

The Solidarity Community: A Phenomenological Analysis

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The reading of phenomenological texts allows us to better understand the Polish experience of “Solidarity.” “Solidarity” could occur thanks to free and independent persons who built a community on the basis of universal ethical values. A community founded on solidarity with the down-trodden had within itself an independence and strength which transformed consciences, restored the sense of dignity to people and stimulated their goodwill.

The life of contemporary man is full of latent tension. We dream of a community and closeness with others, yet jealously guard our own independence. We try in vain to maintain harmony between the desires of an individual and the demands of a society. Feeling helpless, some would like to return to the safety of organic communities in which an individual was only a part of a whole. Still others agree to take a risk and plan new communities in which closeness is impermanent, but leaves

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108 liberty and independence to an individual. However, most of us accept the inevitable conflict and search for the golden mean between pursuing one's own good and the good of a community.

The experience of „Solidarity” of August 1980 seems to contradict this helplessness. The events of August combined the flourishing of a community with the restoration of authenticity and dignity to the individual. However, we still cannot describe this experience well. For enthusiasts “Solidarity” was a miracle or a carnival, that is, a holy-day, in which the usual hierarchy of values changes. For skeptics it was a myth which carried real events to the sphere of perfection where there are no disputes, nor conflicts. Both agree that “Solidarity” temporarily suspended the hard laws of social life.

Tischner's Attempt

A serious attempt to understand and describe the laws that govern a solidarity community was undertaken by Józef Tischner in *The Ethics of Solidarity*.

Dobrosław Kot rightly argues (see “Solidarity without Solidarity” in this volume) that in *The Ethics of Solidarity* there are at least two ways of understanding solidarity: the Samaritan-like helping of one's neighbor, and doing what one should do (or what one is concerned with in life). One could speak here about the festive solidarity and the everyday solidarity (better described with the word “dependability”). These meanings of the concept of solidarity seem to lead to different visions of a community. This ambiguous solidarity embraces too broad a scope of phenomena: from the aid given to the victims of a tragedy to the efficient service toward a customer in a supermarket. According to Kot, the concept of solidarity which describes such a variety of phenomena becomes incoherent.

I am going to defend Tischner's thesis, assuming the hypothesis that the division of solidarity into the two spheres: altruistic, depicted in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and egoistic-cooperative, described in the formula “everyone does his thing” does not wreck the concept of solidarity, on the contrary, it helps to grasp its essence. Solidarity is a synthesis of both dimensions: Samaritan-like reaching toward one's neighbor and regaining one's own authenticity. An individual in his being-for-others reveals his own face, his true self.

Does the demand to “do one's thing” really concern existential authenticity or simply interpersonal cooperation? Tischner's concrete examples point to cooperation – he describes everyday activities: one has to sow, plow, etc. On the other hand, the whole of *The Ethics of Solidarity* makes one think about authenticity. It seems that “Solidarity” was a powerful personal experience, not only a joint action for the good of one's neighbor. “Solidarity” made people find their true selves even in ordinary occupational duties.

The stakes of understanding *The Ethics of Solidarity* are very high.¹⁰⁹ If Tischner's description was incorrect, the essence of solidarity still remains in the shadows. But perhaps it would mean propagating a myth if one defended Tischner's vision and accepted the hypothesis that solidarity was a synthesis of the life for others and the flourishing of individual authenticity. Tischner gives us a vision of a society in which the antagonism between the good of an individual and the good of a community disappears. It somehow resembles organic communities in which an individual feels part of a living whole, but Tischner does not agree that solidarity is a return to organic community. He repeatedly refers to the concept of conscience, and a conscience is a sign of radical individuality of a person, which cannot be reduced. In other types of a community an individual usually must choose between personal good and the good of another community member. He altruistically devotes himself to the community or egoistically cares for his own business. But he may also look for a sensible compromise that balances the two aspirations. Is not then the above vision of solidarity utopian?

We do not have to fall into pessimism. For if Tischner's description is accurate, it means that there once was a "Solidarity" community in which the good of individuals and the good of the community were united. And if it did happen, it implies that solidarity communities can exist!

We will look for a general theory (model) of a community that fulfills the requirements of solidarity. If we succeed in finding such a theory, it will prove that a "solidarity community" is not a myth but a real possibility of social life. This would lead to the conclusion that the movement of "Solidarity '80" was not a unique miracle, but an event that may repeat itself. There is no need to emphasize the importance of these reflections from the practical point of view.

