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Stan Tymiński – the Unrecognized Charismatic Leader

Abstract

The spectacular result of Stanisław Tymiński in the 1990 Polish presidential election not only shocked a substantial segment of public opinion but also confounded numerous commentators of Polish political life, who started to seek the causes of the enigmatic candidate's success. The explanations given by both publicists and social scientists were dominated by the opinion that Tymiński's success resulted from the demagogical nature of his political program, and the immaturity of Polish society, which at that time had not yet adapted to democracy after 45 years of real socialism. In contrast to those explanations, the present paper attempts to demonstrate that Stan Tymiński possessed numerous traits of a charismatic leader (or, at least, he consequently created his image in that direction), which in turn, allows us to understand the results of 1990 Polish presidential election better.

Keywords: *Stan Tymiński, charisma, presidential elections*

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Introduction

The thirty-year period that has elapsed since the presidential election in 1990 allows us to look again at this event without prejudices and emotions permeating current political life. The temporal distance from a given situation or phenomenon, as Hans-Georg Gadamer convinces, very often helps to evaluate and understand it better (2007, *passim*). Based on that conviction, in this text, I will attempt to re-examine the figure of Stan Tymiński – one of the most mysterious individuals that appeared on the Polish political scene after 1989. The star of Tymiński flashed on the firmament of national politics in an imposing way, after which it extinguished exceptionally quickly. However, the votes of almost 4 million Poles (support of 23%) received by a mysterious businessman from Canada induce a political scientist to take a closer look at the phenomenon of Tymiński. Both journalists and representatives of social sciences have repeatedly asked those two obvious questions: How is it possible that a previously unknown “out of nowhere” man, who had no political background, could gather such an impressive electorate in such a short time? Further, how did it happen that he defeated, among others, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Prime Minister of the first non-communist government, in the first universal suffrage after 1989?¹

Publicists and analysts of the Polish political scene have already given them various answers². There were mostly three types of explanations. The first answer states that the media unconsciously popularised Tymiński by their persistent interest in this exotic candidate and involuntarily contributed to his success. The second explanation put attention to several techniques and marketing tricks which Tymiński applied in his campaign, and which, thanks to the fact that they were previously unknown in Poland, proved to be extremely useful. Finally, Tymiński’s impressive result was a manifestation

¹ It is worth reminding that when Tymiński’s candidacy was registered, the polls indicated support for him at 1%. Just a month later, a moment before the first round of election, this candidate had the support of 20% (eventually obtaining 23.10% of votes cast). As Antoni Dudek notes, it was an unprecedented situation not only in the history of Polish elections but also rarely found in the history of other democratic countries (2013, p. 127).

² As a side note, the analyzes and comments on the election result of Stan Tymiński, also those written by representatives of social sciences, were far from Weber’s postulates suggesting the detachment of emotions and value judgments from the studied subject. As Mirosława Grabowska put it, “These comments were malicious, hysterical, insulting, non-political and even anti-sociological. [...] There are two main patterns according to which the results of the first round of elections were interpreted. The first, that here in the elections came to the fore worse (part of) Poland. The second – that threatening Poland spoke up” (1991, p. 100).

of the immaturity of the Polish society, which had not yet managed to build a full-fledged democratic political culture and turned out to be extremely susceptible to populist slogans proclaimed by this candidate³.

There is probably a grain of truth in all these explanations. However, none of them seems to be entirely satisfactory. For example, if the hypothesis that the media strengthened Tymiński's position is to be accepted, one should wonder how it happened? Why did he, and not any other candidate, become an object of a lively interest of the media? Is the knowledge of marketing techniques sufficient to generate the support that Tymiński got? Finally, it has been known since Plato that susceptibility to populism and demagoguery is an inherent feature of democracy as such. Therefore, it would be difficult to prove the thesis that contemporary Polish society is radically different in this respect from that of 1990, especially concerning the promises of "three million apartments" and "economic miracle" made by the winning parties in parliamentary elections during last 25 years.

This article attempts to explain the success of Tymiński by referring to another type of argument. I will try to demonstrate that this success can only be explained by a combination of the authentic charisma held by this candidate with a specific historical context accompanying the 1990 presidential elections. In other words, contrary to the prevailing opinion, I argue that the phenomenon of a Canadian businessman cannot be fully explained only by reference to the high susceptibility of Polish society to populism. This candidate was equipped with authentic features of the charismatic leader, which, to a great extent, translated into a phenomenal election result. It is difficult to notice the latter fact, especially because the perception of the first democratic election after 1989 is, as Mirosława Grabowska put, determined by "interpretive structures, which were fixed, even toughened in high emotional temperatures" (1991, s. 100).

³ That last type of explanation dominated especially in the immediate surroundings and among sympathizers of Tadeusz Mazowiecki. For example, Jan Kofman, a member of the Electoral Committee of Mazowiecki, in his commentary to the first round of elections published in the quarterly newspaper "Krytyka", clearly formulated the thesis that Polish society probably was not ready for democracy yet (1991, p. 7). In an interview with the Marshal of the Sejm, being disappointed with the outcome of the first round of elections Mazowiecki concluded: "People here (in Poland) are incredibly uneducated" (Kozakiewicz 1991, s. 150). Among the epithets that were given during the campaign of a Canadian businessman, definitively dominating terms (such as: "sorcerer", "Dismas", "imposter", "deceiver", "cheater", "shaman", "charlatan") intended to suggest the populist (or demagogic) quality of his political program (see Raciborski, Bartkowski 1991, p. 157).

