 50.

¹⁶ The full text of the statement in: Redakcja "Uważam Rze": tygodnik pozostaje niezależny i odważny: wirtualnemedi.pl/print/redakcja-uważam-rze-tygodnik... (12.11.2012).

of the weekly. The sales of „Uważam Rze” rapidly dropped. In 2012 it was 126,5 thousand copies and in 2013 - less than 18 thousand ones. The journal was forced to change its launching format into a monthly magazine intended for business people.

As already mentioned above, some of the former „Uważam Rze” journalists made an attempt to launch a new magazine. The first issue of the „W Sieci. Tygodnik osobistych opinii” appeared on the 26th November, 2012. The journal’s publisher was the Fratria Co., headed by Tomasz Przybyk¹⁷. Initially, „W Sieci” was a bi-weekly, with a copy price of 2.90 zł. The first issue was sold in the amount of 150 thousand copies, with another 40 thousand copies of the reprint. The newspaper’s next issue had an increased circulation of 200 thousand copies, and finally the third issue was released in the amount of 250 thousand copies. From the beginning of 2013, the weekly copy cost was firstly 2.90 zł. and afterwards - 5.90 zł. In 2013, the average sale equaled 94 thousand copies and in 2014 - 77 thousand copies. The early days of „W Sieci” were connected with the court hearing - the Fratria Co. was sued by the Gremi Media (i.e. the changed name of the publisher releasing the „Rzeczpospolita” and „Uważam Rze”). The charge was the violation of the interests of the Gremi Media, which had owned a social network „W sieci opinii”. The new title, as it was claimed, might have misled the readers who had been the network readers. The court verdict accepted the claims of the Gremi Media and forbade the new periodical the use of the disputed title¹⁸. Therefore, from the tenth to the thirtieth issue from 2013, the weekly was released without the letter “W” in front of the word „Sieci” in the title. Nevertheless, after the further court decision, the first title was restored¹⁹. The executive editor, Jacek Karnowski, claimed in the first issue of the journal that network remains the only uncensored place for the presentation of the current reality in the case of the factual selective choice of information observed in the most important media. He noticed that „Network is the world in which the so-called second rotation of information of not only information-like but also commentary nature has been formed. Network contains thousands of pieces of information. How to get in touch with them How to choose what is really important? Small informational and journalistic portals are of help here: wPolityce.pl, stefczyk.info, wNas.pl and wGospodarce.pl”²⁰. However, because some network resources are

¹⁷ Fratria publishes also the monthly magazines: „W Sieci Historii” edited by Jan Żaryn and „FronD” edited by Grzegorz Górny as well as „Gazeta Bankowa” edited by Wojciech Surmacz. He is the owner of the following portals: wpolityce, wnas, wgospodarce i wsumie. The biggest stakeholder of Fratria is the agency of the integrated marketing - Apella. It deals with publicity and public relations and the production of the promotional materials. Apella descends from the company set up in 2005 - Media SKOK, intended for leading the service of the Cooperative Savings and Credit (Spółdzielcze Kasy Oszczędnościowo-Kredytowe). The chairman of the board of Apella is Romuald Orzeł. More about these companies: <http://www.fratrria.pl/>; <http://www.apella.com.pl/o-nas.html> (25.02.2015).

¹⁸ The position of Fratrii in this legal case: Hajdarowicz attacks but the weekly „W Sieci” does not give in. <http://www.niedziela.pl/artykul/4183/Hajdarowicz-atakuje-jednak-redakcja> (23.02.2015).

¹⁹ Restored „W” so the weekly magazine „w Sieci” is back, www.niedziela.pl/artykul/5729/Odzyskane-%E2%80%9EW%E2%80%9D-czyli-wraca-tygodnik (23.02.2015).

²⁰ J. Karnowski, *In greeting „W Sieci”* 2012, no 1.

volatile, there has been created the journal in which there could be found materials that „could be pointlessly searched for in the official media or that have been treated superficially”²¹.

The “w Sieci” editorial board contained the following journalists: Michał Karnowski, Jacek Karnowski, Piotr Cywiński, Jerzy Jachowicz, Dorota Łosiewicz, Marek Pyza, Marzena Nykiel, Igor Zalewski, Krzysztof Czabański, Krzysztof Feusette, Marcin Fijołek, Marcin Wikło, Paweł Burdzy, Stanisław Żaryn, Maciej Pawlicki, Andrzej Potocki, Maja Narbutt, Stanisław Janecki.

