

FORUM

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POLISH-AMERICAN



John Paul II

CULTURAL CENTER



2nd International Symposium on Modern Polish Society

September 11th at 1:30 pm, just after lunch

This is the second time we have asked prominent guests from Poland to present recent trends in social science and culture to our Cleveland community. Just like last year, this second symposium has developed from the collaboration of Dr. Edward Horowitz, Director of the Polish Studies Initiative, Cleveland State University; Dr. Kathy Farkas, “Invisible Groups in Today’s Poland”, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, CWRU; and Gene Bak, Polish- American Cultural Center.

Everybody is welcome to come to the Center on September 11 at noon to have lunch with our guests! Then join us for the presentation afterwards.

In this issue of Forum, you will find information about our guests and their presentations (below) as well as reflection papers written by



Leslaw Tetla family

Case Western Reserve University students who visited Poland this year as a part of the “Invisible Groups in Today’s Poland” travel-study program. There is also a reflection paper written by our guest, Ewa Sadkowska, concerning her family’s arrival to the United States. Maja and Zosia are the beautiful daughters of Ewa and her husband Lesław Tetla. You may meet them during the Symposium as well.

Speakers and Their Presentations

Lukasz Koperski, PhD student in the Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań. Member of the Polish Sociological Association and the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work. His research interests concern social policy, social economy, social contexts of disability, gerontology, and counseling in the media. Member of the research group realizing local public policy programs (diagnosis and strategies) in Poznań.



Lukasz Koperski

Title of talk: *Social Economy in Poland: innovative examples of community involvement in solving local problems.*

Abstract: The social economy is a rapidly growing sector combining two aspects: economic (economic development, goods production, reducing unemployment) and social (solving social problems, social inclusion, strengthening of social capital). The Polish social economy is one of the best functioning in the European Union. We can indicate innovative measures aimed at combining these aspects, including crowdfunding, corporate social responsibility, cause related marketing, and social revitalization. Such activities allow the inclusion of the public in the process of organizing support, moving away from the traditional principles of charity and strengthening local social capital.

Ewa Sadkowska, manager, National Orchestra of Polish Radio, previously with Stanislaw Wyspiański Dramatic Theatre, responsible for sales and distribution, audience development, commercial events, sales strategy.

Title of talk: *A successful transformation from an industrial city to Unesco City of Music*

Abstract: The influence of quality of place on people's perspectives on culture; the need to develop audiences and to encourage participation in cultural events through the use of effective strategies and audience segmentation; turning an area known for coal mines and industry into the best tourist site in Katowice through revitalization

Lesław Tetla, visual artist, head of Interdisciplinary Actions Studio, Associate Professor, Dean of Faculty of Art, Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice

Title of talk: *Artists behind bars*

Abstract: Dick Higgins created the term intermedia, defining it as the actions placed between art and life, between artistic means of expression and the media through which human existence articulates itself. This anthropocentric way of perceiving art is very important in the work of the Katowice Academy's Interdisciplinary Actions Studio, which, in its actions outside the walls of the school or galleries, in public space, enters into direct relation with specific places and the problems of people living in them. One of the most important socially oriented projects is the cooperation with the prison in Zabrze. The aim of this work is stimulation through art. Direct involvement of inmates in art projects is intended to ease tensions and prevent acts of aggression, as well as encourage them to read books and watch films.

2nd International Symposium on Modern Polish Society

Polish-American Cultural Center
Sunday, September 11, 2016 at 1:30 pm
6501 Lansing Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44105



This event will include presentations on modern Polish society and contemporary culture from a sociological and artistic point of view with

Łukasz Koperski, Poznań University-UAM

Lesław Tetla, Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice and Kosciuszko Foundation Fellow at CSU

Ewa Sadkowska, National Orchestra of Polish Radio, Katowice

A discussion and Q&A session will follow.