The unequivocal classification of a person as a charismatic individual may be a controversial and complicated task. After all, it is difficult to imagine the use of an entirely objective measuring apparatus for this purpose and similar to the tools employed by natural sciences. This fact is connected, of course, with the problematic and ambiguous concept of charisma. It seems that the factor that determines whether a person can be considered a charismatic individual depends on their perception by the environment (Weber 2002, pp. 181, 818).

However, self-determination and a creation of one's public image are also relevant factors here. Thus, for example, Mirosław Karwat claims that the ability to create a public image, self-promotion and suggestive confidence or a sense of mission are as essential attributes of a charismatic leader as the external acceptance of a person (2001, p. 146-152). A large part of these considerations will, therefore, be filled with the opinions, views and statements of the protagonist of this analysis, as well as of his colleagues and friends. The ultimate purpose of this paper will be the attempt to answer the question of whether Tymiński was, in fact, a charismatic candidate, or just tried to create one, but without much social response.

The methodology adopted to conduct this research includes a primarily critical analysis of source texts. In particular, texts that were written by the subject of these considerations (or in cooperation) and were published during the 1990 election campaign.

Notably, they made it possible to analyze and describe the strategy of the charismatic creation of public image adopted by the candidate for the office of the President of the Republic of Poland. Statements of Tymiński's close associates and people (especially voters) who had the opportunity to meet him during the campaign constitute another group of source materials. The analysis of these sources allowed to present the public perception of the candidate, as well as to verify the effectiveness of his public image creation. Both groups of source texts should be analyzed critically and with a high degree of caution, especially since some of them have the form of Tymiński's almost open glorification. Political and sociological studies devoted to the 1990 presidential election proved to be a beneficial supplement. The theoretical layer is based on the classical concept of charismatic authority, introduced by Max Weber. However, the modern context of the consideration also required a reference to slightly more recent studies on this concept.

Charismatic creation of public image

Elements of Tymiński's charismatic image creation were visible from the moment when he introduced the motives for participating in the presidential election. Roman Samsel, the businessman co-worker (who significantly contributed to the book *Święte psy*), in an interview with Malgorzata Waloch argued that Tymiński had decided to stand as a candidate after three days of contemplation and it was due to his inner need (Samsel, Waloch 1991, p. 31). In an interview conducted by Adam Jerzy Socha, Tymiński claimed that if it had not been for the objective need arising from the catastrophic economic situation in Poland, he would not have appeared on the political scene at all. "I value my independent life [...]. I didn't need it" – said the presidential candidate (Socha 1991, p. 121).

Even more suggestive are Samsel's remarks in the afterword to *Święte psy*, conveying a Tymiński's profile: "I suppose he would be able to sacrifice his career as a Canadian businessman for activities in Poland. He would leave his career, business, extensive social contacts and political arrangements to have an impact on the Polish political scene" (Tymiński 1990, s. 257).

These are words written before the 1990 election. Both quoted fragments contain a similar message. Tymiński does not want to run for president, but Poland needs him (how similar it is to Wałęsa's "I don't want to, but I have to"/"Nie chcę, ale muszę"), so he does not run for his pleasure or to satisfy his ambitions. He is selfless (intends to allocate his presidential salary to charity) and runs in the election with a sense of responsibility for the country (Winiarska-Maziuk 1991, p. 158). He does so because the (historical) situation requires it⁴. His participation in the election is, therefore, a mission, a task commissioned by some higher forces. The sense of purpose is one of the most important attributes of a charismatic leader (Schweitzer 1974, p. 152–153). "A charismatic leader is a man with a certain mission, which is noticed and accepted by

⁴ Tymiński justified that his candidacy and other public undertakings are an obligation. In the first chapter of his book, he declares: "Writing this book has become a must. I was not allowed to withdraw" (Tymiński 1990, p. 7). So this undertaking is not the result of a whim, but of a higher necessity. It is worth noting that the conviction about the exceptional importance of the political leader (and more broadly – the "human factor", as opposed to soulless institutions and procedures) for the prosperity of the country has survived in Tymiński to this day, as evidenced by the thoughts contained in his latest book published in 2013 (see Tymiński 2013, pp. 11, 161, 222–223).

the community concerned, seen either as a manifestation of their insight and inquisitiveness or as a result of epiphany and anointing” (Karwat 2001, p. 148).

Tymiński candidates with a sense of duty, a conviction about his mission, not because of his whims. Moreover, the decision to run in the election costs him a lot. He renounces his privacy, professional career and social life. The statement “To save our homeland, he shall return across the sea” was the title of one of his paid political advertisements (Raciborski, Bartkowski 1991, p. 138). His move is, in fact, a tremendous sacrifice for the sake of his beloved country. According to the author of one of the analyzes of Tymiński’s election strategy, he aimed to create an image in which his involvement in politics would be comparable to charity (Cichosz 2003, p. 113).

In an interview with Socha, the candidate claimed that employees of Lech Wałęsa’s campaign headquarters suggested him not to participate in the election. That was before his decision to run (Socha 1991, p. 107). This statement implies that even before the election, potential opponents could be afraid of Tymiński’s possible candidacy. Already at that time, they may perceive him as a “dark horse”. Nevertheless, Wałęsa, indisputably a charismatic candidate, would not be easily intimidated. If he feared of Tymiński, it would indicate the uniqueness of the latter, his extraordinary qualities, which rivals would unmistakably interpret as a charismatic anointing.