The constitution of the editorial board unequivocally influenced its content. The journal described itself as a conservative one. Politics, culture, social issues and history were the subjects to be focused on. The peculiar journalistic logo of the weekly appeared to be columns, or - using more up-to-date terminology – blogs. On average, they were published in the amount of up to 15 in one magazine. They were written not only by the members of the editorial board, but also by Marta Kaczyńska, Jan Pietrzak, Andrzej Zybortowicz and many others.

On the occasion of the first and the second anniversary of the journal’s inception, the managing editor of “w Sieci”, Jacek Karnowski used wirtualmedia.pl portal to present his very comprehensive opinion about the magazine’s condition and its place on the market. He concluded that opinion-forming weeklies had divided themselves visibly in terms of their ideology. As he claimed, the first pole was occupied by liberal, pro-governmental, anti-oppositional, mainstream weeklies, of which “the common characteristic are huge financial transfers coming from the public sphere”²². However, the second pole was taken by conservative, patriotic journals fighting for the historical truth. It did not mean that the second group spoke with one, unified voice. They differed in detail such as the Smolensk tragedy, or their attitude to history. “These obviously are not truly significant gaps, we all represent the conservative group. All in all, the main difference is the capital – we build on the Polish, well-proven, and non-post-communist one”²³.

Behind these slightly general declarations of the managing editor there appeared controversial practical operations. “w Sieci” experienced many personal attacks. The person from the world of politics who especially irritated the journal editors was Donald Tusk. The image of the contemporaneous premier was repeatedly used for diverse photomontages placed on the covers of the magazine. They were joined with the announcements of the materials published in the issue „A sad final. The bill for the five years of Tusk’s mindless play”²⁴, „Here’s the chief of the Left-Wing. From a revolution to a revolution”²⁵.

²¹ Therein.

²²<https://www.facebook.com/LifeCzasopismo/photos/a.1810515342510593.1073741830.1688867631342032/1810524665842994/?type=3&theater>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ „w Sieci” 2013, nr 4.

²⁵ „On The Web” 2013, nr 9.

The journal issue no. 24 published in 2014 was kept in similar poetics. This time the cover presented the picture of Marysia Sokołowska and the announcement “Let me tell you, why the Prime Minister is a traitor”²⁶. The photography of an upper high school learner who had attacked the Prime Minister in public was noticed by the competitive journal “Do Rzeczy”. The weekly journalists, Robert Mazurek and Łukasz Warzecha criticized the cover and Rafał Ziemkiewicz concluded that it reveals low, tabloid-like quality of the magazine. Transferring this polemic into the web was only a matter of time. It became the place of publications of various readership judgements and Marysia Sokołowska was often contrasted with Joanna Szczepkowska who in the meantime transferred her columns from the “Gazeta Wyborcza” to the weekly “Ad Rem”. Jacek Kamowski wrote on the portal politics.pl that “my fellow journalists’ aggression towards this young girl is astounding”²⁷.

Bronisław Komorowski was treated in a little bit less uncompromising way, i.e. without deforming the current President’s image. Negative interest in him increased especially during the presidential election campaign when the magazine „w Sieci” straightforwardly opted for Andrzej Duda, the candidate of Law and Justice²⁸.

„w Sieci” also attacked mainstream’s journalists. Among others, the cover contained the photo of the retired Editor-in-Chief of the “Tygodnik Powszechny”, Father Adam Boniecki, with the inscription “Devil’s Advocate”. There was a photograph of Adam Michnik made from the so-called worm-eye view during the ceremony awarding him the Order of White Eagle. The question “What does Michnik play in?” was also raised²⁹. Tomasz Lis was treated definitely in much tougher way. In October 2003, on the cover of the magazine „w Sieci” there was a photomontage showing the editor of Newsweek in the uniform of a Gestapo officer holding a rosary in his bloodstained hands³⁰. The photomontage was entitled „Almost like Goebbels”. In the December issue 2003, the magazine presented a photomontage of Monika Olejnik standing next to General Wojciech Jaruzelski. This time the inscription ran “Children of the former Security Service Agents and Communist Party Members Have Taken Power in the Media”³¹. In February 2014, the magazine presented a photograph of an anonymous person behind the editor’s desk with a slogan: „To put it simply, here is a gangster functioning as the editor of an influential magazine”³². In this way the criminal episodes from the life of the editor Sylwester Latkowski were reminded. As a matter of form we should add that all the attacked persons

²⁶ „w Sieci” 2013, no 24.

