

On Culture and Revolution



To understand the turnabout that has taken place in Poland, you must read Wildstein

If you want to understand what is happening in Poland, you must understand those who now govern Poland. And to this end, you need to read Bronisław Wildstein – an intellectual whose books and articles have fundamentally influenced the elite of the ruling party. Wildstein is a writer, journalist, and thinker. During his youth in the communist period, he was active in the democratic opposition. Then, during martial law, he became a political émigré in Paris. After the overthrow of communism, he was the president of public television. Most of his closest relatives died in the Holocaust, but he himself – unlike most Poles with a similar biography and background – associated himself unequivocally with the Catholic and rightist movements. The experiences of the communist period had a major impact on his image of the world; proof of this can be found in the book, a collection of essays, *On Culture and Revolution*. Wildstein strongly disputes Marxism – an ideology that not only led to mass crimes against

humanity, but also, in his opinion, equips its adherents with a fundamentally false image of the world. He also disagrees with current western leftist and liberal thought, which, according to him, leads societies to the loss of cultural identity and, as a consequence, to collapse. Wildstein clearly situates himself on the side of tradition, and against its destruction, on the side of the people and against the elites, for the existing identities of European national cultures, and against their dissolution through immigration. Wildstein – once a friend of the leading Polish left-liberal democrats – is today decidedly against them. He accuses them – and he knows them well – of creating a pseudo-democratic system in the 1990s, in essence an oligarchy, to fulfill their selfish interests. To understand the turnabout that has taken place in Poland, you must read Wildstein.

Piotr Skwieceński, translated by Peter Obst

The fact that Europe is a civilizational concept and not a geographical one has always been known. What has changed is that which we consider to be the European foundation. The current European Union is to a large extent an ideological project whose aim was to fundamentally reconstruct the cultural order of Europe. This was quite apparent in the preamble to the European constitution that was rejected in French and Dutch referendums. Its authors referenced antiquity and then immediately moved to the Enlightenment. At least one and a half millennia of European, Christian history, from which the Enlightenment sprang, was not only left out, but the writers of the document strongly resisted any attempts to include this key tradition in European history, demonstrating that their intent was to change our civilization and remove the Christian underpinning.

A non-religious and anti-Christian Europe was to be the utopia of the “new man”, living according to the perfect laws designed by the enlightened, a community of self-forming beings emancipated from strong identities, starting with the religious and national, ending with gender.

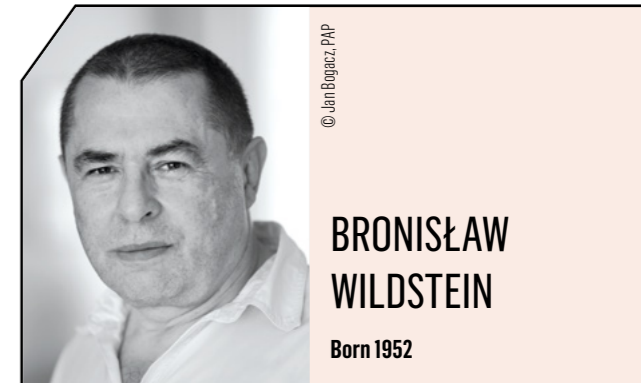
Such fanciful views break with the usual and with the world of real people, who define themselves through national, social, family, and gender affiliation and who also need religion. Legal norms by themselves have never been enough and are not sufficient, and to be effective, must grow out of a living culture that has always had religious roots. Confronted with the immigration crisis, the leaders of modern Europe began to perceive threats and to repeat the need to adapt newcomers to “European values.” But when it came to listing those values, there was a problem. We hear about tolerance, openness, and democracy. In fact, each of these principles is secondary and depends on the previously accepted order, which is embedded in a specific metaphysical arrangement.

Tolerance in contemporary Europe has been brought to self-denial, that is, it has transitioned from recognizing that certain views, considered to be negative, have the right to exist, to demanding their affirmation. In fact, tolerance can never be boundless. Defenders of the modern version of tolerance demonstrate it fully, demanding punishment for their opponents. Rather, it must grow out of a deeper axiological order. Even more problematic and indefinable is “openness,” and current debates on the need for legal restrictions on democracy reveal that the political system must have a deeper ideological foundation.

The dominant ideology of today, which tends to break down traditional cultural forms, is nihilistic. Its goals, as in the case of any utopia, are vague. Newcomers then, understand only one thing: modern Europe is a

place where the old faith and order are dead. In this situation, they withdraw to the civilization that they know, that is their own. Where is Poland situated in this division? Precisely right in the middle of it.

Excerpt translated by Peter Obst



O kulturze i rewolucji [On Culture and Revolution]

Publisher: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 2018

ISBN: 9788362884810

Translation rights: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, piw@piw.pl

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