Furthermore, after losing the presidential election, the Canadian businessman consistently maintained this element of his public image creation. In the conversation, he confidently declared:

“Following the campaign, while the economy continuously goes down, I cannot leave. I have strong a commitment towards my electorate, which I am devoted to and which depends on me that I will do something [...]. I hear warnings from all over the country that if I do not start a political party, people will start it without me” (Socha 1991, p. 121).

Therefore, the businessman cannot withdraw from politics (even if he wanted it) because people need him. He is called to the social service (again, the theme of “anointment” appears here). He does not try to forcefully “interlope” to the Presidential Palace; those are people who carry him there.

On this point, another element of Tymiński’s charismatic image creation is worth mentioning. On Socha’s allegation of poor orientation in Polish political geography, he replied: “Well, you know, this political knowledge is worth nothing in Poland, **especially when a politician wants to create a future**” [emphasis added M.G.] (Socha 1991, p.

108). Hence, every shortcoming – even occurring – is a meaningless detail for this candidate. It is compensated by the plan, the vision of the future. This fact is another distinguishing feature of the greatness, uniqueness and charisma of a politician. Karwat notes that by the sense of a mission the charismatic leader “adds a certain vision of the future, which does not need to be expressive [...], but it is attractive and mobilizing” (2001, p. 148).

However, the authority and obedience typical of a charismatic leader cannot arise under all conditions. This is possible only in communities of a specific nature and in particular historical circumstances. Especially when a community is in a phase of transformation, reconsolidation and major reconstruction, and when standards and institutions are beginning to fail in the thus far rationalized community (Karwat 2001, p. 129; Weber 2002, p. 815).

The above characteristics seem to describe the Polish society of that period correctly. The turn of 1989 and faster than anyone could have predicted the collapse of communism resulted in a lack of confidence and legitimate fears about what tomorrow would bring. All political and economic habits practiced for more than four decades turned out to be utterly inadequate to the reality changed after 1989. The future seemed to be a great unknown. This situation certainly aroused the need for a charismatic leader, a leader who would lead safely throughout the storms and floods.

Tymiński fueled this state of uncertainty and the atmosphere of danger very skillfully. For example, in *Święte psy*, he wrote: “The purpose of my book is to wake Poles from lethargy and deprive them of fantasies because apparently, they do not realize that Poland is already the object of serious aggression” (Tymiński 1990, p. 11). What kind of aggression does the author mean? “The aim is to impose economic dependency. Therefore, I have the right and also the duty to draw the attention of my compatriots to the danger that threatens us, namely the desire of modern international forces to create from Poland the enclave of white Negroes of Europe” (*Ibidem*, p. 11; see also Winiarska-Maziuk 1991, p. 159).

Similar phrases appear in *The Official Speech to Voters* issued during the campaign:

“[...] I believe that Poland is in a state of crisis that threatens our economic sovereignty. For a long time, our country has not been in such a dangerous situation as it is today. The inept, weak government cannot unleash the forces and energy necessary to lift Poland from the fall. We are approaching a critical moment, and we are threatened with such a high

dependence on the national economy that it will soon be impossible to gain full independence” (Tymiński 1991, p. 362).

The situation outlined by Tymiński in the cited fragments seems to be dramatic. One could even get the impression that the final fall of Poland is inevitable. “An economic war is underway, the country is threatened from the outside and the inside” said the candidate (cited after Raciborski, Bartkowski 1991, p. 139)⁵. This pessimistic image, which purpose was also to frighten the voters (who were already confused by the pace of political and economic developments), served, of course, to create a specific psychological effect and context in which the candidate could present himself as a savior.

Agata Winiarska-Maziuk, analyzing the television campaign led by Tymiński, stressed that the candidate created himself as a man of the hour. In the broadcasted TV spots prepared by his campaign staff, people declare that they place “all hope” in Tymiński. There are repeated phrases such as: “Tymiński inspired us”. In one of the aired images, the young man gives Tymiński his son, symbolically handing his future into the hands of the candidate” (Winiarska-Maziuk 1991, p. 158). In the second point of his political program, the candidate stated that “today the President’s chief duty is to strengthen the Spirit of the Nation” (cited after Dudek 2013, p. 128).

Tymiński thus created himself as a candidate endowed with a mission, touched by the “finger of God”. He introduces himself as a providential man who calls for great deeds: “We must defend Poland from falling at all costs. The last moment is coming; the hour of truth is approaching” (Tymiński 1990, p. 7). Moreover, it is in this crisis that Tymiński is to be the only one who knows the right way of fighting to ensure victory:

“This book is a call to fight, in which we must not relent until our last breath! We must not give up, and we must know what kind of weapon we will use to keep Poland on the world map. **I pass this weapon to your hand!**” [emphasis added M.G.] (*Ibidem*, p. 8).

The words mentioned above indicate a vital feature of the charismatic leader – knowledge possessed only by him; knowledge of solutions that guarantee success in situations where others cannot find the right recipe. In the case of Tymiński, it is not only about pompous formulas about war and the need to fight to save the homeland. It

⁵ The war rhetoric permeated Tymiński’s entire political program presented in the *Święte psy*. Here is another quote illustrating the above statement: “The plan of a war campaign, which will mobilize Poles to an export invasion of the West is the only thing that can save the independence of the country” (Tymiński 1990, p. 12). The campaign plan was presented in the following expression: “The weakest points of the Western markets must be attacked in an offensive and guerrilla manner” (*Ibidem*, p. 15).

is also holding of expert, professional, and yet somewhat secret knowledge. In this particular situation, it is mainly about economic knowledge. The book *Święte psy* is to convince the reader that the author is a person who has explored all the secrets of the intricate art of economics. Tymiński writes about economic issues with great lightness. While reading it, one gets the impression that the recipe for the economic development of the country is straightforward (Tymiński 1990, pp. 124-126).