We will begin the search for the theory of solidarity community by considering the initial doubt: why does the sought-for community have to be called a "solidarity community?" The question is seemingly absurd, as the point of departure for the search is the description of the "Solidarity" movement written by Tischner! However, there appear noteworthy objections that the social movement of August 1980 was called "Solidarity" quite accidentally and, what's more, Tischner changed substantially the natural meaning of the frequently used term "solidarity."

In common usage the term "solidarity" is neither clear nor unambiguous. We use it to describe a community of attitudes and actions, which someone called "sailing in one boat," but also sacrificing oneself for the good of other people, not out of personal liking, but because of the misfortune that befell them. The images of the Good Samaritan and "Bear ye one another's burdens" from *The Ethics of Solidarity* refer to these common meanings of the term. That is why solidarity as understood by Tischner is included in the scope of the meaning of the normal concept of solidarity. Tischner does not alter the meaning of the term, he only narrows it. His understanding of solidarity is also solidarity in the common

110 usage. However, according to Tischner, solidarity does not limit itself to the joint action or liking and giving help to the one in need – it requires full commitment and a radical change of one’s life.

Let us try to describe initially the solidarity community. Of course we will not look for it in all types of communities. There are intimate communities (for example a community of love) which are solidarity communities by nature. There are relations based on interests which essentially exclude sacrificing oneself in solidarity. We are interested in a community which is 1) natural and not created artificially, 2) durable, 3) big enough so that it includes not only direct but also indirect relations between people, last but not least, 4) an individual in such a community is not a lonely atom, nor a cog in the social machine. He is endowed with a conscience, liberty and freedom of action.

As yet we do not know the necessary conditions for the emergence of a solidarity community. For now, referring to the experience of “Solidarity ‘80”, we can at most outline a general project of such a community.

In a solidarity community the good of a person is tantamount to the good of the group. A community is exceptional because its growth coincides with the development and perfection of an individual. It is also real and not ideal: defects and crises are possible. People in a community are concerned with the good of others, especially those in need, but at the same time this devotion helps them in their individual development. Individuals are strongly bound with the community, yet they remain “living” people, prone to human weaknesses. We always remember that the “miracle” of August 1980 consisted in building an unusual community of ordinary people.

Phenomenology’s Proposal

Tischner wrote that the idea of solidarity shaped consciences, gave the sense of closeness and restored authenticity to people. The theory of a community that we search for should describe its spirit rather than the outer social processes. That is why I refer to the works of phenomenologists, Scheler, Stein and Hildebrand, which deserve close attention for three reasons.

First, phenomenologists do not focus on experiences of individuals nor actions of social groups. Thus, they do not deal with psychology or sociology, but describe the spirit of a community. The spiritual dimension can be reached only by the cognitive subject. This research requires caution so as not to lose touch with reality. That is why phenomenologists seek to remain faithful to the experience and avoid creating metaphysical constructions.

Second, although the phenomenologists’ works were written nearly a hundred years ago, they are not at all anachronistic as they take up issues that are unusually similar to our problems. In inter-war Germany, individualism (of the liberals) crashed with the longing for organic com-

munity (later caricatured by fascism). In our times, after the disgrace of III
collectivism, it seems that only individualism remains on the battlefield.
But many people return to the dream of reviving the old organic vision of
a community in which an individual is, above all, a part.

The third reason for reading phenomenological texts seems most
important. In their vision autonomous individuals shape the community
according to the principle of social solidarity (Scheler). It is not only a
coincidence of terms. Phenomenologists also tried to build a theory of a
community in which the independence of persons and the independence
of a community agree.

Classification of Communities

Searching for a solidarity community in which authenticity of an individual
and the good of the community agree, I will make use of the classifica-
tions introduced by phenomenologists. First of all, they differentiated
between a community and a society. A society is a set of individuals who
unite so as to guard their own business. Individuals are responsible only
for themselves, not the whole society. This results in a situation in which
the principle of solidarity does not work in a society. Scheler acknowledges
that societies emerge when the mutual trust among people ceases to exist
(this statement may be historically true, however, it does not prove a general
law). Even if we reject this controversial opinion, there is no doubt that in
a real society there exists a natural antagonism between the interest of
an individual and the interest of the group. This antagonism disappears
in communities.