*This event, all of which will be in English, is **free** and open to the public.*

The symposium is organized in collaboration with

Dr. Edward Horowitz, Director of the Polish Studies Initiative, **Cleveland State University**

Dr. Kathy Farkas, "Invisible Groups in Today's Poland", Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, **CWRU** and Gene Bak, **Polish- American Cultural Center**

Students from Case Western Reserve University visiting Poland

Each year, students of Case Western Reserve University travel for one week to visit the Institute of Sociology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. They participate in a social work course concerning "invisible groups" and learn how Polish society takes care of the least fortunate groups of people. At the end of their stay they write a reflection paper. Some of their thoughts and experiences described in these papers we publish in Forum. Phrases specific to the course were eliminated. If you would like to send these students any feedback, please send it to Richard Romaniuk: jrr3@case.edu Let us also know if we can publish your comments.

R. Romaniuk

Dylan Brown

Reflection Paper

When I first decided to go to Poland, I never anticipated it would be one of the most impactful experiences of my life. I somewhat impulsively decided to choose Poland as my study abroad destination because I wanted to experience the culture of my ancestors. My grandfather passed away when I was very young, so even though I felt a connection to Poland through my family, I had no idea what to expect. In reality, I was terrified of traveling, and I was as anxious about the trip as I was excited. When we first arrived in Poland, however, the welcoming atmosphere and wonderful people soon made me feel at home. From both an academic and personal standpoint, our trip to Poland was truly powerful experience that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Poland was in many ways my first exposure to social welfare programs such as homeless shelters and addiction treatment centers. Being able to view social workers in the field gave me a more accurate perception of not only the field of social work, but what it is like to be marginalized by society. Attending lectures on social cooperatives and cultural communication was also fascinating because I discovered how social work as a field is moving forward, and the exciting new ideas that are already being implemented in places like Café Dobra. These visits were excellent, immersive learning experiences that really did restructure my view of the world.

The most surprising aspect of these visits, and indeed the entire trip, was the passion I saw in every social worker we encountered. I always expected that confronting the suffering of those marginalized by society on a daily basis would eventually wear on social workers. After reading about the poor wages and working conditions faced by social workers in Poland, I had expected the social workers to mostly focus on criticizing the government and the difficulties of their day to day struggles. Through every presentation, however, the Polish social workers excitedly described their work with positivity and enthusiasm. At the homeless shelter, our hosts seemed incredibly proud of the work they do, and encouraged us to interact with the individuals staying

there. At MONAR, our hosts walked through the halls conversing with the recovering addicts as if they were friends greeting one another. I was truly surprised and impressed by the passion and respect each social worker had for the individuals they served. This passion affected me greatly, and made me realize that there are amazing people in the world who do truly devote their lives to serving other.

Though every experience I had exploring various social welfare programs drastically affected my views of society, the opportunity to meet with my family was by far my favorite experience. Prior to leaving America, I met with a relative who had visited our Polish family many years ago. I had hoped to learn more about my family's history out of pure curiosity. I had never imagined that actually meeting my Polish family would be possible. To my amazement, I discovered my family came from a small village located a half an hour west of Poznan. By nothing more than pure chance, I would be staying near the place my ancestors had likely lived for hundreds of years.

I arrived in Poland with nothing more than an address and the name of my closest living relative, my great-grandfather's cousin, Jan Kaminski. There had been no time to write a letter, and without a phone number, I had no choice but to go directly to my Polish family's home, introduce myself, and hope for the best. With the help Dr. Romaniuk, Dr. Farkas, and our Polish friends, I found myself on the way to the village of Graby, where Jan Kaminski lived. When we finally arrived, Jan and his daughter warmly welcomed us into their home. After some initial confusion, we began discussing our family, sharing photographs, and telling stories all with the help of a wonderful translator. Though we only had a short time to visit, the relationship between the American and Polish sides of our family was rekindled, and this means more to me and my family than I can express in words.