Nevertheless, is this the revealed truth? Is economics a field accessible to all? Is it not that a sense of simplicity and clarity of intricate economic issues is characteristic only of this particular man?

Comparing the texts written by Tymiński with the texts of other candidates, it is easy to see that this is the case. No other presidential candidate in 1990 presented economic problems with such simplicity. Competitors mostly focused on describing these issues and elaborate mechanisms for emerging from the crisis. The recipe for improving the situation was easy only for Tymiński. This fact was supposed to suggest that he was the only candidate who was genuinely competent in economic matters or even more than competent.

After all, everyone will admit that economics is an intricate and complex field. Since Tymiński moves around this subject with such lightness (inaccessible to the average citizen, but also other politicians), it may indicate his exceptional competences, or – using Karwat’s terminology – super-competences, which are one of the components of the charismatic model of leadership. “The charismatic person surpasses others, who are good or even perfect in the same field” (Karwat 2001, p. 147). Unique competences, inaccessible to others, make the leader charismatic. On the other hand, voters, who do not have sufficient knowledge in a given field, will sooner believe in the extraordinary skills of a candidate (who tells them what they want to hear) than think that their solutions are too simple to be true.

Winiarska-Maziuk assessed Tymiński’s economic program as follows: “The lack of political program details is replaced by instilling in the recipient the belief that the author of the economic plan has knowledge of the secret mechanisms that govern business. This function is served by keywords that magically describe the economics of capitalism: capital, turnover, action, controlling stake” (1991, p. 158).

One more opinion on the same issue was as follows: “The certainty of recipes proposed by the candidate drew attention. This revealed wishful thinking and caused

the impression that success can be achieved very easily. Tyimiński might have been seen as the only candidate to speak clearly and coherently about economic issues” (Bralczyk, Mrozowski 1993, p. 159; see also Raciborski, Bartkowski 1991, p. 140).

Zbigniew Kielmiński wrote in this context: “If it is true what experts say that arranging a political program is the art to give a semblance of reality to meaningless clichés, then Tyimiński’s campaign staff has risen to the heights here. An absolutely »right« political program was constructed because by the assumption, it is apolitical and excludes any substantive criticism. The opposition might only declare that they do not understand the meaning of the political program, while supporters give it the meaning according to their needs. Consequently, the support given to the candidate is a confession of faith, and he becomes a true messiah for his adherents” (1993, p. 130).

It is worth emphasizing that the final part of the quoted statement seems to confirm my thesis about Tyimiński’s use of his (alleged or actual) extraordinary economic knowledge to build the image of a charismatic leader. When analyzing the frequent connections associated with the concept of charisma, Karwat draws attention to the belief that the charismatic leader possesses extraordinary, i.e., above the norm or even miraculous abilities. At the same time, he notes that: “The perpetrators of the [...] economic or war »miracle« can be perceived as if they prayed for that, pulled a rabbit out of their hat, or won the lottery. However, they never cease to be competent economists, strategists, priests, etc. They remain endowed with knowledge and intuition, both substantive and pragmatic efficiency in situations where others get nervous, and also with the ability to give the impression that they are irreplaceable” (2001, p. 130-131).

Tyimiński’s unique competencies, which were supposed to enable him to do seemingly impossible and unattainable for other politicians things, were also revealed in other ways. For example, Samsel wrote about his colleague that he is a man who ‘defeated the West’. He was able to win a prestigious position there. Stan talked like an equal with the influential American or Japanese entrepreneurs (see Tyimiński 1990, p. 267). He literally conquered the West – with all its mystery, wealth, free market, exoticism, etc. He certainly managed to cope with these difficult conditions. One can say that he “tamed the beast”. It is worth remembering that in 1990 the idea of the majority of Poles about the “West”, the free market, etc. significantly differed from today’s view, which, undoubtedly, then was filled with much higher respect, admiration,

and to some extent, fear. Someone who could succeed in this slightly unreal (and sometimes also hostile) world unquestionably had to be unique⁶.

Tymiński's special competencies were manifested (at least in the sphere of marketing procedures) in his every step. In the interview with Socha, he mentions that he was the only candidate for president who accepted the invitation to the October Revolution banquet at the embassy of the USSR. "I was the only candidate who came at the invitation. I saved the face of Poland. Thanks to the fact that I went there, I got a contract for the sale of potatoes from the region of Tymianek" (Socha 1991, p. 106).

Two crucial suggestions occur in this statement. First, Tymiński can do a favorable business in every situation. Meaningless banquet brings such positive outcomes. Could an ordinary (meaning: without special skills) mortal accomplish this? Second, it strikes that the perspicacious candidate was the only one among the Polish political class to appear at the banquet. In a situation where everyone else has disregarded this event, he takes part in it and signs a commercial contract immediately. What kind of insight, what the (sixth?) sense made him come to the banquet⁷.

It may be observed that Tymiński could give extraordinary significance to any, even the most prosaic situations concerning his person⁸. Nevertheless, this seems to be a deliberate attempt to convince voters of his unique, charismatic personality. Karwat emphasizes that the charismatic person differs from others in terms of "surpassing rivals in a formally unrestricted but conclusive social competition, which is based on who is first to see, understand and solve the task that is important for the community" (2001, p. 147).