Phenomenologists divide communities into vital and solidarity
communities. There are serious differences between them. A vital com-
munity resembles an organism whose organs are individuals. Individu-
als are co-responsible for others, they refer to each other by means of the
community. A vital community encourages collectivism and diminishes
the significance of an individual.

It seems that in our times vital communities vanish or they morph
into modern societies in which close relationships among people are
substituted with relations of an instrumental, and of an object-like, char-
acter. Despite this fact, phenomenologists unanimously claim that every
society originates from some community. People must belong to certain
communities (for example family communities) so that they are capable
of creating societies (for example founded on the social contract).

On the other hand, a solidarity community consists of autonomous
persons responsible for themselves and for the whole community. Such a
community tries to avoid extremes: it does not promote individualism (like
a society) nor the community alone (like the vital community). Establishing
a balance between the two elements: the individual and the community,
helps to create both a powerful community and strong interpersonal rela-
tions. According to Edith Stein, the condition for creating a community is

112 sharing life with others, which excludes treating them in an instrumental and object-like manner.

Phenomenologists acknowledge that individualism and collectivism erroneously describe a human person treating it either like a lonely atom or a cog in the social machine. In a solidarity community a person is an independent subject who, for his full development, needs relationships with other people.

Usually we juxtapose the good of the community and the good of an individual. We act either for ourselves or for the community. Acting for the benefit of others may lead to some form of self-realization, but in general it requires sacrificing one's own good. Is it then possible that there exist solidarity communities in which the good of the community entails the benefit of the individual?

This coincidence may appear when one part of the relation loses its independence. It may happen that an individual identifies with the community, or that the community exists only to serve the interests of individuals. Phenomenologists turn down both of these possibilities: they claim that both the person and the community are self-reliant and independent. They also reject another dogmatic assumption according to which there exists a struggle between the individual and the community in a zero-sum game – the power and independence of the community is obtained at the expense of weakening the individual (and vice versa). A community becomes a solidarity community when there is positive feedback and the energies of the community and individuals stimulate each other.

The Mode of Existence of the Community

According to phenomenologists a community is not a material thing nor a psychological experience. It exists in a spiritual way, however, this spirituality is understood diversely.

For Hildebrand the existence of a community is of a paradoxical character. A community is not an independent substance, but it partially exists in an independent way. It is not a person, yet it also has an inner dimension (which is characteristic of spiritual creations as opposed to material ones). Edith Stein goes much further and ascribes to a community not only a stream of consciousness, but also a character and a soul. Such descriptions used with reference to a community may seem awkward and somewhat exotic, but in Stein's perspective they point to the fact that a community is a spiritual being that exists independently enough so as to take responsibility for its actions. Max Scheler goes even further, boldly acknowledging that some types of communities must be called group-persons (*Gesamtpersonen*), because they constitute an act center analogical to individual persons.

Hildebrand strongly protested against ascribing the status of a person to communities. His arguments seem sound. If a community is a person, then as a substance it cannot consist of individual persons who

are substances as well. Then a community is totally independent of individuals or it includes individuals depriving them of independence. The two solutions were impossible in the light of traditional ontology, however, they took on an ominous and dangerous meaning in the 30's when the Nazi state was spreading rapidly in Germany.

Contrary to appearances, the dispute among phenomenologists was not very radical and it resulted rather from the differences in understanding the concept of a person. For Hildebrand the person was a model example of a substance, but for Scheler it constituted a non-substantial act center. This allowed Scheler to distinguish an individual person and a group-person, both of whom were independent act centers.

Despite the differences, all the above-mentioned authors think that a solidarity community is spiritual (or personal), long-lasting and independent in its existence so that it is able to constitute an act center and to take responsibility for itself. This is the most controversial thesis in phenomenological thinking about community.

Does not a community build its independence at the expense of individuals? Is not the development of an individual prompted rather by a fragile and spiritually unstable community which bases its durability on institutions and established laws? Such questions prove that we still think in the logic of antagonism according to which the increase of strength in one place implies its decrease in another. However, a solidarity community acquires strength from strong, independent and involved individuals.

Phenomenologists claim that the good of a person surpasses even the good of the best community. Still, they acknowledge that the higher the value that binds people into a community, the more the good of a person and the good of a community member coincide.

In a solidarity community people are tied to each other not only subjectively, but objectively as well, otherwise, the existence of a community would depend on changeable emotions and the involvement of individuals. Yet, a community exists independently enough to be able to survive the death or disappearance of individuals and generations, also, the character of a community only partially depends on individuals.