Traveling to Poland taught me a lot about myself and changed how I looked at the world. Learning about my ancestors and being apart from my immediate family made me realize that I truly do value my family above all else. Being away from Cleveland and school work for a week helped me to refocus my priorities on my family

and friends. This realization was so impactful that I am now changing my career plans to better focus on the people I care about rather than financial stability. Experiencing such a different, yet wonderful culture helped me appreciate the incredible diversity we have in our world. Being immersed in a foreign culture was a completely new experience, and the understanding I gained from this experience will definitely help me professionally when I am interacting with people of diverse backgrounds that I may not be familiar with.

After experiencing Poland I now understand the true value of studying abroad. My time in Poland expanded my worldview in a way that would have been impossible if I remained in America. I would wholeheartedly recommend studying abroad in Poland to any of my classmates. I sincerely hope that I will be able to return to Poland again someday with my family so they can experience firsthand the wonderful culture and history of our ancestors.

Casie Helkowski

My Study Experiences in Poznań

My initial reason for choosing to study abroad in Poland was to learn about my family's history. Both sides of my family are of Polish descent, yet no one from my family has had the opportunity to visit the country since my great grandparents emigrated in the early 1900s. An additional reason I chose to study abroad in general was to learn about a culture through first-hand experiences and interaction with native persons. Our study topic of "Invisible Groups in a New Poland" was an added bonus, as I am a second year social work student at the Mandel School. I was absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to learn about social welfare issues in another country.

For the brief time our group spent in Poland, we had the pleasure of engaging in a number of activities related to social welfare. A personal favorite was our visit to MONAR, a center for drug and alcohol treatment. All of the staff members were incredibly welcoming and open to answering our questions. I appreciated that as an entire group we facilitated an

intriguing and educational discussion, rather than having a traditional lecture-style learning experience. It was also a pleasure to hear from one of the residents who so willingly opened up to our group to share his personal experiences with addiction. This provided a unique perspective in correlation with what the agency staff had to share.

We also had the opportunity to visit the social emergency center, Pogotowie Społeczne; the Centre for Youth Professional Development; and the Regional Center for Social Policy in Poznań (ROPS). The Adam Mickiewicz University was kind enough to host our group on several occasions. Our group had the pleasure of attending and participating in a symposium with the Lane Kirkland students comparing and contrasting social issues in Poland and America. The symposium was a real treat due to the fact that a number of the Lane Kirkland students are from various other European countries. Their interpretations added another dimension of diversity that I can say was greatly appreciated by the Case Western students.

My most memorable experience was a restaurant called Café Dobra. The restaurant had a very comfortable atmosphere and I appreciated the mission of the organization. Café Dobra accommodates and employs individuals with various mental disabilities without discrimination. It was clear that the owner is passionate about assisting this population and providing them with a sense of normalcy in the work environment. It was humbling to listen to her describe how the café came to be and convey her passion for what she does.

From this trip I have not only gained a diverse learning experience, but also an abundance of stories and memories to share with family and friends. I have gained unique friendships and personal insights regarding social issues in Poland that I would not have received from reading academic articles and textbooks. In addition, I have a new perception of Poland and the country's history while developing a greater respect for my heritage. This trip has had a significant impact and I highly recommend traveling to Poland to my friends, family, and anyone else seeking a unique cultural experience.

Madeline Reiches

Personal Reflection

I will be completely honest in saying the reason I decided to travel to Poland was really the concept of travel and gaining a meaningful experience. With my engineering course load and semester activities I found it very difficult to even attempt to take a semester off to study abroad. When I realized that I would be free for spring break I decided to look into it. Once I met with Dr. Farkas and learned more about the program I knew this was going to be a great opportunity.

Going to a country I have never been to before I had no idea what to expect. I definitely went into this trip with a very open mind and a mind ready to learn. I did think that more people were going to speak English but I was also really glad to be immersed in the culture completely. Yes, communicating was hard sometimes but it was really an experience. What was interesting to me was that most people actually understood English very well. In fact, they knew how to speak it but were not very confident in it. I thought it was funny that sometimes we thought the students or teachers in Poland did not know any English, but they could hear and understand everything we were saying. Ksenia used to joke that Bogna (her mom) was the greatest spy ever because everyone thinks she does not know English because she does not speak it, but she understands it very well.

