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The Gdańsk Liberals – an Exemplification of Polish Pragmatic Liberalism

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The purpose of the article is to present the ideology and socio-political program of the Gdansk liberals. Subsequently, an attempt will be made to incorporate the concept of the Gdansk liberals in the party program of the Liberal Democratic Congress (Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny). The introduction focuses on the definition of intellectual formation called the Gdansk liberals. Further the author introduces the basic ideas, the political program (political system of state, privatization as an attempt to create a middle class, regionalism, and the issue of "liberal revolution"). The article ends with reflections on the relationship of Gdansk's liberals to Congress.

Keywords

Gdansk Liberals, parliamentary democracy, privatization, regionalism.

The Gdańsk liberals were an intellectual group created in the early 1980s, bringing together the intelligentsia of Gdansk who opposed the communism. At the beginning of their existence, the members of this group did not have specific views, but they were primarily reluctant to join the political system at the time. Their ideas began to crystallize in 1983 when the first issue of the "Political Review" ("Przegląd Polityczny") was published, whose editor-in-chief was Donald Tusk, current president of the European Council (originally written under the pseudonyms Anna Barycz and Tadeusz Doniecki). The list of editors included Wojciech Duda, Marek Zająkała, Jacek Kozłowski, Andrzej Zarębski and Wojciech Fułek¹. Among the Gdansk liberals apart from those mentioned above were Dariusz Filar, Lech and Longin Mażewski, Piotr Kapczyński and Jan Szomburg. Views of the Gdańsk liberals were reflected in the program of the party Liberal Democratic Congress (1990), which stopped existing in 1994, joining the Democratic Union (Unia Demokratyczna).

¹ **Paradowska J., Baczyński J.**, Folders of Liberals, *Obserwator Poznan*, 1993, p. 55.

Fundamental ideas

In the first issue of the "Political Review" the editorial stated: "We do not have the ambition to create our own political program at least. It is probably still too early"². Indeed it was too early, because liberal ideas were discussed in Poland, but in the larger academic centers such as Warsaw, Poznan and Krakow. Only minor works on this subject were published in Gdańsk. In the first few years of the activities of the Gdańsk liberals there was no debate on the essence of liberalism. It should be noted, however, that the aim of the "Political Review" was to create an ideological and substantive basis for the new policy. The realization of this goal seems to be an article D. Tusk "Reflections on Liberalism". It did not contain any serious research on the main philosophical assumptions of this doctrine. Freedom seemed to be the author of the idea of the most important characteristic of "practical liberalism"³. However, D. Tusk barely mentioned his fundamental ideas of the Gdańsk liberals. D. Tusk stated in it: "What does the liberal demand in a state of parliamentary democracy, what else in a totalitarian state? In communism or fascism every liberal is entered radicalism attitudes and actions"⁴. Three years later, D. Tusk asked rhetorically, "How important for us to be able to dispute the liberals of the free world within involvement of the welfare state, the degree of freedom of competition, the nuances of the liberal conception of man, etc. – for us who live in the country of unlimited power policeman and an officer of the party?"⁵, and I answered as follows: "It was only sensible to adopt the broadest version of liberalism, which he means as much as anti-totalitarianism"⁶. Because there is no way undermine the simple truth that "liberalism offers a radical form of escape from the totalitarian system, because it is obvious opposite of"⁷. The 80s liberalism was seen "not as a

² From Editorial, *Political Review*, 1983, 1, p.1.

³ So the phenomenon of Gdansk is called by J. K. Bielecki in an interview with Mark Rudziński. *I have no conscience conflict. Marek Rudziński talks to Jan K. Bielecki*, "Youth Banner" from 24-26, 1991, 9, p.15.

⁴ **Barycz A.** (D. Tusk), Reflections on Liberalism, *Political Review*, 1984, 2, p. 23.