The Constitution of a Community

Experiences-in-Common. For phenomenologists the basis of every community are individual persons. A person is an independent being, free and conscious, who opens up to the world of things and the objective world of values. Thanks to being open, a person may enter into close relationships with other people. Phenomenologists claim that persons may have experiences-in-common (for example when a squadron suffers because of their beloved leader's death). This confirms our naïve convictions that communities may rejoice and experience sorrow.

Community Consciousness. Stein thinks that there may exist a communal stream of consciousness founded on individual consciousness.

114 Scheler goes even further and argues convincingly that in the stream of consciousness of a person there may appear not only his own experiences but also the experiences that come from others. He considers as superstitious the statement that it is impossible to personally live out the experiences of others.

We know that there are various types of communities. Phenomenologists usually describe these communities from the point of view of individuals. However, they realize that life in communities cannot be reduced to a set of direct individual relations, since in the majority of communities not all people know each other. People may simply live next to each other, or they build a society in which objectivizing relations predominate.

Common Values. Living next to each other, or instrumental relations with others, are not enough to create a community. One has to share life with others, which, according to phenomenologists, requires “habitation” (incorporation) in the common sphere of values. The common life emerges when people are in the sphere of common values that seal the community and give meaning to the experiences and actions of individuals. There are many types of values, and accordingly, there are also many ways of sharing life – it is possible to join in associations and develop common interests. But more importantly, there are communities which usually emerge in a natural way and embrace the whole of a person, and not only some dimension of his existence – solidarity communities belong to these types of communities.

Models and Leaders. Here a problem emerges. For phenomenologists values are characterized by objective existence and durability in time, therefore, we do not know what happens when, here and now, certain values become a bond for a human community. Scheler solves this problem by pointing to the fact that values may be significant for a community only when they are incarnated into certain models. Every community produces models, usually embodied in concrete persons – present, past or even fictitious – that make the values of a community concrete and affect the actions and imaginations of individuals.

The communal model is usually not a political leader, as he influences the entire spirit and not only the will and actions of an individual. According to Scheler, every sphere of values corresponds to a certain type of a model: a saint, a sage, a hero, etc. Communities assimilate and specify a chosen model which will decide what values will be realized in the community. Without incorporation and creative transformation of models a community ossifies or disintegrates and disappears.

Interaction of an Individual with a Community. An individual and a community influence each other. Individuals develop a community through shaping and assimilating models. On the other hand, a community creates a spiritual dimension which allows individuals to understand the meaning of their actions and experiences. The stronger the community, the more the individuals who are involved in it tend to see the world and their own fate from the perspective of the community. Individuals are able

to act in solidarity and feel deep empathy with other people. Nevertheless, a momentary solidarity usually does not create long-lasting ties, as emotions and attitudes of individuals often change. Spiritual bonds in a solidarity community are relatively independent and thus more durable than standpoints and feelings of individuals. It is true that individuals build a particular character of a community, but not in a direct way. The character of a community is not a compilation of typical traits of its members. Atypical individuals have a greater influence on this character – they are leaders or even people from the margins.

A solidarity community exists relatively independently and that is why it may take responsibility for its members. The dynamic of its existence depends on the involvement of individuals who give the community a part of their own life and spiritual energy. However, does not the devotion of an individual turn against him? For the more he immerses himself in a community, the more he succumbs to its influence. Does not this process lead, finally, to the loss of an individual's independence?

Such reasoning is faulty – a community does not affect an individual like a mechanical force which compels or drives him to something. A community owes its strength to the action of values which do not push, but appeal to an individual, giving him freedom of choice, since values touch the essence of a person, but do not enslave him. We can now see the importance of the assumption that a solidarity community is built by persons who are free and open to the call of values. Contrary to expectations, the stronger the community, the more the freedom of individuals increases.

Shaping of Identity

The strength of the community depends on its individual members who give it life and shape its spirit. And yet, the more an individual influences the identity of a community, the more he becomes involved in it and the more the community takes root inside of him and shapes his identity.

Here another serious difficulty comes up. On the one hand, the influence of the community depends on the freedom of the individual, so it does not weaken its independence. On the other hand, if belonging to a community shapes the identity (that is the core) of an individual, then the influence of the community must be powerful. For if a relation changes the identity of its elements, it means that their independence is doubtful.