²⁷ <http://wpolityce.pl/smolensk/199922-rzeczywiscie-zdrade-rzadko-widac-na-biezaco-tym-razem-jednak-widac-wyraznie-niepokojaco-wyraznie> (4.03.2015).

²⁸ Cf.: M. Wikło Na celowniku Komorowskiego, „W sieci”, 2015 nr 19; Udał nam się Duda, Jacek i Michał Karnowscy rozmawiają z Jarosławem Kaczyńskim, prezesem Prawa i Sprawiedliwości, tamże; Dam radę, Z Andrzejem Dudą rozmawiają Jacek i Michał Karnowscy, „w Sieci” 2015, no 20.

²⁹ „wSieci” 2013, nr 23.

³⁰ „w Sieci” 2013 nr 41.

³¹ „w Sieci” 2013, nr 49.

³² A. Potocki, *Kto stoi za Latkowskim*, „W Sieci” 2014, nr 7.

submitted their applications to the court, demanding protection of their personal goods as well as material compensation.

The magazine „Do Rzeczy” also represents conservative views. As it mentioned above, the magazine was launched by a group of employees of the weekly „Do Rzeczy.” Journalists left the journal after Grzegorz Hajdanowicz’s decision to dismiss Paweł Lisiecki from the post of the editor of the magazine „Uważam Rze”.

The publisher of „Do Rzeczy” is the company „Orle Pióro” co-governed by Robert Pstrokoński and Paweł Lisiecki. The partnership company includes PMPG „Polskie Media”³³ (80%) and journalist cooperative (20%) consisting of the weekly editor and the leading journalists self-employing themselves in the weekly.. Both parties have equal right to shape the ideological line and choice of the editor. In 2013 the net profit of the co-partnership was PLN 10,000 and in 2012 it was PLN 560,000.³⁴

The first issue of the magazine „Do Rzeczy” was launched on January 25th, 2013. The cover of the issue was embroidered with the slogan “We Are Back. Horny Journalists Did Not Let Themselves Be Deleted”. The first issue was sold in the amount of 119 935 copies and it was the best result achieved by the magazine so far. In 2013, the average disposal of the magazine was 86 614 copies and in 2014 it was 61 981 copies.

The first issue of the weekly "Do Rzeczy" was released on the 25th of January 2013 and was preceded by the online zero issue. The cover was decorated with the slogan "We're going back. Rebellious journalists held their ground". It was sold in amount of 119 935 copies, which was the best result achieved by the newspaper so far. In year 2013, the average sale of the weekly was 86 614 copies in all, and in 2014 - 61 981 copies. The decline in the sales of the magazine was influenced by, among others, its price increase. The weekly entered the market with the price of 3.95 zł, in October 2013 it went up to 4.90 zł, and since March 2014, it has costed 5.90 zł.

To mark the release of the hundredth issue of "Do Rzeczy", Paweł Lisiecki stated that "The weekly was created off- hand, as a civic response to the destructive, unfair activity of the “Uważam Rze” publisher, who decided to destroy our magazine being motivated by either hurt ambition or supposed compliance with the ruling Platforma”. He further noticed that "(...) not all those who bought the first issue of "Do Rzeczy" stayed with us. For some of the readers we turned out to be too moderate, insufficiently involved and emotional. The Polish public opinion is divided into distinct political camps. People are either for the PiS, or against it. Because of that, a magazine that sympathizes with the right-wing ideas, maintains the distance to the current policy and tries to show their own opinion is not fully convincing to

³³ Michał Lisiecki media platform Point Group was founded in 1997 r. Initially it was concerned in the publication of a student magazine „Dlaczego”, to subsequently publish „Machina”, „Film” and „Wprost”. In 2015, to underline the source of the initial capital of the group the phrase Polskie Media was added.

³⁴ Ł. Brzezicki, Rośnie zysk wydawcy „Do Rzeczy”. „Zdrowa i prężnie rozwijająca się firma”; <http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/rosnie-zysk-wydawcy-do-rzeczy-zdrowa-i-preznie-rozwijajaca-sie-firma> (30.06.2015).

everyone. The tribal Polish public life makes it easier to penetrate the market with yelling, and radical gestures rather than balanced, though difficult sometimes, opinion and the use of a reasonable argument³⁵.