⁵ **Doniecki T.** (D. Tusk), The Way and the Choice, *Political Review*, 1987, 9, p.18.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ **Węgielek J.**, Traps of Liberalism, *Political Review*, 1991, 13, p. 11.

program of socio-political and economic, but as a personality predisposition, way of thinking and the initial canon of political principles"⁸. For these reasons, it did not require any justification. This caused a complete loss from the field of view of the problems of building the next political system. There was no reflection on what it was like to move on to the new order, and what ideological-programmatic assumptions should be adopted by free Poland. Liberalism must have transformed itself into a utopia or a more subtle vision that became popular only because it was highly contrasting with the realities of the communist regime⁹. D. Tusk substantially agreed with this assessment, but he was convinced that "(...) we developed (meaning: Gdansk liberal) some insights and assumptions" importing the following:

1. One of the main sources of civilizational collapse in Poland is etatism; without a fundamental change in the sphere of ownership of means of production and the limitation of state omnipotence, Poland has no chance of recovering from the crisis;
2. Private property, free market and free competition of free generators are guarantees for the proper functioning of the economy. Any ideas related to the "third way", "no bourgeois civil society", "socialism with human face", etc. are utopian and political fiction, regardless of their origin. The idea of civil society in the traditional sense of the term (and therefore the only positive one tested) is immanently linked to economic freedom;
3. Polish society is largely egalitarian. It is still common to allow etatist omnipotence and overprotectiveness, and one of the main tasks of the opposition is to change that attitude;
4. The Poles need reforms – they must at the same time demand rights¹⁰.

⁸ **Doniecki T.** (D. Tusk), Op. cit., p.18.

⁹ **Szacki J.**, The rebirth of liberalism?, Idem: *Dilemmas of Historiography of Ideas and Other Sketches and Studies*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw, 1991, p. 201.

¹⁰ **Szacki J.**, Op. cit., p. 25.

Political program

In the 1980s, the liberal program in Poland was reduced to four principles: "freedom, not equality", "individual, not mass", "law, not violence", "property, not alienation", "evolution, not revolution"¹¹. However, the Gdansk liberals quickly created their own concept of political system - democratic capitalism - inspired by the publications of Michaela Novaka, whose elements were presidential-parliamentary republic, regionalization, separation of church and state, widespread privatization, as well as the liberal revolution as a way to come to them¹². The political program developed by the Gdansk liberals contained a vision of political and economic order as well as considerations on the way out of communism and the separation of church and state. The most important element of the ideas of Gdańsk liberals was privatization and regionalism. These were the two main conditions for the final overthrow of communism in Poland¹³. A "competent" separation of church and state was the least refined element of the program of Gdansk liberals. They admitted that "neutrality worldview should take in Poland different shape than in the West", but the details of the program on this subject have only "become the subject of public debate" . It was only known that this should "bring about the development of the Church itself"¹⁴. This issue will be omitted in further reflections.

State supreme governing body. According to the Gdansk liberals, the president of Poland should be elected by a direct vote. The term of office would be 6 years, but there would be no re – election ban. Besides the traditional powers of the head of the parliamentary state, the President would have a number of personal competencies. The most important of them would be: nominating and releasing the head of the armed forces, appointing a commander of the armed forces for the time of war, the powers associated with the introduction and conduct of extraordinary states, the appointment and dismissal of the prime minister, the

¹¹ Filar D., Being a Liberal, *Political Review*, 1988, 11, p. 20.

¹² Mażewski L., Democratic Capitalism, *Przegląd Polityczny*, 1991, 14, p. 21; D. Tusk, *Solidarity and pride*, Gdansk, 2005, p. 54.

¹³ Tusk D., Pomeranian regional idea. Paper presented at the 2nd Kashubian Congress, *Pomerania. Socio-Cultural Monthly*, 1992, 6, p. 2.

¹⁴ Mażewski L., *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

possibility of defining a separate act of direct relations between the president and the ministers of foreign affairs and defence, the right of veto of the legislature and the unlimited possibility of dissolving the parliament before the end of the term. In case of official actions, the president would not be held accountable for political matters, but only for criminal and constitutional reasons on the basis of consistent resolutions of both chambers. The justification for such a solution would be to make the head of state independent (by way of appointment) from the parliament and to make it equal to the parliament's legitimacy to power. A range of competencies allow the president to be active in political life, especially as defence and foreign policy issues would be entrusted to him bypassing the government. The right of veto suspension and unlimited resolution of the chambers would mean a profound interference in the legislative activity. Parliament should consist of two equal chambers: the Sejm (lower house) and the Senate (upper house). The parliamentary tasks would primarily include legislative activity (presidential decree could only take place through parliamentary mandate during inter-parliamentary periods) and government scrutiny. The Gdańsk liberals rejected the conception of the Senate as representative of the regions. It would come from regional-based elections (according to which smaller towns are subject to the nearest major center), but would not represent a region, as it would be contrary to the idea of a regional state (a unitarian and non-federal state). Both chambers would come from the general elections with a majority¹⁵.

