

A Very Private Revolution

So it happened. Young people made a move, though it was never expected to happen. This move included greater numbers of people than the move of 'the old'. Young people came out in the open not on the matters which excite their parents and grand parents (such as the Constitution, courts and the rule of law, but on the matter of 'ideology', which the 'old people' from the mainstream opposition preferred to put aside for 'when we win'. Where is this difference between 'the old' and 'the young' coming from and how different are the languages they speak?

The battle for abortion unveiled a mental difference between generations, a deepening difference and in part, explains a failure in mobilising younger generations by KOD, Citizens RP and similar movements.

'Young people did not live in communism so they don't understand' – but they do understand only they do not live in fears and fascinations from 30, 40, 50 years ago. For them, continued talks of who was in the secret police, who drank vodka in Magdalenka, are historical disputes. They know, however, that in the age of internet, social media, algorithms in search engines, contents positioning and all other things about which 'the old' have no idea, authoritarianism has a different face from the one at the time of the Polish People's Republic.

'The young will be moved when they are deprived of the internet' – no authority is going to 'deprive' anyone of the internet because it has no interest in this. The problem is in the information war and fake news gallowing around the internet in Iran, Russia, China and other countries not associated with freedom.

Younger activist has little confidence in the pillars of the common state because, he or she doesn't consider them to be worth defending. Also, because he or she is disappointed with the way they work. Young person will not perhaps be fighting for the school, as it is the source of his or hers oppression, or for the courts which in his or hers view, seem to deliver bizarre judgements or have nothing to do with her or him. Young person has come to terms with the fact that he or she has no influence on public life. Young person has come to terms with the fact that the state does not support her or him and sometimes even delivers a hard treatment when he or she falls. Young person has come to terms even with the fact that Poland sells her or his rights and interests to big business.

This is why young people will fiercely defend their private space, because this is their enclave. There is not enough young people to make a difference in elections. Their representatives do not dominate the press or any structures. They have no offices. They run away to their own world, which they share with their friends from other countries. Issues that interest them such as Extinction Rebellion or anti-natalist movements, are not interesting to the older people or they are rejected as radical. So their private space is so much more valuable.

The state is crashing right into this space, the state that thinks in past categories. The times, when it disciplined people to keep sexuality and family in traditional framework. Younger generations will not even discuss such values. They deny any basis to have their lives evaluated or what they do with their bodies and lives.

So, these 'indifferent young people' rush to mad combat – despite the cold, pandemic, crisis, despite fines and police brutality. They beat all previous records of protests. Most frequently with or without the minimal support of 'the old'. They go right into police tear gas and entrapments shouting vulgar slogans. Such deep is their pain and determination.

These two groups must understand each other if they want to cooperate. Those who want to save the fundamentals of the rule of law are attached to the hard won democratic structures and those for which democracy never worked well, but they are prepared to fight to the end for their personal freedom and future. This may be a difficult dialogue, unpleasant for both sides. After all 'the old' are disappointed and hurt that the young don't appreciate the gift of a democratic, European country, which they were given at birth and that they do not want to defend it. On the other hand, the young are frustrated because, if this country was governed better not 5 but 25 years ago, maybe today's protests would not be necessary.

Any revolution is private. The one for 'the old' too, though they may not think of it this way. Every activist wants Poland of his or her dreams. It is time to start talking about these dreams.

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