We have to consider the concept of identity more closely. If we imagine the identity as a permanent and invariable core of things, then the identities of two separate things must be different. At most, one of them may be subordinate to the other, however, contemporary philosophy acknowledges that the identity of a person does not consist in maintaining invariable qualities, but in a constant relation toward values. A person retains his identity when he feels he belongs to the moral sphere in which

116 there is a definite distinction between good and evil, and some values are so important to him that they become his aim and, at the same time, a moral source from which he draws strength.

If a community is a spiritual (personal) creation, then we can apply to it the modern understanding of identity. Analogically to individuals, communities also exist in a certain moral sphere. Values that constitute a community (and, of course, are made concrete by models) can be treated as the equivalent of moral sources in the identity of an individual. If then we understand identity in the modern manner (tied with the axiological sphere), then overlapping and permeating of identities becomes possible. In our case the possibility of a radical interaction between an individual and a community reveals itself. Community goods may turn out to be a moral source for an individual and thus shape his identity. On the other hand, charismatic personalities may revive values and thus revive the life of the community. We should remember that a permeation of identity happens through free acknowledgment of values, that is, through the attraction of the good; efficient causes are not at work here. Freedom prevents a situation in which individuals make up a mass moved by accidental events and temptations.

In a solidarity community the strong influence of values, while maintaining an individual's freedom, is the basis of mutual relations among people. Individuals may have direct emotional relationships, but more often they are bound only indirectly through belonging to the shared spiritual sphere created by community values. Uniting subjective and objective bonds supports the stability of the community.

Divisions in a Solidarity Community

From the spiritual perspective, a community resembles a kernel surrounded by a shell. The kernel is the elite which builds the spirit of the community and through its involvement shares its spiritual strength. The remaining part are the "conformists" who passively take over the ways of life of the community, and "outsiders" who use the material and spiritual goods of the community, but do not feel responsible for it. The coherence of the community, that is, the extent to which passive and rebellious individuals are involved, depends on the strength and commitment of the elite.

How to explain the existence of the elite, since in a solidarity community persons have identical dignity? It seems that hierarchy results from the existence of community models. It is true that Scheler accepts a somewhat utopian assumption that in a solidarity community all individuals fully take part in a community. Stein is more realistic when she accepts a division into the center and periphery, according to the degree of an individual's involvement in a community. In the center of every community there are people that shape the life of the community through cultivating, developing and even introducing new models. Hence, the elite forms even in a solidarity community. The reason for the existence of the

elite is the protection of values that constitute the community. Person-¹¹⁷ models and leaders help to assimilate and specify anew the community values thanks to which a community may develop. The charisma of the leaders is not just the result of the magnetism of their personalities, it also comes from the values they possess, which are especially appreciated by the community.

Every community has its own grandeur and measure that both depend on the values it realizes. Thus, it has a specific position in spiritual reality. It is the task of the leaders to protect this position. If they cannot realize values or if they introduce false models, they cease to be leaders and change into deceivers. A deceiver is most easily recognized by the radical changes he makes to community values without regard for its tradition, or by not respecting the natural limitations of his own community and violating norms of the community of man or restricting freedom and autonomy of persons.

The Falls of a Solidarity Community

We now face another dilemma. Communities based on material values are not solidarity communities, and a solidarity community founded on high values makes tremendous demands on people and seems to forget about their ordinary, everyday affairs.

Should then a community member be an angel devoid of mundane needs? Some claim that solidarity includes only spiritual ties, leaving material affairs to politicians and economists. But the theory of solidarity community rejects this explanation, firmly stating that solidarity embraces the whole of human matters. It is well known that the various spheres of our lives have their special laws, but they are not impermeable, because the whole man is involved in each sphere, thus a man cannot be reduced to any given role he plays.

According to the phenomenologists, a solidarity community provides models that shape the spirit of individuals. Yet, every model must take into account real conditions of human life in which spirit binds with body. If we divide an individual into an ideal spirit and bulky corporeality, then the existence of an individual becomes inauthentic.

We can agree that an individual, apart from being in solidarity with others, must also take care of his own affairs. We are not angels and cannot live only in the sphere of higher values. However, the potential disputes concerning everyday matters do not have to destroy solidarity bonds.

Furthermore, we can ask, can a solidarity community include persons that are not in solidarity with others? If someone violates values, does he cease to belong to a community?