The Gdańsk liberals demanded the independence of the Senate from the Sejm. The dissolution of the lower house of the Polish parliament would not entail the filing of elections to a higher chamber. The effect of the Senate's continuity could be strengthened if, with the four-year term of senators being renewed, half of its composition was renewed every two years. In addition, the Gdańsk liberals have postulated that the higher chamber is competent to draft statutes. The establishment of a legislative act in the described manner would only occur in the event of natural disaster, war and emergency at the request of the government. Laws passed by the Senate alone would be subject to approval by the

¹⁵**Mazurek L.**, *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

Sejm within 30 days of its establishment. The legal acts established in this special procedure would cease to apply in two cases: 1) if the lower house of the Polish parliament would not approve them and 2) if they were not submitted for approval. The Gdańsk liberals were opponents of the Senate's transformation into a self-governing chamber. They were supporters of the general election to the upper house. They did not want the passive right to be voted only by qualified citizens who had the function of coming from the local government elections¹⁶.

Privatization as an attempt to create a middle class. The difficulty in introducing the changes proposed by the Gdansk liberals was that there was no significant breakthrough in the initial years for building a new system that would coincide with its real interests. Lech Mażewski recalled that: "The medium class with the pattern of its western counterparts could be the backbone for us". But this was not. Therefore, Janusz Lewandowski and Jan Szomburg and Lech and Longin Mażewski proposed universal privatization as a tool capable of creating it. It was not an original idea, because in countries where the sociological dimension of the appropriation was strongly emphasized, the focus was on the empowerment of small shareholders. It was characteristic of the "people's capitalism", proclaimed by Ludwik Erhard at the congress of the CDU in Hamburg in 1957 and for the subsequent re-privatization of the public sector in Austria, where it was also about the social privatization (*soziale Privatisierung*). The social motif was clearly intertwined with fiscal motives in numerous re-privatization undertakings. Conservatives openly declared aim was the British folk capital market (*people's capital market*). It was a conscious process of creating - through direct, indirect and not capitalizing savings - a broader layer of risk-taking individuals, necessary work revitalize the economy, building economic culture (*enterprise culture*). It was also in France and other Western countries.

The universal and mass privatization of J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg was supposed to be a top-down transformation of the amorphous state ownership into a decentralized system of individual and

¹⁶ **Tusk D.**, Vision of Parliament in the new Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warsaw, 1995, p. 43.

voluntary powers over the existing production assets¹⁷. According to J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg, the effects of the transfer of ownership rights to a wide range of society would not only be a radical socialization of the dispersing economy, but also the spread of private property, the creation of a market economy and the creation of "property specialists" - middle class representatives. The parcel of state property meant that every Polish household would have the property right "which will soon be able to try on the stock market"¹⁸.

The result of the reflections of J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg was the idea of taking over the re-privatization of all natural persons over 18 years of age who were Polish citizens. They would receive nominal property bills of 2 million zlotys (today's 200 zlotys, approximately 40 sterling pounds). They could be used only for one purpose: as a right to take shares of equivalent value. The holder of the voucher could choose the moment in which he appears on the stock exchange as a potential shareholder, knowing the fixed schedule of re-privatization with the dates of introduction of individual companies on the stock exchange. Apart from the issue of ordinary bearer shares, the issue of preference shares of the company concerned was also issued to its employees. It would take over these shares for vouchers or buy them with a rebate, thus providing the right amount of voting power at the shareholders meeting. The legal form was obtained by Janusz Lewandowski and Jan Szomburg in the Act of 30th April 1993 on national investment funds and their privatization (*Ustawa z dnia 30 kwietnia 1993r. o narodowych funduszach inwestycyjnych i ich prywatyzacji*). The law envisaged the conversion of about 5% of state-owned companies into commercial law companies and the transfer of their shares to national investment funds. It was intended to transfer the shares of commercialized businesses to two types of funds:

1. Common investment fund;
2. Compensation fund investment.

National investment funds (NIF), in accordance with the law, were state-owned companies with the aim of managing privatized state-

¹⁷ **Lewandowski J., Szomburg J.**, Property as a threshold for economic reform. Economic Alternative, *Political Review*, 1991, 14, p. 25.