I think one of my most memorable experiences was going to MONAR and talking with a resident of this facility. I thought his story was so fascinating and was so grateful he was willing to share. This was a man who actually lived in America where his problem occurred and he was not afraid to tell us and I thought that was so brave. I also felt like he really understood us, too. Maybe it was because he had been to America, but I feel like he knew how to tell us things and understood things on our side as well. He could tell when maybe we were confused and at least for me he was so comforting. I think these are the types of experiences that really make the trip. Even though this was not planned by any means, it worked out so perfectly.

So, I knew I wanted to go on a study abroad trip but to be honest at first I was not super invested in the course topic or name. Although I did not have a lot of experience I felt so welcoming in this learning environment. People not only helped me understand topics I was confused about, but it was actually nice learning outside of the math and science world. I liked how so many of our topics and learning was so discussion based. I loved seeing everyone give their opinions on things and we had so many different perspectives whether from Americans, international students, or students or faculty from Poland.

I wanted to talk about some things I learned. I could talk about how much I learned in the classroom about invisible groups and addiction and things of that nature, but something I learned that I don't think I was expecting was how to immerse yourself in a culture in the right way. I will be honest in saying I love travelling. I don't travel too much outside of the United States but I do travel a lot. My family and I are travelers who like adventure. We don't go to places and sit at the pool or beach all day, we go outside and do things. With that being said, I thought this trip was going to be the same and it was more than I ever could have imagined. We did not just go place to place and did not just see famous tourist sites, we saw the real deal. I think the guides and people helping us out were truly amazing and I really felt like I was living there for a week. I have to say one of the most challenging parts was the English. But at the same time I really think it made the trip better. Again, this really made me feel like I was living there and not an outsider. (...)

Overall this was such an amazing experience and I am so glad I went. I got to learn with truly amazing people from around the world and I would recommend traveling to Poland to anyone.

Matthew Parulski

Reflections

Originally I had not planned on signing up to go on a study abroad trip to Poland. One of my friends told me about how he went on a study abroad trip to Berlin and how much he enjoyed the experience. I decided to look at the study abroad website to see what classes were being offered. As I looked around at different trips during spring break, the trip going to Poland immediately stuck out to me. Knowing that my great grandfather had come from Poland, my father would talk about how it's a shame no one has gone back. Seeing that the topic was on the change in Poland's politics after the fall of communism, I became even more interested.

Although I visited Germany and Spain during high school, this trip was very different than a normal vacation. While we were in Poland we went on trips to different social centers around Poznan, such as MONAR, a drug rehabilitation clinic, and a homeless shelter. From these trips we could see how those effected by addiction and homelessness are treated and taught how to again become functioning members of society. Although I had never been into centers like these before, the biggest surprise to me was the personality and mentality of the people around the city. In my past trips to Europe I had always gone to tourist cities where most of the people around were also visiting the city. The fact that Poznan does not fit this made the overall city different with most of the stores being normal stores as opposed to small tourist places.

During my trip to Poland, I realized how similar and different everyone is across the world. One of the major differences is the stereotypes we hold concerning different places, and how our thoughts do not always translate in other cultures. For instance, when the student from Russia could not understand Professor Romaniuk's concern when he thinks about Siberia. However, other concerns are global problems. One student going to Adam Mickiewicz University voiced his concern over a few large companies owning multiple smaller ones and how he saw monopolies as a problem, which was the case in the United States in the early 1900s. I think that this trip helped me professionally since it taught me how to see different people's backgrounds and to help understand their viewpoints and

why they would not agree with or understand cultures and practices considered the "norm" in other countries.