The editorial board of the weekly is large³⁶, but reveals a certain degree of fluidity. As an example, let us note that initially Marcin Wolski was planning to publish in both "w Sieci" and "Do Rzeczy". The editors of "Do Rzeczy" thanked Krzysztof Czubański for further cooperation, after he had published his column in "w Sieci". Joanna Szczepkowska, who previously published in the "Gazeta Wyborcza" affiliated Saturday magazine entitled "High heels" was associated with the weekly for a very short time. She left "Do Rzeczy" when on its cover there appeared a caricature of the Polish Prime Minister depicting him as a tribal chief and bearing the slogan "Tusk, Go Away"³⁷. In March 2015 it was announced that on 1 April Bronisław Wildstein made a decision to transfer himself to "w Sieci".

The staff rotation was probably due to the tension that was present in the environment of Polish conservative journalists. Sometimes it had a very emotional character which could be observed in the discussion concerning Prof. Witold Kierzun. In August of 2014, Prof. Kierzun was on the cover of "w Sieci", personifying the heroism of the Warsaw insurgents. At the end of that year the September issue of "Do Rzeczy" published Sławomir Cenckiewicz and Piotr Wojciechowski's text which showed that in the 70s, Prof. Kierzun collaborated with the Security Service and contributed to the sussing of prof. Wiesław Chrzanowski³⁸. Protesting against the publication Agnieszka Romaszewska and Jan Oldakowski decided to resign from their positions held in the Memory Warden (Strażnik Pamięci) Award Committee.

A week later, an interview with Professor Piotr Kierzun was published in "w Sieci"; the interview authors were Piotr Zaremba, Piotr Skwierciński and Michał Karnowski. The scholar - putting the whole matter in the simplest way - explained that there was a misunderstanding because it was him who was the subject of surveillance what meant that he did not inform on anyone. Piotr Gontarczyk suggested that the text that appeared in "Do Rzeczy" was a reaction to the previous speech of Professor

³⁵ „Do Rzeczy”, 2015 No. 1 (100).

³⁶ The following names are listed on the magazine's website: Piotr Semka, Andrzej Horubała, Bronisław Wildstein, Wojciech Wybranowski, Piotr Gursztyn, Rafał A. Ziembkiewicz, Sławomir Cenckiewicz, Paweł Lisicki, Jacek Przybylski, Piotr Gabryel, Jakub Kowalski, Cezary Gmyz, Piotr Włoczyk, Urszula Kifer, Tomasz Wróblewski, Tomasz P. Terlikowski, Maciej Szymanowski, Mariusz Staniszewski, Piotr Zychowicz, Joanna Bajańczyk, Karolina Marchlewska – Trzmiel, Agnieszka Niewińska, Piotr Gociek, Maciej Rosalak, Marcin Pade, Tadeusz Zachurski, Jarosław Kałucki, Paweł Kukiz, Anna Piotrowska, Krzysztof Masłoń, Ewa K. Czaczkowska, Remigiusz Włast – Mauszak, Adam Tycner, Ewa Łosińska, Artur Bilski, Katarzyna Pinkosz, Krzysztof Rybiński, Jacek Komuda, Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Anna Herbich, Marcin Wolski, Waldemar Łysiak, Grzegorz Kucharczyk, Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski, Wojciech Górecki, Szwach Weiss, Janusz Kotański, Monika Florek – Mostowska, Joanna Lichocka, Łukasz Zalesiński, Małgorzata P. Terlikowska, Piotr Kościński, Mariusz Majewski, Łukasz Warzecha, Monika Rogozińska, Tomasz Stańczyk, Teresa Wójcik, Ewa Łosiewicz, Krzysztof M. Kaźmierczak, Janusz Kapusta, Piotr Pałka, Zdzisław Krasodębski, Eryk Mistewicz, Piotr Kobalczyk, Agnieszka Rybak, Jarosław Stóżyk.

³⁷ „Do Rzeczy” 2014, No. 2.

³⁸ S. Cenckiewicz, P. Wojciechowski, *Tajemnica agenta „Tamizy”*, „Do Rzeczy” 2014, No. 39.

Kierzuń, who strongly criticized the two journalists working for the weekly, Piotr Zychowicz and Rafał Ziemkiewicz, who – in his opinion - undermined the sense of the Warsaw Uprising. The dispute between both magazines not only dealt with other historical issues³⁹, but also current ones, like Roman Polański's case. The participants took up various topics, quite often of small topical value, but high emotional content. The team of the debaters grew up, the polemic being often transmitted to other magazines but, above all, becoming the subject matter of various internet network.