¹⁸ Ibid.

owned companies. The shares of these companies themselves were subject to the following division:

1. 60% of shares had to hit different NIFs, however, one NIF held a 33% controlling stake, while the rest, 27%, received each NIF equally, and 15% of those shares were reserved for the management company of the NIF as compensation. For her work;
2. 15% of the shares went free to company employees;
3. 25% of the shares were held by the State Treasury to subsidize the social security system or as a compensation fund for employees of the budgetary sphere or pensioners.

By assessing the above distribution of shares, attention should be paid to the appropriation of the NIF and its management boards to the dissemination of the rest of the shareholders. This is because they have become the real owners of commercialized businesses. In addition, the employees of the privatized company were too comfortable to participate in both the privatization of their company and the Universal Share Certificate (*Powszechnie Swiadectwo Udzialowe*; USC) equivalent to one share in each NIF. The USC itself cost 10% of the average monthly salary announced by Polish Central Statistics Office and the approximate valuation of shares received by one citizen was estimated at about 20 thousand polish zlotys (approximately 5 sterling pounds)¹⁹.

Among the proposals for emancipation, a special attention should be drawn to Compensation Share Certificate, which was to be distributed free of charge to persons who did not receive valorization of their benefits or wages from the government in the second half of 1991. In concluding the program of universal privatization, it should be emphasized that, at the moment of specifying the NIF and their privatization, it completely abandoned the idea of creating a middle class. Its purpose has been to seize state-owned enterprises, improve their market position, and compensate for the absence of increases in the budgetary sphere. The main weakness of the program was the limited scope of privatization, which covered only 10% of state-owned enterprises at that time, which, even in mass participation, could not provide the capital needed to create their own businesses. The proposals of J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg were not unanimously accepted by

¹⁹ **Thieme J.**, Republic of Investors, *Wprost*, 1991, 3-4, p. 24.

the Liberal Democratic Congress. Part of the Gdańsk liberals saw the shortcomings of the Universal Privatization Program.

The leaders of the opposition in the Congress were Lech and Longin Mażewskis, who, because of their lack of acceptance for their privatization program, left the Congress and joined the Conservative Party of Alexander Hall. Even as members of the Congress, they proposed a commercialization project at the Congress of the Congress (17th June 1992), competing against the then-program of J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg. The main assumptions of the mass and universal privatization of Mażewskis were:

1. System of credit vouchers;
2. Regionalization of privatization rights;
3. Regionalization of stock exchanges;
4. Use of NIF for privatization purposes²⁰.

The authors of the concept of credit vouchers referred to the idea of Lech Wałęsa, "100 million zlotys for everyone" (today's 10.000 polish zlotys, approximately 2.000 sterling pounds). According to L. Walesa, every adult citizen was eligible to receive a loan of 10.000 American dollars, which had to be repaid within 20 years. However, for the first 10 years, one's would not be charged interest. In 11 years the interest rate would be 10% per annum. So repaying the loan earlier, the citizen could count on lower investment costs. In the concept of L. Walesa, to which the brothers Mażewski referred to, the sum received could be used to repay debts, purchase state and communal property, and purchase shares of commercialized enterprises²¹. The whole process of privatization in accordance with this concept should become the domain of individual teams counting a number of voivodeships, to which 20% of the proceeds from the commercialization of enterprises would be charged.

Privatization, in line with the concept of a conservative Congress option, should be done with reprivatization through reprivatization bills, as well as returns in kind where possible. The property repatriate was to be the National Repurchase Fund, which had the power to exchange reprivatization vouchers for shares of commercial enterprises (at central

²⁰ **Mażewski L.**, Mass and Universal Privatization, Wydawnictwo Trio, Gdansk, 1993, p.32.