⁶ It is worth remembering that according to Tymiński himself – he made the first million dollars at the age of 31, that is, four years after arriving in Canada, starting almost from scratch. People who knew the Canadian businessman consistently give an account that he is incredibly diligent and determined (see Kasprzyk, Komorowski, Osuchowski, Szulc 1991, pp. 31, 123-124, 126). See also: Błasiak 2014, p. 15.

⁷ In his book, which is the result of several days and many hours of conversations with Tymiński, Wojciech Błasiak suggests that the protagonist of these considerations was to a large extent inspired by the leadership model observed among the Indians in the Peruvian Amazon, and how they have been preparing selected boys for the role of leader. One of the critical skills of such a leader is the ability to "almost telepathically sense the dangers threatening the tribe. These special abilities are the sixth sense. [...] Stan Tymiński sought contact with the Indians who were uncontaminated by the Western civilization to help him develop his senses" (Błasiak 2014, pp. 64, 68; Tymiński 1990, p. 246-247). It is worth noting that Błasiak's book is highly laudatory in relation to Tymiński, and therefore the findings of its author should be treated with some caution and scientific distance.

⁸ Probably the juxtaposition of the fact that Tymiński had an interview in Polish television (in the summer 1990) and the following day the Marshal of the Sejm ordered the presidential election is the best example of that strategy. During the political campaign, Tymiński repeatedly recalled these two events, suggesting that they are connected in some mystical (and certainly symbolic) way – see Kasprzyk *et al.* 1991, p. 145.

In the event described above, reality seems to favor Tymiński as he can find benefits for his country in every situation, although others do not see these possibilities. The element of creating himself as a providential man appears again – Tymiński, thanks to his insight and intuition, saved the honor and face of Poland. This situation does not happen to everyone.

How Tymiński is perceived

The previous part of the text focused mainly on the efforts of Tymiński himself aimed at creating and consolidating his image as a charismatic figure. This chapter is devoted to examining the effectiveness of these treatments. A number of facts seem to suggest that the candidate has mostly achieved his goal.

Thus, for example, Zygmunt Kuz (who at some point was candidate's Campaign manager) recalls:

“We picked up about 30 tons of political campaign brochures from the printing house [...]. In order to distribute such amount of materials around the country, we needed three days and 60 to 100 cars [...] In the evening [Tymiński's – M.G.] appeal for help went on TV [...]. The message met great interest among Polish society, so people, regardless of the cost, came from all over Poland, especially to offer help. After two days, there were not enough materials (Socha 1991, p. 98-99).

Grażyna Sińchuch, who worked in Tymiński's campaign headquarters said as follows about the same event:

“After Stanisław's television appeal for help, people were waiting at the campaign headquarters from six o'clock in the morning. A guy from Plock distributed flyers at his own cost. Poor people and pensioners came. They hung up posters on trains and buses. It was touching [...]. Some people slept next to the campaign headquarters” (Socha 1991, p. 71).

The above reports still impress the analysts of Polish presidential campaigns. No other candidate could count on such spontaneous and selfless help from his supporters. This fact, to a large extent, offset the evident weakness of the Canadian businessman. Those were the lack of political facilities, party structures and organizations that could take over the burden of political electioneering in favor of the candidate.

As Tymiński's other associate mentioned, there was no petitioning supporting his candidacy. People volunteered spontaneously and asked for forms, or they brought

already filled lists with signatures. Since Tymiński's TV message, his staff no longer had to organize campaign speech and meetings on their own. He was invited to various towns across the country. Over time, the halls were more and more tightly filled during the meetings, and the auditorium gradually more enthusiastically welcomed his presence (see Bazyłko, Fałara, Wysocki 1991, p. 62-63).

Malgorzata Dobrowolska (spokesperson for the candidate in the second round of election) recalls: "Tymiński's visit to Wrocław and Lublin was the climax. The meetings were accompanied by an atmosphere of euphoria" (Socha 1991, p. 74). Euphoria accompanying the meeting with the presidential candidate is not something that happens in the realities of the Polish political scene too often. The performance of a rock star or any other celebrity is euphoric, but not politics. Nevertheless, it happened to Tymiński. This phenomenon is difficult to explain without reference to the category of charisma.

The charismatic personality of the candidate can also be indirectly evidenced by the nature of relations established with his colleagues. Dobrowolska claims that there were tendencies of courtly manners in the surroundings of the candidate that were to appear spontaneously. It should be emphasized that the candidate did not inspire them himself (Socha 1991, p. 74). Therefore, it can undoubtedly be stated that Tymiński aroused strong emotions, usually accompanied by extraordinary respect, in people with whom he encountered.

Analysts of the 1990 campaign indicate that the climate of Tymiński's meetings with voters, the excerpts of which were presented in his TV spots, was usually heavily emotionally charged. It contained screaming, crying, gesticulating, and this excitement grew as the campaign progressed (Cichosz 2003, pp. 115-117; Winiarska-Maziuk 1991, p. 157). One can even assume that it was a kind of collective excitement that has overwhelmed the supporters of this candidate. However, it is difficult to imagine that such strong feelings could be awakened by someone devoid of charisma. The very interaction with Tymiński brought people into a state of agitation (and sometimes euphoria).

Marek Sotnik, the bodyguard of the author of *Święte psy*, recalls the experience with his employer as follows: "At first I supported Mazowiecki, but during the campaign, I

was **captivated** [emphasis added M.G.] by Tymiński. Tymiński is a direct guy. He does not beat around the bush” (Socha 1991, p. 72)⁹.

Regardless of how Tymiński’s professionalism and competence, as well as his predispositions to perform public functions, will be assessed, one thing should be granted – it was impossible to pass by him indifferently. He has always aroused strong emotions.