Two situations are possible: a fall and a betrayal. An individual that falls does not reject community values, but only cannot face up to them. He strongly experiences the values and that is why he is clearly aware of his fall, admits his fault and tries to improve. What's more, help given to

118 someone who has difficulties or has fallen, should belong to the essence of a solidarity community. Thanks to that, a solidarity community may absorb and transform people who are not in solidarity with others (they never were or ceased to be).

The second case concerns betrayal. An individual consciously destroys the foundations of a community which is based on faithfulness and trust. What happens to the community in which people begin to betray each other? Sometimes a betrayal is visible, sometimes it is hidden. In the first case, the lack of faithfulness, that is the fundamental bond between community members, appears directly. In the latter, a community seemingly endures, and the sickness of treachery eats away at individuals. Sometimes we may encounter a cynical game of individuals who hide behind a mask of solidarity; or, a deep disintegration of identity, where a person may sincerely and devotedly act for the benefit of a community and, at the same time, contribute to its disintegration.

The betrayal of individuals is a deadly illness for a community as it violates its fundamental bonds, which are grounded in mutual faithfulness and the authenticity of an individual's existence. Destroying a community may be an individual's fault, but also the community's. A community dies when it ceases to be the place of "habitation" (incorporation) in values, the place from which moral sources pulsate. When the models present in a community lose their strength and attraction, individuals choose other models, or, while declaring devotion to old values they cease to realize them. Then hypocrisy sneaks into social life. Increasing inauthenticity is the main symptom of the disintegration of a community, for a solidarity community is both strong and durable, it may survive turmoil, but it is also fragile, as it may be destroyed by inauthenticity and unfaithfulness.

Usually, the disintegration of a community is not manifested by any spectacular events; the bond of values that was the foundation of the community simply dies. When the symptoms of the disintegration appear, the eternal antagonism between an individual and a community returns. An individual fears that the more he devotes himself to the community, the more he will lose his independence, and in a gesture of self-defense he wants to regain distance and self-reliance. But here we find ourselves in a vicious circle: the stronger the desire to be self-reliant, the weaker and more abstract the community. The process of disintegration of solidarity gathers momentum. Even goodwill and heroic effort will not help to restore the delicate community bonds.

Tischner and the Phenomenologists

The reading of phenomenological texts allows us to better understand the Polish experience of "Solidarity" (as interpreted by Tischner) and to show what its universal meaning consists in. "Solidarity" could happen because free and independent persons built a community on the basis of universal ethical values. A community founded on solidarity with the

downtrodden had within itself an independence and strength which ¹¹⁹ transformed consciences, restored the sense of dignity to people, and stimulated their goodwill.

What are the main differences between the phenomenologists' theories and Tischner's analyses? Tischner shares the phenomenological conviction that community bonds must be founded on spiritual values. Whereas phenomenologists, first of all, emphasize the role of values incarnated in models that shape the consciousness of individuals, Tischner underscores the significance of encounters with the suffering – when we experience for ourselves the values that have to be saved. For the phenomenologists, solidarity is the readiness to act following the example of the Good Samaritan. Tischner thinks that solidarity is, first of all, concrete action for the good of the suffering. To put it another way, for the phenomenologists the living values of the community allow us to see the suffering and feel a bond with them. For Tischner, it is seeing poverty, and the joint action to remedy it, is what allows us to build a solidarity community.

On the other hand, Tischner's analyses from *The Ethics of Solidarity* enrich phenomenological theory with two important insights. First, recognizing in another person a neighbor who may need help is the condition of life in a solidarity community. Second, a community becomes a solidarity community when it opens up to universal ethical values, and not through cultivating traditional ties. The sense of belonging to the community of man does not destroy old commitments, rather it helps to overcome one's own limitations, to stand in the light of truth, and to regain a sense of dignity. This is possible due to the fact that a person may belong to many communities which permeate and influence each other.

It is now clear that the experience of "Solidarity '80" is a great illustration of the theory of a solidarity community that was created by phenomenologists at the beginning of the 20th century. However, one may infer the opposite: the existence of "Solidarity" confirms phenomenological theories! Would not that entail accepting the controversial theses by Scheler and Stein? Can one seriously say that a community has a soul and character, and, what sounds even worse, that it exists as a person? We know that such theses are absurd in the light of contemporary conceptions of a person and community. But how poor these conceptions are when compared with the wealth of phenomenological analyses. Perhaps it would make more sense to see the contemporary disputes about the definition of both "person" and "community" from the phenomenological perspective?