²¹ **Mażewski L.**, Privatization on Credit, *Dziennik Bałtycki*, 1992, 42, p. 19.

level) or financial assets (at local level). Another point of the Mażewski brothers program was the division into the central stock exchange and its regional counterparts. This would allow access to the capital markets of smaller and lesser-known privatized state-owned and private companies, for which certain conditions of admission to the markets were relaxed, such as period of operation and size. On the other hand, at central level they would have to be the subject to all restrictions.

The conservative option program of the Liberal-Democratic Congress also assumed a modification of the rules for the formation and functioning of the NIF. As a result of these changes, the NIFs would become joint stock companies of the Treasury and management companies. Citizens could place credit bundles in the selected fund, which would force competition between them for investors. The authors of the concept claimed that the result of mass credit would be the emergence of the middle class. Thanks to it, according to Lech and Longin Mażewski, the transformation of Poland would take place not as a result of the administration, but due to the forces actively interested in defending and deepening "democratic capitalism". They believed that "the property revolution would lead to the individual interest joining the common interest"²². In summary, the Congress conservative option program assumed universality, despite the emphasis on participating only in the most active entities – people capable of multiplying the acquired capital and returning it after a maximum of 20 years. Moreover, it did not put the employees or managers of the privatized enterprises in a privileged position. It is therefore possible for authors to conceive that the aim was to create a middle class by using regional instruments as close as possible to the citizen. Also worth mentioning is the combination of privatization and reprivatisation, which J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg overlooked in total silence. The presentation of liberal privatization projects in Poland after 1989 aiming at the creation of the middle class allows us to answer the question posed at the beginning. Liberal projects seem to confirm the following thesis: they believed that the best way to create a middle class, then limited to entrepreneurs and consolidating it in the structure of Polish society, would be to provide

²² **Mażewski L.**, *Mass ...*, Op. cit., p. 56.

capital to citizens. They will use it to invest not only in their own home but also in building or strengthening their own businesses.

The privatization project of J. Lewandowski and J. Szomburg suffered an absolute defeat not in the Poles but in the NIF, their management companies and the employees of the commercialized companies. The concept of Mażewski brothers was definitely a better solution. It had the potential to cover all Poles by providing them with capital in the form of a preferential loan. It was not a money distribution, because on the borrower's side was born a debt, which after a maximum of 20 years should be returned. The concept of mass and universal privatization put emphasis on entrepreneurship and accountability, not just past *condictio sine* the development of capitalism, but also the development of the middle class. The results of Polish privatization were much more modest than the expectations of the liberals. As a result of the universal privatization program, citizens received a voucher of today's value of PLN 20, which in no way could help them run a business or secure a substantial investment. Common Stock Certificates were often sold after a while from purchase at the same bank where they were obtained. Until now, most citizens have not been deprived of their citizenship. Perpetual usufruct, cooperative and communal property are just some examples of areas the privatization of which has been lost.

The development of the middle class took place without political elites, including those liberal proponents interested in current profits from the commercialization of enterprises. He made it in the midst of small business - trade, services, small production. Today's small entrepreneurs started their businesses with the introduction of the economic laws of Mieczysław Rakowski and Mieczysław Wilczka, and developed them without the capital inflow from privatized companies. Privatization itself has preserved the division of Poles into: the class of beneficiaries of change, and those who have come to their own positions. The potential for dissatisfaction has become a breeding ground for parties interested in gaining access to power.

The authors of the presented conceptual errors can be seen in the desire to shape the Polish society in accordance with their will and imagination. The strategy adopted by them was erroneous. Instead of limiting state participation in the process of economic and social

reconstruction, they carried out active pro-state economic and social policies. They could not reduce the burden on the middle class. Liberals considered these burdens to guarantee funds for its development. In fact, the middle class in Poland was born outside of the liberals.

Regionalism. Some representatives of the Gdańsk liberals, including D. Tusk, had at least an ambivalent attitude towards Poland. For D. Tusk: "Polishness is abnormality (...) Polishness invokes invariably the reaction of rebellion: history, geography, historical bad luck and God knows what else has thrown on my shoulders a burden that I have no special desire to carry and I can not dump I want anyway?, Burn the badge and make it proudly"²³. The source of this dual relationship to the homeland can be seen in the double identity of the national part of the Gdańsk liberals. Many of them were Kashubs or had Kashubian origin, among others D. Tusk and J. Szomburg.

