

## The Cultural Heritage of Solidarity

The heritage of “Solidarity” has been an issue often discussed and considered in the perspective of the political disputes over the years. It seems, however, that this discussion should be supplemented with in-depth socio-anthropological analysis. After all, not only is “Solidarity” a social movement which has played a major part in Polish politics in recent decades, but also—or maybe first of all—it is a system of values and ideas that are necessary for the formation of modern civil society.

This thought inspired organizers of the conference “The Culture of Freedom—the Culture of Responsibility. Sociological and Anthropological Analysis of the Cultural Heritage of Solidarity” which took place at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Journalism at the University of Gdansk, 23–24 May 2011. The organizers of the conference—Karolina Ciechorska-Kulesza, Radosław Kossakowski and Paweł Łuczeczek—proposed to focus the reflection on the title “culture of freedom,” understood precisely as the primary heritage of “Solidarity,” on the following topics:

- cultural heritage of “Solidarity”—history, collective memory, mythologization,
- issues of social and civic engagement,
- civic competence—civic activity—civic responsibility,
- the third sector and social responsibility,
- the boundaries of freedom in art, science, business, politics and culture,
- the role of culture in strengthening local communities,
- activities of local individuals and organizations for local communities,
- business, science and art as tools to support civil society,
- deliberative democracy, social dialogue, public consultation,
- strategies for filling in a “sociological vacuum,”
- social trust and social responsibility.

The conference was opened by Piotr Gliński’s lecture, titled “The Heritage of the Self-Governing Republic.” The speaker—an opposition activist, arrested during the 1981 Martial Law—recalling the program of the Self-Governing Republic, pointed out the libertarian thought and explicit demands of building a civil society. He emphasized that the Self-Governing Republic was a program of truly revolutionary changes, based on a rebellion against the system and stressing the drama of ordinary people. This speech was an excellent introduction to the whole conference. It reconstructed the characteristic testament of solidarity—an idealistic vision that has become de facto a benchmark for the next conference speeches.

The first session was started by Izabella Bukraba-Rylska's presentation, "What is Left of Solidarity?." The author confronted the title question with the contemporary situation of the Polish countryside. Pointing to a number of omissions made by the authorities in the first years of transition, she argued that the model of treating the village as "a ball and chain" or "to remove the problem" adopted by the political elite, still effectively prevents the proper (adapted to the Polish specificity) transformation of the Polish countryside. Barbara Fedyszak-Radziejowska's presentation was in a similar vein. She stressed that "Solidarity" was, above all, a trade union, and this union nature should be seen as a success.

The next speeches took up the subject of the contemporary understanding of "Solidarity," with memory about it and its identity. Marek Latoszek put "Solidarity" in the dimension of dynamic adaptation, indicating the identity of two types: everyday and epoch-making by which this phenomenon manifests itself. He also recalled that "Solidarity" from the years 1980–1981 was, in fact, four "incarnations"—and today it is understood and analyzed in study as a trade union, a social movement, the rise of a nation, and the leaven of "world revolution." Jacek Kołtan from The European Solidarity Center was considering the presence of the "cultural memory" of "Solidarity" and communal responsibility for this memory. His findings were faced with the modern phenomena of memory manipulation. Ireneusz Krzeminski reconstructed the image of "Solidarity" by indicating the results of social researches. Building on his latest empirical investigation he stressed that the memory of the first "Solidarity" movement among activists is still alive.

Adam Mielczarek tried to explain the phenomenon of the emergence and primary fall of the social movement "Solidarity" by using the theories of social movements. In turn, Sławomira Kamińska-Berezowska pointed out the earlier and current underrepresentation of women in the trade union "Solidarity." The young generation of researchers was represented by Beata Bielska and Katarzyna Lis. They reflected on the abundance and quasi-objectivity of the Polish press writing about the memorable speech of Henryka Krzywonos at the 2010 celebrations of the anniversary of the August Events. This presentation—otherwise very restrained in its assessments—provoked tempestuous discussion about the character of the paper as much as the law (or maybe obligations) of the sociologist-researcher to go beyond passive description.

Another part of the conference was opened by Ewa Leś's speech titled "The Polish civil sector and social responsibility. Between democracy building and civil society." It was an excellent introduction to the second part of the session. The speaker pointed out the development of the civil sector in Poland, stressing that reconstruction of social actions of taking the initiative after 1989 is the most important, yet least appreciated achievement of recent years. To create an authentic civil society, it is necessary to include the civil sector fully and deliberately in the overall concept of the functioning of the state.

Another presentation seemed to confirm the diagnosis of Ewa Leś. Marek Rymsza, referring to the development of the third sector, especially building intersectoral cooperation, called the concept of "politics of missed opportunities." Magdalena

Dudkiewicz paid attention to a considerable problem of insufficient presence in the media of accurate information about aid activities.

The next three presentations were focused on a reflection on the meaning of community for solidarity and building a civil society. Monika Mazurek discussed a case study of the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association and the building of social capital based on the local community and local association. Agnieszka Kowalczyk analyzed the idea of solidarity (issues of community, social integration, accountability) on the basis of the theoretical concepts of Charles Taylor. Radosław Kossakowski showed how activities of Lechia Gdańsk fans supported anti-systemic movement in People's Republic of Poland.

The ambition of the organizers of the conference “The Culture of Freedom—the Culture of Responsibility. Sociological and Anthropological Analysis of the Cultural Heritage of Solidarity” was a reflection on the legacy of “Solidarity,” but far from being another example of putting a renowned worldwide movement on a pedestal. “Solidarity” was supposed to be—and, it seems, was treated—as a research problem, and presentations have conveyed an image differing from rave reviews so frequent in the media discourse. It can be concluded that the meeting of so many eminent scholars helped to achieve the goals set by the organizers—analyzing the current state of the heritage of “Solidarity” and indicating the directions in which it should be aimed in order to make this heritage complete. The conference was also faced with the question of the title, trying to determine whether the culture of freedom is possible without an elaborate culture of accountability. The quite obviously negative answer was borne out by many voices and comments. It follows from these—let's summarize the various topics that appeared in the presentations of the conference—simple in its essence, but very fundamental observation: today Polish society does not lack social responsibility, but Polish elites do.

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