

POLAND | Right's electoral primacy

BY RAFAL PANKOWSKI FOR THE NEVER AGAIN ASSOCIATION IN WARSAW

POLES ELECTED their new president in May 2015. Among the eleven official candidates contesting the election, having collected 100,000 supporting signatures, several espoused or condoned racist, xenophobic or antisemitic views.

Most extreme was documentary film director Grzegorz Braun who ran as an independent on a strongly antisemitic and openly anti-democratic platform but polled a mere 0.83% of the national vote. Marian Kowalski, a representative of the far-right National Movement (Ruch Narodowy, RN) fared even worse with only 0.53%. A former skinhead, bouncer and fitness trainer, Kowalski won little acclaim for his openly racist outbursts such as "No coloured people in our country!" during the campaign.

Janusz Korwin-Mikke MEP (whose new personal far-right outfit KORWIN works with UKIP in the European Parliament) did a little better. Notorious for his well-documented antisemitic, anti-gay, anti-disabled and anti-women comments, he garnered 3.26 percent.

The real winners of the election were the surprisingly successful rock-singer-turned-politician Pawel Kukiz (20.80% of the vote) and the right-wing Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc, PiS) candidate, Andrzej Duda, who received 34.76% in the first round and eventually narrowly defeated incumbent Bronislaw Komorowski in the second round run-off with 51.55%. Both Kukiz and Duda have right-wing populist and homophobic elements in their political back-story.