The solution to Polish problems was regionalism for the liberals in Gdańsk. In their understanding, this was a far broader concept than folklore, folk and ritual. Indignation caused them to limit the idea of regionalism only to the cultural sphere²⁴. They considered regionalism to be a political movement intended to defend the values threatened by central government, progress, egalitarianism and unification²⁵.

The goal of regionalism was to allow Pomerania and other aspirations of self-government to be understood not as a rebellion against the center, but as an active participation in the reform of the whole state, to realize the regional system²⁶. The autonomy of small homeland was to be achieved not with Poland but with regard to central bureaucracy²⁷. D. Tusk proposed:

1. Intensifying the existing ways of functioning of regional organizations by promoting regional culture and self-education of future local government staff;

²³ **Tusk D.**, The Broken Pole, *Znak*, 1987, No. 11-12, 12-15.

²⁴ Confused in Action - Regionalism Today, *Pomerania.Socio-Cultural Monthly*, 1998, 12, p. 14; **Tusk D.**, Vision ..., Op. cit., p. 17.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pomeranian Regional Idea, Paper presented at the 2nd Kashubian Congress, *Pomerania.Socio-Cultural Monthly*, p. 2.

²⁷ Strong Regions - a Strong Country, *Pomerania. Socio-Cultural Monthly*, 1992, 4, p. 7.

2. Undertaking a broad educational campaign, showing the dangers of a centralized state model and the opportunity arising from the decentralization of power;
3. Establishing closer cooperation between regional unions;
4. Improving and enhancing the effectiveness of lobbying in the Sejm and the Senate, and in particular gaining the regional ideas of the individual members of those clubs which remain indifferent to the issues of regionalization;
5. Establishing contacts with entrepreneurial circles, and in particular with regional chambers of commerce and private capital clubs. "An increasing number of such circles are interested in increasing the role of local government, as decentralization provides greater opportunities for effective control of taxpayer dollars"²⁸;
6. Working on a specific economic program that addresses the realities and capabilities of individual regions;
7. Preparing for the election campaign together with the political parties which are ready to implement the idea of regionalism²⁹.

The Lech Mażewski's program of "Regionalism of Administration" was an attempt to apply the idea of regional self – government to reality. This concept was based on the decentralization of administrative activities in accordance with the principles of democracy and participation in the functioning of a given self – government unit of its citizens. This participation, according to the author's intent, consisted of the participation of individuals in the election of representatives of municipal and provincial assemblies as well as the activity of pressure groups aimed at realizing the interests of specific communities. Democracy in Lech Mażewski's project was not limited to the choice of the representatives of the organs - assemblies or councils, but also the manner of cooperation between them. It is worth noting that the system of self–government did not propose the introduction of intermediate units between voivodeships and districts.

The key issue of the project was the demarcation between the competence of the municipality, which should be autonomous and the

²⁸ Pomeranian Regional Idea, Op. cit., p. 11.

²⁹ Ibid.

tasks entrusted to it by the state. In the sphere of its own actions the municipality should not be constrained by the supervision and management of the central authorities. The organizational chart of the municipality included:

1. Representative Assembly – council board or council;
2. Executive body - board of municipalities, cities;
3. The head of the municipality, the president of the city;
4. Administrative staff.

The number of members of the representative assembly and the executive body should depend on the number of inhabitants of the given local government unit. The democratic election of members of municipal councils should take place in the absolute majority system in two rounds. The condition for selection is that the candidate receives more than half of all valid votes in the constituency. The assembly is chaired by the head of the municipality, or mayor of the city, who has an advisory or deciding vote depending on whether or not he is a member of the council. The body convening the board meeting is in turn the board. The project assumes a general presumption of competence in local council issues. In addition, it has the right to issue local acts and the status of administrative staff. Central authority may also advise the municipality of its competence on the tasks entrusted by statute.

The board is similar to the collegiate board, except that individual board members do not have individual rights. It is made up of members headed by the head of the municipality. Executive election takes place in democratically elected councils from among its members for a term of office. The Management Board shall act in accordance with its rules of procedure after the Chief Executive has been appointed. In addition, in moments important for the functioning of a given small homeland the main task of the board is to implement the resolutions of the council and their own, as well as the current reporting of matters of the municipality.

