

Conclusions

Our series “Ethics and the Public Life” addresses current ethical problems of contemporary public life. So far we have discussed, among others, freedom, trust, hatred, sensitivity and justice. Forty years after the birth of the Solidarity social movement, we reflect on the topicality of the idea of solidarity in public life.

The Authors invited to take part in the philosophical debate on the phenomenon of solidarity analyse the impact of this idea in various spheres of public life. Therefore, the articles published in this volume cover a wide range of problems linked with an attempt to define this concept and to grasp its understanding in contemporary society. The Authors consider whether we have moved away from the original understanding of solidarity, and – if so – why and in which direction. They reflect not only on the origins of this concept but also on its justification and possible applications. How far can we reasonably extend the boundaries of solidarity: does it refer to all people, all animate beings or perhaps all of creation?

Maybe we misinterpret the reality using this concept and only generate hypotheses that are verified by the social reality. The problem is that all our attempts to rationalize this reality using such moral concepts as solidarity may turn out to be impossible utopian projects.

It is worth remembering that the concept of solidarity entered our culture – at least its social dimension – relatively recently. After it first appeared in the writings of the French utopians and Comte in the 18th century, for

a long time it was treated primarily as a research hypothesis. It was not until the events of the 1980s that this concept was included in a series of social projects that seemed to stand a chance of being realized in practice. We are aware of the hypothetical nature of our judgements and projects regarding solidarity and of the fact that our discussion reveals different points of view, the value of which lies in their potential to help us better understand our socio-economic reality.

Ryszard Moń's article entitled *Individual, Social and Moral Dimension of Solidarity*, which opens the monograph, discusses interrelationships existing in various dimensions of social life which are revealed through the phenomenon of solidarity. The Author deliberately uses the word "phenomenon" to draw our attention to the nature of the phenomenon of solidarity. He emphasizes the fact that the thinkers who brought the idea of solidarity to life tried to detach the evaluation of human actions from all external authorities, especially the religious ones (God, the Church). They wondered how to establish a constructive organisation of community without referring to religious principles, and they searched for the foundations through which we could establish the legitimacy, content and range of our moral obligation.

Some philosophers looked for the sources of solidarity in fighting social evils, best exemplified by epidemics. This concept, not only in the Author's opinion, may be particularly interesting now in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. As an epidemic can break out anywhere, it is necessary to consolidate the global society against a potential disease. This can be done by the search for sources, scientific research, and responsibility to observe hygiene recommendations. The risk is still present, although it remains invisible. Minimizing it requires high expenditures and coordinated actions, which should apply to all individuals covered by the same solidarity. In such situations, an individual cannot do only what suits him; he must cede his freedom to an institution that is capable of forcing him and others to act appropriately. In this view, solidarity would be an imperative that is universally applicable in the face of epidemiological threats. This was the principle of international solidarity at the time of the coronavirus pandemic in recent months, despite certain exceptions, e.g. when, in order to protect their own citizens, some countries bought vaccines at higher prices, leaving poorer nations unprotected.

Another attempt to look for sources of solidarity discussed in this article was to counter the threat of market competition by means of the institution of social insurance and by means of granting legal validity to actions of a social nature. The authors of this concept argue that we are indebted to one another, we owe debts, but, at the same time, others owe us a lot. This is a source of our mutual moral obligation. However, the question that needs answering is how to determine the content and range of our obligations. The Author of the article considers referring to the social contract theory or to the so-called solidarity contract, although, in his opinion, both seem to be illusory.

The article addresses a number of problems, including the way of achieving the common good through a process of trial and errors, which makes it necessary to provide compensation to community member. Important questions are whether the fight against social evils requires a strong and centralized state and whether the socialization of the common effort assumes the nationalization of human existence. The Author analyses these issues and observes that what appears on the horizon of common action is not only a better way of existence for each individual but is also a state of our “quality of life.” Thus, we need some form of solidarity because it improves the quality of our lives.

Tomasz Homa looks for the origins of solidarity from a different historical perspective. His article entitled *Spirit and Culture of Solidarity: Historical and philosophical study* focuses on the formation of the “spirit” of solidarity in the Polish society in the second half of the 20th century and discusses individual and collective forms of forming and expressing solidary attitudes during the protests of Polish workers in the period between 1956 and 1980.

The article offers a successful attempt to capture significant changes in the maturation to solidary thinking and acting, which in 1980 and in the following years gradually crystallized into a specific form of the culture of solidarity. The Author presents universally significant aspects of the unique phenomenon of the intertwining of the Polish spirituality and the culture of solidarity.

