

## **KRZYSZTOF MICHALSKI HAS PASSED AWAY (1948-2013)**

ADAM MICHNIK

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This friend of many of us was a very prominent and remarkable figure of his generation.

As a student of the so-called Warsaw School of Historians of Ideas, labeled with names like Leszek Kołakowski and Bronisław Baczko, he was the author of the first extensive work on Martin Heidegger's philosophy in Polish. This book was enthusiastically commented by Józef Tischner. Later, he wrote important studies on Friedrich Nietzsche.

In 1982 Krzysztof Michalski founded, together with Tischner, the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, a meeting place for humanists of this part of Europe.

The institute facilitated scientific, literary and translation work for many persons devoted to independent thought and democratic opposition.

A favorable and friendly observer of Krzysztof's work and his Institute was John Paul II. It was the pope around whom the meetings in Castel Gandolfo were organized. Most prominent representatives of different disciplines were invited there. At these international conferences humanists from various countries and ideological camps were able to meet and talk to John Paul II. Krzysztof was able to read very clearly the pope's sense of tolerance, pluralism and dialogue. The achievements of these conferences were recently published with Znak Publishing House.

Together with his friend Józef Tischner Krzysztof prepared the pope's book „Memory and Identity”. He regretted very much that the Vatican hierarchy later brought these valuable reflections to canonical platitudes.

Krzysztof was an original philosopher, highly respected all over the world. He lectured in Boston and at the University of Warsaw, as well as in former Yugoslavia and Italian Cortona during summer schools.

Together with Marcin Król he organized the Tischner Debates at the University of Warsaw. He had friends all over the world: George Soros, Zbigniew Brzeziński, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Bronisław Geremek, Paweł Hertz, Aleksander Smolar, Timothy Garton Ash, Andrzej Seweryn, Jerzy Szacki... it would take a long time to name them all.

He was friendly to people and incredibly effective in his activities. He knew very well what he wanted and he wanted to do it well. Such people are rare, there is perhaps one within a generation.

With great dolor, I bid farewell to Krzysztof on behalf of his friends at “Gazeta Wyborcza”, a newspaper that he honored with his essays. His death leaves a void for all of us.

*Translated by Karolina Wigura*