For me the most memorable part of the trip was the visit to the old church and being able to see the remains of a historic church since it is believed to also be the home of the first Polish king. (...) Opportunities such as visiting and exploring another country are important because they both expose students to different views and ideas of the world, while at the same time showing how people across the world are similar and can find common interest in things although they live half a world apart. Because of this I would participate in another study abroad trip. It was a good experience that taught me how different cultures deal with problems that affect everyone.

This trip was both fun and rewarding. I was able to visit the homeland of my great grandparents and learn about both the history of Poland and how it is becoming a modern country. I was able to hear about and experience how the Poles deal with problems that plague the world but are not often talked about.

Jeremy Griffith

Personal Reflection

(...) I have some Polish heritage in my family. For example, my mother's maiden name is Soboleski and her family is still very Catholic. We always have large family meals during Christmas and Easter where cabbage rolls are guaranteed. (...)

Thinking back on the trip, I think the biggest surprise to me was learning about the large difference in perception of Native Americans between Poles and Americans. I happened to be in the car with Noah on our way to the homeless shelter when I first heard about this cultural difference. I suppose I was most surprised when I found out that Polish kids grow up collecting feathers and other symbols of Native American culture.

In terms of personal gains, I think some of the biggest gains from the trip were the friendships. This experience gave me the opportunity to make up for one of my biggest regrets from a previous semester abroad: not making any friends from the local area. I spent a

whole semester close to any American friends that I could because I felt like I was fitting in well with the English culture. Instead of trying to branch out and bridge that difference in culture, I stuck close to what I knew. Of course I deeply regret that mistake, but I was fortunate to remedy that with all my new Polish and Ukrainian friends like Emilia and Bogdan.

In terms of professional gains, I was able to become more educated in social welfare. While not a direct benefit to computer engineering, the knowledge has allowed me to expand my cultural literacy. These types of skills are important in any workplace especially at an international company like General Electric, my employer beginning in July. Cultural literacy is important to a company like GE because deals are being made on international scale. It is important for an engineer to be able to work with customers from all around the world, and it helps even more to have experience with their history and culture.

Among all the experiences, I think the most memorable experience was bonding over cultural differences with Emilia, Ksenia, and Bogdan. It is really amazing being able to sit down with someone and celebrate each other's differences. For instance, we spent a lot of time talking about the lack of multilingual Americans while it seems necessary to know multiple languages in Poland. Of course, we also were able to share traveling stories as well as impressions of each other's cultures. Perhaps the most pleasant experience was all the food. I really enjoy Polish cuisine, and the food was quite an improvement over some of my past traveling experiences. (...)

Overall, I felt the trip was an extremely valuable experience. Not only was I able to travel to a country that I share some heritage with, but I was also able to dive deep into its culture and history. This experience is something that I'll be able to take with me for the rest of my life, and I definitely plan to share it with anyone that I can.

Gosia Oleksy

Mikroświat

Czasem duży świat wymyka się z rąk
Rozsypuje się na tysiąc kawałków
Czy uda się go poskładać?
Gdy to za trudne
Gdy pamięć już nie ta
A palce zgrabią
Gdy klimat nie sprzyja
Gdy oczy spowija mgła
Gdy za trudno unieść ten ciężar
Gdy za dużo mórz się wylało
A horyzont jest obcy i nie ma końca
Gdy tylu ludzi zabrakło
I tyle okien się rozbiło...
...Wystarczy kilka kawałków
By odbudować mały świat
I wychowywać w nim
promycek światła

Kamyk

W torebce noszę kamyk
Znalezione gdzieś na plaży lub na drodze
Nie pamiętam gdzie i w jakich okolicznościach
Wiem tylko, że kiedyś przykuł mą uwagę
Siłą obecności, która przetrwa wszystko
Odtąd czuję się odpowiedzialna za mój kamyk
W wolnych chwilach głaszczę jego
oswojoną kamiennosc
Zrósł się ze mną i z torebką, choć wiedzie
Niezależne życie uśpione snem kamiennym,
Jak pewnie powiedziałyby Zbigniew Herbert
Ciężarem mi nie jest - Przecież bez kamieni
Wszelkie lekkości byłyby nieznane
Wspieram się na nim
Jest jak przyjaciel, z którym
czasem wystarczy pomilczeć
Od dawna chodzę tak po ziemi i niebie
Z kamykiem w torebce jak z kotwicą

Ewa Sadkowska

Ameryka jest huge...

