

ANP Newsletter

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Hamburg, Europe, 41 years ago

That day, as for several weeks, we were building a large parking, it was a glass warehouse somewhere in Hamburg. Together with me, four boys graduated from Economics at the University of Warsaw. I don't know what happened to them after that, but they definitely did a lot of nice things, intelligent company. At 12 o'clock there was a regular lunch break and we turned on the news "From the country and from the world" on a sloppy grundig. During the day he did not catch a free Europe, it was hissing terribly. It was August 31, 1980.

We listened to these messages, I remember, for the most part in complete silence. None of us knew what was going on. First, heaps of garbage in Lublin. Then some negotiations. Who with who? (If I had listened to Kurski TV today, I would also not know what is really going on). We were afraid. Such things in Poland do not end well.

But if I had one thought and one hope attached to this day, it was that someone would finally end this unchanging humiliation of ours. Not because we were digging in curbs, how damn heavy it was, it was even fun.

We only knew that in our lifetime we would never live in the world we had there in Hamburg, next to us. Both in the sense of the availability of goods and in the sense of an immeasurable sense of freedom. Which where, where, but in Hamburg it is in every mouthful of air. We wanted to belong to the world, to Europe, staying in Poland. And we had no hope of it.

But in the end, the world changed against our closed, humiliated logic of the boys from the parking lot at the glass warehouse in Hamburg. Let's not let it be taken away.

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I like Tusk.

I like Tusk, let me, I really do. He is youthful, though almost as old as I am, enthusiastic and natural. Ok, he's a politician, so he's always up to something, that's politics. But in his case, I don't feel a dramatic disconnect between the political game and actual beliefs. Yes, yes, liberal beliefs, based on a strong belief in the meaning and meaning of human freedom.

I recommend the interview in the last Polityka. Tusk says simple things, but says them cleanly, nicely. He does not shy away from admitting mistakes, but even this admission of mistakes is not entirely formal, but put into context. It also seems to me that

in the conversation with Baczyński, who has done many interviews with Tusk, Tusk becomes all the more natural and, I would say, light and obvious in his argumentation.

If I were to derive one diagnosis from this interview, which, although known, impressed me, it would be the hypothesis of fear as the cause of populist successes. Fear of strangers, of freedom, of climate change, of digital. Fear of a completely different world that has come to us in the last two decades. Fear is understandable, many of us share it. On the other hand, building a political position on universal fear is immoral, not to say disgusting.

Everyone has their own Taliban

I look at this picture of the most important Taliban and I think to myself, it's not good, they don't look like friendly people. But - is there any more general lesson for us from Afghanistan? I'm afraid the same one that came from Vietnam, Persia or Iraq for the Americans. You cannot measure the needs of other nations and peoples with your own measure.

The obtrusive question, however, is: who can and who are we entitled to measure with the same measure that we ourselves share? If there is such a dramatic rift in Afghanistan, between the majority that more or less passively supported the Taliban, and the Kabul intelligence, which is more or less the same as in the rest of the world, i.e. like us here in Warsaw, then we are not very distant from the same problem. We measure the PiS voter from Podlasie, we measure Mrs. Witek and Mr. Kaczyński with the

same our intellectual-Western European measure and we also ask them: what do you mean, our local Taliban? Do you want to close Poland? Do you want to be the source of the only truth for the whole world that does not listen to you and does not like you? Where do you want to look for allies, where do you want to look for support or even understanding? In Belarus, Russia, Afghanistan?

Who is your alter ego role model? Do you want to be the Messiah of the nations once again? Who would you like to be and what kind of Poland do you want, since you consider the European Union a leftist-German conspiracy? I would like to understand what you ultimately mean.