Although, both conservative magazines are somewhat different in their polemical accents, they have the same political enemies which are the leading PO representatives: Donald Tusk, Ewa Kopacz and Bronisław Komorowski. The magazine openly joined in the electoral campaign and attacked the current President⁴⁰. „Do Rzeczy” avoids trivial patterns, but sometimes it uses stereotypes which can be seen on the magazine's cover. Apart from the already mentioned cover with Donald Tusk⁴¹, the magazine showed the president of Poland as the patron of WSI⁴² and wondered “How could the depressed Ewa be changed into the iron Prime Minister⁴³. In addition, the enemies were also searched for in liberal left- wing media. The allies were not only politicians from the PIS⁴⁴, but also representatives of the conservative sectors of the society⁴⁵.

It is difficult not to discover the ways the two conservative magazines, just as most of the press, were influenced by tabloid mannerisms. This phenomenon is most often observed in the graphics of these magazines. The cover does not only perform the information functions but, above all, functions like an advertisement. It attracts the attention of potential buyers and is dominated by carefully selected photographs. It is rare when the picture accurately reflects reality. Usually both magazines search for non-conventional pictures. The literalism of the transmission is usually used towards the people who are respected by the editors. Trick photos are reserved for political opponents. On the covers ambiguous titles are exhibited with the past history of taboo words to appear there as well.

The editors of the magazines strive to show both the text and the graphic elements in similar proportions. Thus, we deal with the phenomenon of information visualization, which is being progressively introduced in all printed media, still being mostly observed in respect to tabloids. These magazines clearly undergo the process of content tabloidisation. The opposing camps are building higher trenches and not

³⁹ Orle Pióro is also the publisher of the monthly „Uważam Rze. Historia” edited by Andrzej Urbański.

⁴⁰ P. Semka, *Dosyć*, „Do Rzeczy” 2015 nr 19, p. ?; P. Lisicki, *Czas zmiany*, tamże, 2015 no. 21.

⁴¹ Zob. też Co ukrywa Tusk, „Do Rzeczy” 2014 no 17.

⁴² *Co łączy, Komorowkiego z Wojskowymi Służbami Informacyjnymi rozwiązany przez Maciarewicza*, „Do Rzeczy” 2014, no. 5.

⁴³ „Do Rzeczy” 2014 no. 42.

⁴⁴ *Jarosław Kaczyński: jaki naprawdę był Leszek*, „Do Rzeczy” 2014, no. 37.

⁴⁵ *Myszę o dzieciach, które nie narodziły się przeze mnie. Profesor Bogdan Hazan opowiada o swojej duchowej przemianie - od abortera do obrońcy życia*, „Do Rzeczy” 2014 no. 33.

only offer various ambiguous labels for the opponents but also – what can be seen in numerous examples – make an attempt to horrify their image.

Polemics are quite quickly brought from the level of mere ideas to the one of personal attacks. In 2013, a slightly ironic text about the conservative media published by “Polityka” passed by unnoticed⁴⁶; however, one year later a similar statement of the executive editor of the same newspaper caused a storm. When Jerzy Baczyński was asked how he would name the journals, like the “Gazeta Polska” or “Do Rzeczy”, he said: “Although it may sound bizarre, I would call them identically-national, often lefties in social views. But for the wrong associations of the blend, one could call almost them national-socialist. This is a kind of mix of social populism and very deep conservative ideological component”⁴⁷. In reply, Marek Magierowski observed: “I can understand the lifelong need of maintaining the image of arbitrator of elegance of Polish journalism, but the readers of the “Gazeta Wyborcza” would not be offended if you put it bluntly that “Do rzeczy”, “w Sieci” and the “Gazeta Polska” are simply fascist magazines”⁴⁸. Jerzy Baczyński was openly attacked in the network by Stanisław Janecki, Artur Bazak and Krzysztof Czabański, who not only argue with the main theses of the interview given by Jerzy Baczyński but also report that he was “(...) registered by the Secret Service as the operational contact known as ‘Bogusław’”.