The Author characterizes this culture by discussing its four crucial aspects: the sense of community, non-violence actions, negotiating in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and gratitude. Against the background of the historical reconstruction, it is worth confronting the emergence of the culture of solidarity with its destruction, which took place in the 1990s and which is still

taking place in the 21st century. The analysis of the disintegration of the ethos of solidarity is conducted through the prism of Józef Tischner's diagnoses. The Author reconstructs Tischner's phenomenological considerations in order to understand the meaning of the "ethos of solidarity" through the process of its disintegration. He concludes that the current condition of society has resulted from replacing human solidarity by factional solidarity and solidarity of conscience by solidarity of interests.

The article is a valuable contribution to the attempt to understand the causes of current divisions in the Polish society and stimulates reflection on the state of contemporary solidary thinking and acting.

These issues are also addressed by Władysław Zuziak from a slightly different historical perspective. In his article entitled *On the Possibilities of Rebuilding Social Solidarity*, he discusses the issue of the maturation of real solidarity in the consciousness of Poles. He discusses this complex problem through the prism of the views and actions of John Paul II and Józef Tischner. The article describes the evolution of the concept of "solidarity" starting with Karol Wojtyła's early views and finishing with the Pope's later reflections shaped by his "dialogue" with Tischner's views. It presents the origins of the idea of solidarity, which Wojtyła analyses in *Person and Act* with reference to participation in the common good. This participation is realized when a person enters into a specific relationship with other persons and the common good. By adopting an attitude of solidarity, the person identifies himself with the common good of the community in which he lives. He treats this good as his own and tries to engage in its realization. When he considers the way in which the common good is realized to be inappropriate, he adopts an attitude of moral opposition.

The article also discusses the impact of John Paul II on the transformation – both spiritual and social – of Poles. The Author quotes Wojtyła's words in which he stresses that participation understood as the person's attribute allows him to fulfil the act and fulfil himself in it by acting "together with others." Twenty years later, the impact of John Paul II's turned his "acting" into "happening," which led to the creation of the Solidarity movement.

The article also presents Józef Tischner's analyses of the phenomenon of solidarity. The idea of freedom is central to this concept and forms the basis for the emergence of the authentic solidary community. Here, too,

we find a vital reference to the other person. Tischner argues that solidarity is not a value that is easy to realize, as it calls for forgetting about oneself. The selfless pursuit of the good expressed in the ideal of solidarity demands a specific attitude to life – humility. Humility dispels illusions about one's own worth, both those that lead to pride and those that lead to complexes, because in both cases authenticity is lost.

Tischner believes that the ethos of solidarity has not been internalized by society because we keep forgetting about ourselves and our dignity and about the fact that we have to strive for it by fighting our own egoism. Solidarity demands a kind of spiritual unity. Community of spirit does not demand unanimity of opinion but respect for the other; it does not demand from us to be of the same opinion but to understand that our “opponent” sees the possibilities of realizing the common good in a different way. The realization of the common good is achieved through authentic participation advocated by Wojtyła. The community of spirit is the treasure from which our strength is drawn: by all of us together and by each of us individually.

Solidarity between persons and societies is not an end in itself. Its meaning and justification lies in the realization of the common good, both individually, communally and globally. Intra-societal solidarity and international solidarity are necessary because the interdependence of the modern world demands it. It is in this spirit that Grażyna Bilik develops this thought in her text entitled *Solidarity of Consciences or Globalization of Indifference? The refugee crisis in the light of the reflection of Józef Tischner and Pope Francis*.

The Author confronts the heroic struggle for dignity of every human being at the time of the emergence of the solidarity movement with the current situation. She reminds us that this spontaneous movement was born from the confrontation with the regime and was an example of faithfulness to such values as truth, freedom and the dignity of another human being. Hope was the force that accompanied people of good will in realizing these values in the new social order. In this context, the Author quotes Tischner's thought: “man is capable of heroism only in the name of some hope,” which suggests that the lack of hope might have been the cause of the contemporary disintegration of the old idea of solidarity. The institutionalization of the management of hope and fear, based on the knowledge of social mechanisms

possessed by those in power might be another possible cause. Or perhaps nowadays the idea of solidarity is an anachronism?

It is difficult to realize the old solidarity of conscience in the face of contemporary migration processes. According to the Author, fear, ignorance and conformism grant permission to evil as the price for a peaceful and comfortable life. In this context, she refers to M. Sandel's reflections on the possible range of solidarity and recalls Pope Francis' appeals for the globalization of solidarity against the globalization of indifference, the source of which, in the Author's opinion, is moral individualism.