It is worth studying other personality traits of the “only truly independent” (as he presented himself) presidential candidate in 1990 – which may testify to the charismatic type of leadership model presented by him. Most people cooperating with Tymiński admit that he is a man with a strong personality (see Socha 1991, p. 42, 74). The descriptions of his character include such terms as vibrant, fierce, ambitious and stubborn. A former member of Tymiński’s scout team portrays him as an ambitious and very firm scout. He concludes it in one word: “The brawler” (*Ibidem*, p. 31).

At the same time, the colleagues of the Canadian businessman emphasized his independence and a somewhat authoritarian leadership style. Artur Trusiński (a member of the candidate’s campaign staff) said about him that he has “a very strong personality, but allows different opinions [...]. He wouldn’t need a Political Council as Wałęsa did. He’s terribly radical. He has a clear view of economic, social and national affairs and the Church” (*Ibidem*, p. 69). He also emphasized the candidate’s excellent memory and the art of concentration mastered to perfection. Samsel wholeheartedly agreed with the thesis about the tremendous independence of Tymiński, suggesting at the same time very high self-esteem of the candidate.

He is guided by the principle that he basically works alone and only alone. He will not listen to anyone and be told what to do. According to the belief that only an outstanding individual is able to break the passivity of the masses. He thinks that there is no evolution at all because the masses are incapable of evolving. Furthermore, those who want to accelerate their own development are outstanding (Samsel, Waloch 1991, p. 30-31)¹⁰.

Kuz also mentioned the enormous independence of his superior and the reluctance to consult with his colleagues:

⁹ Similarly, the fundamental change of political views made under the influence of Tymiński can be observed on an example of Roman Samsel who also underwent a specific purification through symbolic crucifixion (see Samsel 2002, p. 52 ff.).

¹⁰ On Tymiński’s tendency to self-decision-making, somewhat overbearing management of the team, but also persuasive abilities see Kasprzyk 1991, p. 115-116.

“Tymiński wanted to be the sole constructor of his own campaign. He blocked the thought of creating collective success [...]. He was guided by intuition all too often. He used to say: *Bring me the sick or the dying, and I will heal them.* He spent quite a long time among the Peruvian Indians and probably learned this intuition while living in the jungle” (Socha 1991, p. 98-100).

Kuz seems to point out that his former chief had followed his intuition too often. However, for the sake of this paper, the interesting fact about this relationship is (apart from the legitimacy of these allegations) that Tymiński represented the intuitive leadership style. That means a way of exercising power and making decisions characteristic of charismatic leaders. His intuition is an extraordinary skill that allows him to avoid pitfalls and always choose beneficial solutions. This intuition is somehow connected with the revealed knowledge, and at the same time, it flows out of extraordinary personality traits. A charismatic leader is a kind of prophet. Moreover, as is well known, the discussion with the prophet is not possible, but his instructions are followed without reflection, as he reveals the will of God himself. One should just give his words the benefit of the doubt¹¹. Any attempt to discuss would be doomed to failure because the charismatic leader surpasses any adversaries by his knowledge and rhetorical skills.

Krzysztof Tymiński (son of Stan's aunt; he was in the candidate property during the work on *Święte py*) recalls that all Samsel's attempts of substantive discussion with Tymiński failed. Stan may have overwhelmed the adversary with a list of arguments; he had plenty of examples to support his thesis; he was able to hastily construct the most convincing reasons proving that he was right (Socha 1991, p. 25).

Between leadership and mysticism

Finally, it is worth paying some attention to perhaps the most interesting issue, i.e., the mystical aura and atmosphere of mystery surrounding Tymiński's persona. According to Karwat, this is another feature that distinguishes the charismatic style of leadership (2001, pp. 150-151). However, it does not merely concern as prosaically understood mystery as the fact of his appearing from nowhere and taking part in elections.

Jerzy Bralczyk and Maciej Mrozowski pointed to the peculiar aura of mystery that accompanied the media messages of the candidate:

¹¹ About prophetic leadership style see Filipowicz 1995.

“The set of rhetorical means and elements of non-verbal communication used by Tymiński should be considered quite modest. His statements are characterized by restraint, both in terms of voice modulation, as in mimics and gesticulation. This restraint, combined with an enigmatic smile, significant pauses and understatement, created an aura of metaphysical mystery around him. Although it contrasted with the candidate’s viewpoint as »ordinary citizen«, it also allowed ordinary people to put metaphysical hopes in the candidate. The lack of a good command of the Polish language strengthened the image of a successful foreign man. It caused the frequent effect of repeating even not very successful and understandable formulas. This, in turn, could have favored the metaphysical characterization of the candidate in general” (1993, p. 160).

Tymiński appeared, therefore, as a quasi-unreal figure, eluding the common patterns and thought categories used by people concerning politics (political class in particular). The studies conducted (using the method of focussed interview) by his supporters indicated the “fairy-tale character” of this personality (Raciborski, Bartkowski 1991, p. 141).

However, Tymiński’s mystery had other sources. It derived from his peculiar life philosophy. For example, in *Święte psy*,¹² he writes about four dimensions of man. The first three dimensions are vital, emotional and intellectual. There is also a fourth dimension - spiritual. The author emphasizes, however, that unlike the previous three aspects, one cannot be born a man of the fourth dimension. “In order to climb to the fourth level of humanity, it is necessary to change consciousness, which can be achieved only in the process of self-education initiated by self-observation” (Tymiński, 1990, p. 241) The fourth dimension also corresponds to the fourth body called the “body of the spirit”. This spiritual body enables man to rise above himself through direct contact with nature (*Ibidem*, p. 242). These considerations end with the statement, “You can become a CHAMPION – which means, above all, self-control and a fourth dimension” (*Ibidem*, p. 243).