Państwa samolot jest opóźniony, nie uda wam się zdążyć na lot z Warszawy do NY... Ale jak to, nasza misterna układanka legła w gruzach. Ostatecznie zmieniamy lot W-wa – NY na późniejszy i zastanawiamy się jak wytrzymamy kilkugodzinne czekanie w Warszawie i jak damy sobie radę w nocy w Nowym Yorku... Jak na sam początek podróży, niezbyt zachęcająco. Lot przebiega gładko. Podchodzimy do lądowania, koła dotykają podłoża, hamowanie i... czekamy, kwadrans, pół godziny, jeszcze dłużej... NY wita nas koszmarną burzą, lotnisko sparaliżowane. Po dłuższym czasie udaje się nam, meandrując wśród zdezorientowanych ludzi na lotnisku, zająć właściwą kolejkę. Jest grubo po pierwszej w nocy, dzieci trupy, my zombie... Teraz rozumiem radość mojego przyjaciela, kiedy w Chicago trafił na urzędnika Polaka i nie musiał wystawiać swojej znajomości angielskiego na próbę... Udało się, wsiadamy w yellow taxi i ruszamy do hotelu.

Ranek słoneczny, kałuże stoją. Śniadanie i w drogę. Dzieci piszczą na widok świecących ciężarówek, pięknych Afroamerykanek, Afroamerykanów w stylu gangstera rap... Nowe, inne, wielkie, nie do ogarnięcia. Na pierwszy rzut Central Park, Empire po drodze i po kolei reszta. Staramy się wszędzie chodzić, nie chcemy tracić widoków, zdarzeń, sytuacji... Kolejny dzień 9/11 – będzie nam się odbijał czkawką przez kilka dni z rzędu. Dzieci pytają jak to możliwe, kto mógł zrobić taką okropną rzecz, jakie wieże, kto w nich był, ilu ich było, ilu terrorystów... Wielka lekcja, zadajemy sobie pytanie, czy słusznie izolujemy córki przed informacjami o wojnie, obozach, zagrożeniu... Wiadomo, każdy rodzic chce, żeby dziecko miało poczucie bezpieczeństwa, ale powinno chyba też wiedzieć, że to nie świat Barbie i Kena. MoMA, Natural History, Modern Art. I inne przeplatane wizytami na placach zabaw. Kiedy Zosia była mała i podróżowaliśmy po Bułgarii, pierwszy raz miałam pomysł na wydanie przewodnika – Place zabaw Bułgarii... Teraz temat wraca. I wraca poczucie ogromu wrażeń, doznań, poczucie, że tych wielkich kolekcji nie sposób zobaczyć, percepcja spada wraz z kolejnym piętrem. Tak, w Ameryce wszystko *huge*... Nawet porcje jedzenia są dla nas nie do przerobienia. Jeden talerz spaghetti jemy w czwórkę i jeszcze zostawiamy resztki...