Ayn Rand's views can serve as a good illustration of such individualism, or even its glorification. They are discussed in Sławomir Drelich's article entitled *The Critique of Altruism in Ayn Rand's Political Philosophy*. Rand, a libertarian, criticises altruism from the perspective of moral individualism and claims that egoism is the engine of all progress.

Contrary to pro-social concepts, Rand believes that the ethical principle according to which individuals' talents belong to society is incompatible with freedom. She equates altruism with self-sacrifice, which, in her view, results in self-destruction and runs against individuals' self-interest. For her, altruism leads to man's moral and physical death.

Rand expresses her apologia of egoism in numerous apodictic formulations, which simplifies the perception of communal relations. For example, she claims that altruistic ethic is based on the metaphysics of a "hostile universe," a theory according to which man – by his very nature – is helpless and doomed and unable to achieve success and happiness.

This leads to the view that altruism is incompatible with freedom, capitalism and human rights. Moreover, society, the state and economy, which, according to Rand, are based on altruistic morality, become "a soulless machine operated by moral and intellectual mediocrities." One can argue with Rand's simplifications, but there is a good deal of truth in this view if one takes into consideration the number of politicians, activists and bureaucrats (and their intellectual level) who prey on the state's welfare system. She is also right, of course, when she observes that any extensive government that interferes with citizens' privacy and limits their possibilities for action is a form of tyranny which impedes the development of societies and individuals. Although it is impossible to agree with those Rand's claims which simplify relations

within communities, they are definitely worth exploring, especially in view of the fact that they have many supporters, precisely because they simplify our complex social reality.

While Rand with her apologia of egoism can be assigned to the conservative wing of American libertarianism, Richard Rorty, a leading postmodernist philosopher, is an American liberal-pragmatist who advocates a different perspective on the social order and interpersonal relations.

Barbara Żmuda-Frydrychowska's article entitled *Richard Rorty's Post-modern Solidarity* presents his concept of solidarity. Rorty, as befits a post-modernist, rejects all theories of human nature, both those that emphasize the social nature of man and those that glorify egoism. The specific criterion of his concept is the renunciation of what is useless and meaningless in favour of what is "beneficial and practically helpful." In his pragmatic views, he observes that people lead meaningful lives by pursuing either "the desire for solidarity" or "the desire for objectivity." He criticizes the latter option and claims that the objectivist tradition of searching for truth for its own sake cuts man off from the attachment to community, which brings his views closer to those held by American communitarians.

In his "liberal utopia," as Rorty himself defines his concept, the life of an individual takes place between two poles: self-creation and solidarity. Both are connected with the need to be accepted by community and result from the sensitivity which the individual, thanks to community, is able to experience.

Solidarity in this concept is not a fact to be discovered but rather a goal to be achieved. It is achieved not through philosophical enquiry but through empathy, which stimulates our imagination and enables us to see "suffering neighbours" in strangers. Trust in freedom and solidarity with those who suffer is a fundamental value in this concept, while inflicting pain is the greatest anti-value. Human solidarity does not arise on the basis of an abstractly conceived "humanity" but in relation to the other person as "one of us," someone who can suffer as we are able to imagine.

The ideal put forward in the project of solidarity is a world in which people will live better lives together, in which egoism will replace solidarity, tolerance will supplant hatred and common sense will eliminate stupidity. The road to this goal leads through dialogue rather than violence and through mutual solidarity rather than humiliation of the other. Education that deepens

our capacity for empathy is a tool for achieving this goal. Rorty claims that only stable and prosperous societies can afford comprehensive development of solidarity. Thus, achieving universal solidarity necessitates solidary and just distribution of wealth, which will enable further moral development of the human community.

This theme is addressed in the article entitled *(Non-)solidary Treatment of Employees in the EU Law*. Its Author, Andrzej Marian Świątkowski, describes how technological development, which entails new forms of work and employment, may lead to un-just legal solutions. Theoretically, the European labour market is governed by the principle of equal treatment of all economically active persons who should not be differentiated according to the nature and type of work nor on whose behalf it is performed.

The Author argues, however, that dynamically developing electronic employment technologies may become a threat to the EU model which is supposed to guarantee all employees fair and equal exercise of rights. The situations discussed in the article call for developing new solutions that would be compatible with existing legal standards. On the one hand, innovative forms of employment should be supported, entrepreneurship and self-employment should be encouraged, and job mobility should be promoted. But, on the other hand, as the Author notices, establishing employment relationships which lead to precarious working conditions should be prohibited, by, for example, prohibiting the abuse of atypical employment contracts.