Did Tymiński consider himself as a “champion”? According to Samsel, he did. When Waloch asked Samson how the fourth dimension was manifested in Stan, he answered: “Even in his conviction that he can have businesses and investments far from where he lives and can manage them” (Samsel, Waloch 1991, p. 28). How did he do this

¹² Andrzej Kumor, a journalist from the Polish “Gazeta”, living in Canada, spoke about Tymiński’s political book as follows: “A great passion struck me, even mysticism, inserted in every word” (cited after Kasprzyk *et al.* 1991, p. 118).

work? “By willpower, by the strength of possibilities, something like managing from a distance the people he knows and trusts” (*Ibidem*, p. 28)¹³.

Samsel also adds that Tymiński has developed this skill through the constant exercise of will and contemplation. What emerges from the above accounts creates the image of the candidate as a man from a higher dimension, a man endowed with unusual, metaphysical abilities such as telepathic management of people and the possibility to shape reality by willpower. Is it possible to find a more eloquent proof of a charismatic personality?

Nevertheless, this is not the end of Tymiński’s extraordinary abilities. In a conversation with Waloch, Samsel describes Stan’s experience of going through an Indian ritual – *ayahuasca* – consisting of “exteriorization”, that is, a process of a thetan leaving its human body. At the same time, he mentions that Tymiński has performed this ritual many times. Moreover, he entered a state that allows him to move freely outside his body, while Samsel had considerable trouble with it. In this condition, Tymiński was not only able to visit places distant from the physical location of his body, but also could travel back in time (supposedly even to the time of the Napoleonic Wars), and see what would happen in the future (*Ibidem*, pp. 33-40).

Samsel also suggests that Tymiński has reached a state in which he no longer needed to take particular Indian medication. He could reach the state of *ayahuasca* by meditation. However, the reflections on the veracity of these descriptions and the actual possibilities opened to humans by taking substances of a psychotropic and hallucinogenic nature are not the subject of this paper. In the light of these considerations, an interesting fact is the alleged or actual preternatural abilities of Stan Tymiński. These are almost magical skills. It also would imply some features of charisma based on tradition, supernatural abilities, and at the same time — on mastering mysterious and incomprehensible rituals for the average mortal.

While discussing Stan’s experiences related to staying in the Peruvian jungle, his concept of political leadership should also be mentioned. That concept was based on the idea of the Indian leader of Jibaro and Aliuasuma. According to the description given in the *Święte psy*, the Indian chief was characterized by a number of extraordinary spiritual, telepathic powers. He was endowed with the ability to predict the dangers threatening the tribe and treat diseases (Tymiński 1990, p. 246-268).

¹³ More about Tymiński’s spirituality and the specific aura surrounding him – see Kasprzyk *at al.* 1991, p. 143-146.

While reading Tymiński's description, one cannot miss noticing his fascination with this undoubtedly supernatural model of leadership. Samsel admits, moreover, that Tymiński studied the Indian type of leadership (Samsel, Waloch 1991, p. 28). The candidate himself characterized the requirements for the future president as follows:

“The leader of Poland cannot be a man unaware of the laws of nature, overemotional, full of unsatisfied desires, greedy for power and mundane [...]. Only a man who acts at a higher level, with a full understanding of the laws of nature, can be a good leader. It must be a man of the fourth dimension” (Tymiński 1990, p. 244).

It is vivid that the description above clearly points to the person who meets these requirements. In another fragment, Tymiński notes: “Some people say that a candidate is a man who has great charisma. It's true” (cited after Socha 1991, p. 105). So Poland needs a charismatic leader. Moreover, the component of charisma (among others) is the already mentioned aura of mystery, with which the Canadian businessman very skilfully surrounded himself. It is visible in the fragment where he describes his death:

“I know when I'm gonna die. I asked the Indians to see my own death. I know I'm not gonna die naturally, and I know until when I'm gonna live. It gives me peace. I know how much I have to do and how much time I have for it” (Socha 1991, p. 117).

Apart from the mystical dimension of knowing the date of his death, Tymiński introduces here a typical element of creating the image of a charismatic leader: enemies are unable to harm him because he has a fundamental advantage over them. In a certain sense, if he knows exactly when he will die – he is close to the state of immortality. It probably means that his early physical elimination is impossible (as incompatible with God's judgments, providence, etc.). It is challenging to have a more eloquent attribute of a charismatic personality (of course, in its self-creative dimension).

At this point, one can ask if the candidate did not alienate voters with such exaggerated examples of his exceptional qualities. Further, the question is whether his experiences were not too unusual for Polish society, and thus involuntarily aroused fear instead of admiration (and if someone prefers: laughter). The answer seems to be negative. Perhaps it was due to the unique combination of Canadian businessman's personality traits such as uniqueness and greatness with being native. After all, Tymiński repeatedly emphasized his Polish roots. He often pointed out that he started from scratch. This fact could arouse the feeling that, despite his extraordinary nature, he was a “compatriot”, although better than “all of us”, but still “ours”.

In addition to the mystical elements of experience related to Indian culture, Tymiński interlaced in his image native, even Sarmatian culture: “It is only now that I understand why I was having trouble at school – because I was driven by something”. It was the genes of the landed nobility. The Tymińscy are of the Nałęcz coat of arms, and his mother, Lewandowska, is of the Dołęga coat of arms” (cited after Socha 1991, p. 130)¹⁴.