Powoli nadchodzi czas na zmianę klimatu. Pełni wrażeń wsiadamy w autobus i zmierzamy ku Ohio. Nowe miejsce, nowa sytuacja. Punkt ciężkości przenosi nam się z miejsc na ludzi. Poznajemy, poznajemy, rozmawiamy, zaprzyjaźniamy się. Spotykamy niezwykle życzliwą, bezinteresowną. Mam już znajomych w domu, koleżankę w dzielnicy... Ludzie dzielą się informacjami, ślą maile, chcą pomagać... To niespotykane. Zaczynam rozumieć frustrację Joe – profesora, który był w Katowicach przez ostatni rok, kiedy to mówił nieznanym ludziom dzień dobry i narażał się na opinię świra. Otacza nas matczyzna troska Carol, zdroworozsądkowa i konkretna opieka Eda, każdy chce dołożyć swoją cegiełkę do naszej fortecy. Zapoznajemy się z terenem, bierzemy wózek i zaczynamy zwiedzanie. Downtown, lokalne festiwale, koncerty, muzea, metodycznie krok po kroku... Dzieci bawią się z rówieśnikami, body language działa wszędzie. Zdziwione, bo nikt się nie pcha, nikt nikomu nic nie odbiera, Szalone Afroamerykanki wciągają Majkę na dmuchany zamek. Zosia powoli pokonuje bariery językowe, Maja niewiele sobie z tego robi i idzie po swoje. Zainteresowanie nowych cioc i wujków bezcenne. Każdy facet po 60-tce może chwilowo zastąpić dziadzia Irka, Carol staje się najlepszą cicią świata. Szczególnie, że często przynosi ogórki, a to dziewczyny lubią najbardziej. Mam świadomość, że obracamy się w dobrych dzielnicach, wśród dobrych ludzi, jednak moje poczucie bezpieczeństwa, w stanie, w którym każdy może mieć broni po zęby, jest większe niż w Europie. Może dlatego, że nie zaczynam dnia od nagłówków ilu zabitych i kto dziś kogo wysadził w powietrze. To świetnie, że padł mit wypucowanej i tip top Ameryki. Normalni ludzie żyją normalnym trybem, jest czysto i brudno, jest porządek i chaos. To pozwala nam lubić ten kraj coraz bardziej. Bycie tutaj to dla nas wielka lekcja, angielskiego, otwartości, uprzejmości, nawet jeśli powierzchownej, lepsze to niż kwaśna mina. Celowo nie wymieniam więcej imion, choć chciałabym i mogła, miejsc, do których dotarliśmy dzięki uprzejmości ludzi... nie robię tego, bo to nie laurka, raczej opis wrażeń, które dobrze usystematyzować zanim zbledną w dżdżyste polskie wieczory...



Elżbieta Ulanowska

Labor Day

w wydaniu Amerykańskim

Przypada zawsze w pierwszy poniedziałek września, a włączając sobotę i niedzielę daje bardzo lubiany trzydniowy weekend. Nikt już dziś nie pamięta jakie były jego początki.

Tradycja tego dnia sięga 1882 roku. Zainicjował go Peter Maguire pochodzący z wielodzietnej rodziny emigrantów irlandzkich. Jako jedenastolatek opuścił dom rodzinny i próbował pracować zarobkowo. Najpierw czyścił konie w stajniach, buty na ulicach Nowego Jorku. Kiedy podrósł, szukał lepszego zajęcia i zdobył specjalizację w stolarce. Zatrudnił się w fabryce mebli i fortepianów w Nowej Anglii, po czym wyjechał na południe Stanów.

Kiedy po kilku latach wrócił do Nowego Jorku, wstąpił do związku pracowników stolarskich i natychmiast wybił się jako zdolny organizator. Były to ciężkie czasy dla robotników. Dzień nie miał limitowanych godzin pracy, a zarobki nie przekraczały 11 dolarów tygodniowo. Nieliczne organizacje pracownicze nie miały środków do działania.

Maguire zaangażował się w działalność związku z nadzwyczajną energią i właśnie w wymienionym roku 1882 wystąpił z pomysłem zwołania pochodu, który jak określił, miał na celu wyrazić uznanie dla przemysłu Ameryki. Ustalono, że ma to być pierwszy poniedziałek września i nazwano go Labor Day.

Na Union Square w Nowym Jorku zebrało się ponad 10 tysięcy robotników. Pochód ruszył przez Fifth Avenue z pełną paradą. Otwierała go konna policja, szły orkiestry oraz szeregi maszerujących. Ulice udekorowano sztandarami Stanów Zjednoczonych, a na transparentach widniały hasła: „Dzień roboczy powinien trwać 8 godzin. Wszyscy ludzie są sobie równi. Praca tworzy wszelkie dobro.”

