

IN MEMORY OF KRZYSZTOF

He was a philosopher. He would not have been such a philosopher, if not for the time that shaped him, the most important environment of intellectual maturation, at the time when you are too self-confident, but also craving for knowledge – in the age of 20. When Krzysztof was 20 years old, the March 1968 was sweeping through the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw. Those recollected by him always with respect and tenderness: Baczko, Kołakowski, Pomian, Stanosz, Zabłudowski, Suszko, Przelecki, Chwedeńczuk were teachers, but also partners in the search. Just like many of his peers in this fantastic faculty, who were scattered around the world by the ferocious wind of that year, at the famous universities and in unnamed places.

In the "Philosophical Studies" from 1972, in his essay "The Silence of the philosopher," where he presented by analysing Heidegger, the presenting and analysing Schelling – he wrote: "We are not able to "possess" the truth, make the reality completely understandable or at least in principle understandable. Darkness continues to be accompanied by the light of reason, and not only by running away from its ever-growing domain. Hence the indispensable problematicity of thinking." The verve of many of his explorations and philosophical work was this "problematicity of thinking."

When, in the middle 1970s, he conducted his famous seminars, they were attended by the excited, rebellious, restless students from different faculties. A moment later and it gave the first Heidegger's interpretations of Edward Stachura works, so important for young students of Polish Studies at the University of Warsaw at that time. Krzysztof's returns to the University, visible from the 1990s, were in a sense a desire to repay this debt of gratitude which he felt towards the university, which kind of collapsed in 1968, and was later regaining its identity for a long time.

Krzysztof was a brilliant philosopher, but also a wonderful guide to the philosophy. And not just because he came close to knowing... But mostly because he knew how to tell what is the most difficult, in the most transparent manner. Come back home today and read at least a part of His text.

He was a one-man institution. Of course, not in the bureaucratic sense, he was: an institution – bedrock. Just as the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw became the bedrock in His formation. He understood and knew how to build an institution – bedrock. With the support of Hans Georg Gadamer, with the warmth of Father Józef Tischner, which was like an elixir renewing energy in anyone, with whom Father Tischner had contact – the Institute for Human Sciences was established in Vienna in 1983.

A special place, with its magnificent library, with the atmosphere for work and open dialogue – the Institute has become a link between free science, social and political thought of free Europe, and this part of Europe, which carrying its internal independence in itself, had to kind of learn anew the freedom in intricacies of experience after 1989. There were so many conferences, scholarships and scholarships holders, sensitivity to new trends, but also to the practical duties to the newly constructed democracy.

There, from the conversations of Krzysztof and Jacek Kuroń, in 1993, the Social Policy Reform Programme was borne, in which we not only exchanged transformational experiences with friends from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, but we fought battles for new solutions in the pension system, efficiency and flexibility of the labour market, education fitted to the challenges of

time, or we asked fundamental questions about the problem of exclusion, combining the perspective of a philosopher asking about the meaning of the human condition with the perspective of an economist looking at the market game.

Even years after those disputes, with Richard Freeman and Ira Katznelson, in the introduction to the book by Michael Sandel, "What money can't buy," Krzysztof wrote, seeking reasons to redefine the market and capitalism after the trauma of crisis of 2008: "And yet, neither human nature nor capitalism can be a sufficient explanation for this rapid corrosion of social life as a result of offensive of market mechanisms..." .

Krzysztof, a philosopher and a one-man institution, has never been an outsider in the debate on public policy. He knew what to bring from himself, so that others, presenting their ideas and projects, could make them better and deeper. In this way, he liberated the energy of the meetings in Castel Gandolfo, inspiring for debates on the most important civilization problems of our time, weaving threads of different fields of knowledge. In this way, he liberated the energy, at the end of the rule of Hanna Suchocka, so that, after several years of efforts, the Institute of Public Affairs was created in Warsaw. What an intellectual joy it was, when in the initial phase of work of the Institute – its visitor, thanks to the friendship with Krzysztof, was Lord Darhendorf with a wonderful lecture.

Today, the Institute is one of the wisest institutions of a think tank nature, keeping high quality of expertise in a number of publicly hot issues, and joining it with the political independence and impartiality. Because only in these conditions people with different beliefs and attitudes can meet creatively. I remember myself how I ordered an opinion on the labour law by Lech Kaczyński...

These institutions – bedrocks are the work of Krzysztof. But they are not closed, they are still open for the future. When a few days ago I looked at website of the Vienna Institute, I saw: In memoriam Krzysztof Michalski (1948 – 2013) we carry on.... and below the information: As he would have wished all events at the Institute will take place as scheduled.... When tonight, we will come back our homes, we should remember our tribute – we carry on...

He was a philosopher. He was a one-man institution. And he was just a man. He knew how to join the mission and duties performed with a responsible and serious passion with passions and pleasures of everyday life. Vienna, late autumn 1992. After the conference, we are walking the evening streets with Jacek Kuroń, in a larger group. We are debating important issues. And suddenly Jacek says: I'd eat some sausages. Krzys, with care, warmth, still continuing a serious conversation, is looking around a while. In a few minutes we sit in a Viennese cafe across from the Opera.

What about the cherries and white wine in the Vienna May-June climate?... What about the herring and cold vodka precisely and perfectly ordered in Warsaw restaurant?... What about the favourite hotel Bristol in the 1990s, by a strange twist of fate, probably because it reminded that Bristol from the late 60/70s, where in the bar you could meet Ireneusz Iredyński... Smiles, jokes, sharp, critical words, but also understanding, warm words. This caring and affectionate "child" – directed to the close women.

He was a man of conversation. You could not be bored in His company. He needed himself – for himself, especially when he worked. But he needed himself – for others, when he looked at himself in our eyes, and we looked at ourselves in His eyes. Here, now, he is definitely among us, with a

critical smile analysing every moment of this event. And he is watching whether there is not too much ceremonial, and too little simplicity....

When you return home tonight, think a moment about the "indispensable problematicity of thinking." Smile to Krzyś, freed from suffering, from unrecognised dark side of life, and see how His wise thought illuminates the sky, and this sky is illuminating our ways of life....

Thank you, Krzyś, and I am trying to say this on behalf of us all, whose lives, at least for a while, intertwined with Your, thank you Krzyś that... YOU ARE.

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