The message addressed to voters seems to be clear: not such a terrible Peruvian devil (as unfavorable media portray him), since he has more in common with the Polish nobleman Twardowski (who fooled the devil) than with descendants of the Aztecs.

The analysis of Ireneusz Krzemiński appears to validate the above interpretation that the elements of mystery and familiarity blend in the person of Tymiński:

“Tymiński referred to mysterious and unusual matters: mystical experiences in the Peruvian forest, exotic Indian wife¹⁵, own esoteric religiosity and these elements created a distinctive, hypnotic aura. Tymiński was a man of flesh and blood; in other words, a logically thinking man who managed the laws of market competition. At the same time, however, he was a person full of lofty feelings, strange and attractive experiences. All this he achieved with his own effort, in spite of the hostile world. These elements gave unusual opportunities to identify with the ‘independent candidate’ of an extremely diverse audience. Tymiński’s electoral campaign and his political program (which does not withstand, of course, detailed and systematic criticism) constituted the rationalization of irrational. Although Stan Tymiński’s television programs were full of overexcited women, not only to them, he appealed so effectively. He was supported by young men, dreaming of »male success«, developing their businesses and not inclined to trust sentimental promises. In their view, Tymiński represented a political program that carried hope, made the promise real and, above all, poured self-confidence in people” (Krzemiński 1991, p. 232).

Conclusions

The above statement will be the starting point for a final reflection on whether Tymiński’s consistent creation as the charismatic leader has proved effective or not. The

¹⁴ In another situation, along with his noble descent, Tymiński also emphasized the strong family traditions connected with the Marshal Józef Piłsudski (see Kasprzyk *et al.* 1991, s. 10; Zaborny 2005, s. 53).

¹⁵ Tymiński claimed that there is a significant probability that she comes in a straight line from the family of the Virgin Mary (see Kasprzyk *et al.* 1991, s. 141; Socha 1991, s. 132).

effectiveness of this procedure seems partly revealed in this article. Strong emotions and euphoric atmosphere accompanying the speeches of this – deprived of political support and party structures -candidate and the dedication with which people supported him are difficult to explain otherwise than by genuine charisma.

Also, the sociological analysis of his electorate seems to confirm that Tyimiński has managed to accomplish a remarkable thing – mobilize a large part of those who have not yet participated in the elections. People who supported him were the least frequently participated in the local elections which took place before the presidential election (according to the OBOP poll, 2/5 of the candidate's followers did not go to polling stations at that time). Through this previously unknown candidate, the phenomenon of activating a significant part of the passive and apolitical electorate took place (Zukowski 1993, p. 66)¹⁶.

Can it be achieved only through the Tyimiński's attractive political program or skilfully used marketing? It is hard to ignore the suggestion that the candidate's charismatic personality could have played a role here. It is worth recalling that a charismatic leader can attract and mobilize people to undertakings that require effort, or even break their passivity. Finally, the scale of Tyimiński's support suggests that it seems inadequate to translate his success purely by a populist political program or creation by media. Ultimately, in order to create someone, there must be an object suitable for this.

Concluding the above considerations, it is possible to state that Stanisław Tyimiński has numerous characteristics of a charismatic leader. An issue requiring separate studies

¹⁶ It is worth noting that studies conducted by sociologists put into question the assertion mentioned in the introduction of this article that people voting for Tyimiński showed extremely high susceptibility to populism and, in general, represented this part of society, which "did not grow up" to democracy. According to Ireneusz Krzemiński, "Tyimiński's people are the most difficult to define in short terms. It can be stated, however, that his supporters were slightly more sceptical to the idea of democracy than those who chose the other two candidates. They were, however, more inclined to comply with its practical principles: freedom of speech and the right to use direct democracy. An analysis of the seven features of »undemocratic personality« indicates that the electorate of Wałęsa and Tyimiński differed from each other »symmetrically«. So Stan's electorate had qualities that favoured a conflict-free life in a democratic order. Attributes indicating a sense of control over events, an unwillingness to manipulate the environment and a lack of naive optimism should also be included. [...] Therefore, it should be openly acknowledged that the hypothesis proposed by Tomasz Zukowski and me, based on a preliminary analysis of the data suggesting that Stan Tyimiński's followers are a collective of authoritarian and anti-democratic tendencies, needs to be corrected. Although the followers of S. Tyimiński come from environments generally antagonistic to democracy, comprise a group of people most enlightened and thinking in a surprisingly modern way. This should be the new hypothesis on the electorate of S. Tyimiński" (Krzemiński 1991, p. 143).

would be the problem of precisely classifying this person on the charismatic axis. After all, charisma can be manifested in various ways. As Karwat notes, there are often mystifications of charisma, while genuine charisma is reflected in non-authentic phenomena or quasi-and pseudo-charisma.

To summarise the considerations on the charismatic features of Stan Tymiński's leadership, his own words should be quoted:

“I conducted the election on several levels; I wanted my countrymen to wake up, to believe in themselves, not to stop at what they have because there are people who achieve a minimum degree of prosperity and are satisfied with it. I wanted Poles to start dreaming because they were deprived of their dreams” (Socha 1991, p. 120).

According to the results of the 1990 election, almost four million citizens have become carried away by their dreams. However, as Krzysztof Jasiewicz, who titled one of the subsections of the article on Tymiński's success: *Czy Polacy oszaleli/Have the Poles gone crazy* (Jasiewicz 1993, p. 92), reminds that there is often a hint of madness in dreams. Nonetheless, that is another concern.

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