Po południu odbył się piknik na wolnym powietrzu z tańcami i zabawą do północy. Wtedy już ulice Nowego Jorku oświetlały pierwsze, jeszcze nieliczne lampy elektryczne, a niebo rozbłyskiwało sztucznymi ogniami.

W ten sposób zaczął swój żywot Labor Day. Nie da się go porównać do europejskiego święta 1 maja, a nawet do tego pierwszego maja w Chicago z roku 1890, kiedy w starciu z policją zginęło kilkuset robotników i kilku policjantów. Labor Day w Ameryce odbył się bez rozlewu krwi. Nawet Karol Marx, który nie widział innej drogi przed robotnikami niż rewolucja, powiedział: „Nie zaprzeczam, że istnieją kraje jak Anglia, czy Ameryka, i jeszcze Holandia, gdzie robotnik może osiągnąć swoje cele środkami pokojowymi”. Pierwszy maja jest w większości krajów dniem politycznym, a pierwszy poniedziałek września jest dniem kończącym lato i rozpoczęciem nowego sezonu wyżęzonego wysiłku.

Nie wszyscy akceptowali wprowadzenie tego wolnego dnia. Protestowała zwłaszcza liczna grupa fabrykantów. Właściciele firm nie chcieli zwalniać robotników udających się na pochód, straszono ich też zwolnieniem z pracy. Ale ostatecznie pomysł Maguiere'a zatriumfował dość łatwo i szybko. Federacja Pracy ustaliła uchwałę o Labor Day i przedstawiła Kongresowi. Po czym Stan za Stanem akceptował to postanowienie. Pierwszy ogłosił tę nowość Oregon. W kilka miesięcy później następne Stany: Colorado, New Jersey, Nowy Jork, Massachusetts. Na końcu znalazł się stan Wyoming akceptując dzień pracy dopiero w 1923 roku, czyli po 29 latach od uchwały Kongresu, którą podpisał w 1894 roku 24th prezydent Stephen Grover Cleveland.

Do naszych czasów zmieniło się bardzo dużo, zwłaszcza w kwestiach uposażeń i uprawnień socjalnych, a Labor Day przybrał formę wakacyjno-zakupową. Kto ma chęć wymyka się za miasto, griluje w ogrodzie lub pędzi do sklepów, w których nabywa niemal wszystko po znacznie obniżonych cenach. Zatrudnieni pracownicy handlu, głównie sprzedawcy, pracują w tym dniu ze zwiększonym wysiłkiem.

Życzę dobrze zaplanowanego i wypełnionego atrakcjami, wrześniowego długiego weekendu.

W Centrum i okolicach

Niedziela, 11 września	Początek obiadów w Centrum
Niedziela, 11 września, 1:30 PM	Symposium - zobacz pierwszą stronę Forum
Sobota, 17 września, 7 PM	Dyskusja o książce „Podróż życia” E. Baka w Centrum
Sobota, 29 października	Reverse Raffle
Piątek, 11 listopada	Program patriotyczny w Centrum
Niedziela, 20 listopada	Obiad Thanksgiving w Centrum
Niedziela, 18 grudnia, 12:30 PM	Wigilia w Centrum
Sobota, 31 grudnia	Sylwester w Centrum

Social and Cultural Events at the Center & Slavic Village

Sunday, September 11	Our lunches begin after summer brake
Sunday, September 11, 1:30 PM	Symposium-see page 1.
Saturday, September 17, 7 PM	Book club discussion - ”Life’s Journey” by E. Bak at PACC
Saturday, October 29	Reverse Raffle
Friday, November 11	Independence Day Reception and Artistic Program
Sunday, November 20	Thanksgiving Day Dinner
Sunday, December 18, 12:30 PM	Wigilia
Saturday, December 31	Sylwester

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