Karolina Ferreira Fernandes' article entitled is *Voluntary Service among Catholics* another attempt to concretize the considerations of the idea of solidarity. The article presents the multidimensional character of voluntary service, its history and impact on the integration of the social environment. The Author discusses the mechanisms that determine and strengthen such integration (interiorization, symbolization of values, implementation, social control) and presents historical and cultural sources of helping attitudes in the service of the sick and the poor. She analyses the influence of Catholic social teaching on the contemporary civil society and reveals the relationship between voluntary service and Christian values. She shows how the Catholic Church influences the development of helping movements in the world and presents numerous examples of such activity, including voluntary service offered to people with COVID-19.

Another perspective on the problem of solidarity can be found in Michael Dominic Taylor's article *Solidarity with Creation: Uncovering the Hidden Foundations*.

The Author starts with analysing the birth of the Solidarity movement in Poland as a reaction against the communist system. In this context, he analyses the views of Józef Tischner and John Paul II. However, he discusses deeper foundations of the creation of solidarity as a reaction to the contemporary form of egoism and individualism expressed by Machiavelli's maxim *homo homini lupus est*. Taylor presents pragmatic dimensions of solidarity in the expanding circles of solidarizing which is maturing into responsibility for the human world.

He refers to the ideas concerning man's increased responsibility for all of creation which is discussed by, for example, Hans Jonas and Pope Francis. Here the principle of solidarity is extended to all spheres of nature. The Author, not without reason, observes that responsible human thinking and acting is necessary for the preservation of humans' health and even for the survival of humanity. At the same time, he finds the source of our solidarity with another person and with all creation in that which transcends us, i.e. in divine transcendence. Such solidarity is supported by faith in the dignity of the human person and in the responsibility of the "sons of God" for the created world. Solidarity with creation can be achieved through reflection on metaphysical truths and committed action which finds its expression in participation, communion and self-giving. The Author believes that such action is necessary to safeguard the health of both the natural world and the health of our human communities and our democracies.

We are aware that the articles published in this volume do not address all issues related to solidarity. They are not intended to resolve all doubts regarding the origins of and perspectives on this idea. However, they can certainly serve as a starting point for reflection and discussion on the conditions conducive for building a better social order.

Reflection on solidarity requires a multi-faceted approach and the ability to highlight and integrate many different – sometimes only apparent – points of view that are built on shared values. Paraphrasing Ricoeur, we can say that solidarity is food for thought. But its being "food for

thought” always takes place in specific historical and cultural conditions. Each era is characterised by new problems which force us to constantly confront our previous patterns of thinking about solidarity. We need to start new thinking about solidarity that is more oriented towards the present and the future than towards historical reproduction. Perhaps too much time has been devoted to the past of solidarity. New challenges we face today require a change in the way we think about solidarity. The future with a growing number of uncertainties, threats, and unspecified risks forces us to rethink the idea of solidarity and the conditions for its implementation. The pandemic has revealed many problems linked with solidarity. It can be treated as a proof that people have different attitudes to solidarity and, even in the face of a global threat, do not take it into account in their social actions.

Of course, we cannot live without solidarity. Although it sounds beautiful in theory, in practice we have trouble with realizing it. Especially because there is an urgent need to develop new models for putting the principle of solidarity into practice in a technologized and increasingly individualistic society. The new reality demands a change in the current theoretical paradigm. We need to think about solidarity in the spirit of interdisciplinary reflection that involves representatives of different sciences. Only in this way will we be able to understand what the solidarity of the future will consist in. Solidarity remains an important social project, but its implementation requires interdisciplinary reflection, discussion and an increasing awareness that it is not only necessary but also that it pays off shared by all members of the human community.

The key question we need to answer is about the shape of the solidarity of tomorrow. However, in order to answer it, a collaboration of researchers from different theoretical areas is needed. The social, economic and cultural world is changing too quickly for ethics or philosophy alone to be able to grasp all the regularities that define it. In answering the question about the solidarity of tomorrow there is room for a sociologist, a lawyer, a political scientist, an economist, a psychologist and a theologian. It is necessary to think about the solidarity of tomorrow in a multifaceted and open way, being constantly aware that our answers may be, or rather will be, nothing more than hypotheses that can be confirmed by practice. The solidarity

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of tomorrow is another challenge that we are planning to address in the future, hoping to engage in fruitful collaboration with researchers who are not indifferent to the idea of solidarity.