It is almost at the same time when in the “Gazeta Wyborcza” there appeared series of articles entitled “Post-Smolensk Children. Media”, in which the conservative media were presented in the not too flattering way⁴⁹. As a form of reaction to this text, the representatives of the attacked magazines, reminded that – in their opinion - all those who had not been recognized as allies of their camp, must be counted as the representatives of the “industry of contempt”. Summing up, after 25 years of functioning of independent media, one more time a significant part of Polish press started to lay agitation functions before information ones. Blurring the boundaries between information and opinion, which occurs in the paper versions of the magazines, becomes most apparent in the internet. Messages, filled up with emotion overgrow in unscrupulous comments of numerous internet users, what not only makes them alike, but even borrows the character of a tabloid. Brutalization of discussion causes real effects since - due to the existing and accepted situation - the number of real users of particular magazines grows. It is worth noticing, that the growing interest rate of these portals depends also on another factors, including positioning and scale of access to the content. Therefore, the portals of “Newsweek”,

⁴⁶ G. Rzeczkowski, *Republika kolegów*, „Polityka” 2013 nr 2.

⁴⁷ *Plemienna wojna mediów. Sebastian Kucharski rozmawia z Jerzym Baczyńskim, redaktorem naczelnym tygodnika „Polityka”*, „Gazeta Wyborcza”, 27.05.2013.

⁴⁸ M. Magierowski, *Baczyński zionie ogniem miłości*, „Do Rzeczy” 2013, nr 13.

⁴⁹ „Gazeta Wyborcza” numery z: 31.03.2014, 1.04.2014 i 2.04.2014.

“Polityka” and “Wprost” thrived the most and the conservative or right-wing magazines were represented only by the “Gazeta Polska”⁵⁰.

Another unsettling phenomenon concerning the opinion-targeted press is the volume of successively increasing personification of messages. Even cursory analyses show that newspaper offices are more likely to choose social topics, perceived by the prism of individual (i.e. selected) stories, which - in hope to gain more readership - appeal to images of the carefully selected celebrities.

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Such gradual metamorphosis of opinion-targeted magazines is caused by ideological or political, but often economical grounds. The sale of opinion-targeted press diminishes successively, although this phenomenon is disproportionately smaller than in case of daily press.

Table 1. Sale of opinion-targeted press in the years 2011-2015

Year	Polityka	Wprost	Newsweek	Gazeta Polska	Uważam Rze	W Sieci	Do Rzeczy	Total
2011	134	96	104	71	132	-	-	537
2012	126	74	119	66	126			511
2013	127	61	126	56	18	94	86	568
2014	121	58	118	43	-	77	60	477
2015*	119	51	114	36	-	74	52	446

* First quarter 2015

Source.: Data provided by the Union of Press Distribution Control.

Erosion in the usage and sales of opinion-targeted magazines is a permanent phenomenon, which was only temporarily suppressed in 2013, when the market was incited with two new titles and readers, encouraged by the low price, probably were willing to buy both of them⁵¹. When the profiles of both magazines were uncovered and their prices increased, the sales volume of "w Sieci" and "Uważam Rze" fell and was comparable to the one achieved by "Uważam Rze" in the years 2011 - 2012. It is probably only a matter of time before further gradual decline in sales of the whole group of magazines, regardless of the views that will be articulated on their pages.

⁵⁰ In January 2013 r. wprost.pl counted almost 0,9 mln active users newsweek.pl - 0,73 mln, polityka.pl - 0,37 mln. In January 2015 r.: newsweek.pl. reported having 2,7 mln, active users, polityka.pl - 0,6 mln, wprost.pl - 0,5 mln, and gazetapolska.pl – only 0,12 mln;.Cf. <http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/tygodniki-zyskaly-w-sieci-wprost-wyprzedzil-newsweeka> and <http://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/serwisy-tygodnikow-opinii-newsweek-srubuje-rekord-polityka-wyprzedzila-wprost> (5.04.2015).

⁵¹ More on this topic: M. Kowalczyk, „*Tłok na łowisku*”, „Press”, 2013.

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On contemporary conservative opinion weeklies

Summary

The subject of the article are conservative opinion weeklies published in Poland after 1989. In the 1990s and in the first decade of 21st century these magazines, although available on the market, were not enjoying much popularity. Situation changed after the 2010 government plane crash in Smoleńsk, when popularity of “Gazeta Polska” increased sharply and “UważamRze” achieved huge publishing success. Changes in ownership contributed to the fall of “UważamRze” which was replaced by “W Sieci” and “Do Rzeczy”.

Currently conservative opinion weeklies are a permanent element of Polish media market. Their prosperity is due to explicitness and expressiveness of content, presence in the Internet but also to use of methods and journalistic forms applicable to tabloids.

Key words: opinion weeklies after 1989, right-wing, conservatism, discussion