The head of the municipality (city president) appoints and dismisses the council for an indefinite period of time. Candidates for this post are presented after consultation with the board and the governor. The head not being a member of the board is the chairman of the board and he has a decisive voice there. The council only has an advisory role. In addition, he is a representative of his community and a representative of

central government. The head is also the head of administrative staff, whose numbers depend on the size of the local government unit³⁰. The supervision measures of the voivode and the central authority will be used only in relation to unlawful acts. The average level of territorial division in this program is voivodeship. The administration of the voivodeship consists of two assemblies: the resolution (voivodeship council) and the advisory (voivodeship chamber). The voivodeship is governed by the voivode, who is also subject to administrative staff. The resolution assembly consists of three types of members:

1. Deputies elected in the voivodeship;
2. Equal number of councilors nominated by the president at the request of the Prime Minister from among the citizens of particular merit for the given voivodeship;
3. Councilors elected in the democratic elections by citizens of the voivodeship twice as large as the other two groups of members of the assembly of the legislature.

The introduction of deputies to the county council has, according to Lech Mażewski, to ensure coherence between government and local government, and the inclusion of councilors nominated by the president is a compromise between the authorities and society. It is worth noting the close association of the non-elected councilor with the mandate of a deputy. At the moment of losing the right to sit in parliament, he is also deprived of the opportunity to sit on the council. The number of voivodeship councilors will be similar to that of members of municipal assemblies, depending on the number of inhabitants of the given local government unit. In parallel to the council of the municipality, voivodeship council is characterized by a general presumption of competence on matters of provincial coverage. The Voivodeship Chamber of Commerce comprises three types of members:

1. Half of them are representatives of employers' organizations, trade unions, professions, crafts and chambers of commerce;

³⁰ **Mażewski L.**, New System of Local Authorities, Presentation presented at the 1st Gdansk Congress of Liberals, 10 - 11 December 1988, *Pomerania. Socio-Cultural Monthly*, 1989, 3, p. 17.

2. 25% are recruited from enterprises specific to the given voivodeships;
3. 25% of the space is reserved for representatives of organizations dealing with ecology, public health, education and culture³¹.

The Voivodeship Chamber of Commerce has only advisory competence. The voivodeship is in turn the executive body of the voivodeship self-government without the right of veto to the resolutions of the council. The scope of its tasks vis-à-vis the voivodeship is the same as that of the municipality. Supervision over the activities of the voivodeship administration should lie with the joint commission of the two chambers of Polish Parliament. It should be noted that the presented program was, according to the author, the "institutional brake of presidential power". It enabled to disperse the negative effects of the necessary reconstruction on various local systems (Tadeusz Mazowiecki's cabinet). In addition, it mobilized local resources, which enabled him to entrust local governments with social policies and the organization of collective consumption³².

Liberal revolution. According to the "Sociological dictionary" of Krzysztof Olechnicki and Paweł Załęcki, a revolution is:

1. "The process of violent and radical changes in the existing state of affairs or the system of relations; Overturn, rapid transition from one developmental stage to another; Opposite concept of evolution";
2. "The violent change of the existing social organization and the shape of the system of the state, of the nation, of society accompanied by the usually armed attempts to exchange political elites"³³.

In addition, researchers referring to the "revolution" as a rule also take into account the criterion of mass participation, which distinguishes it from the revolts³⁴ and from the coup³⁵. For the definition of revolutions, the following are characteristic:

³¹ **Mażewski L.**, *New System...*, Op. cit., p. 18.

³² **Mażewski L.**, *Democratic Capitalism...*, Op. cit., p. 21.

³³ **Olechnicki K., Załęcki P.**, *Sociological Dictionary*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Torunskiego, Toruń, 1999, p. 177.

³⁴ **Topolski J.**, *Revolution in Modern and Modern History*, *The Quarterly of History*, 1976, 2, p. 81.

1. Violence – sudden and speedy;
2. Radicality – bringing about fundamental changes in social life;
3. Massiveness – participation of a large number of people;
4. Exchange of social elites – as a result of successful revolution;
5. Violence – exert an influence on the mental process, behavior or physical condition of a group of people without their consent;
6. The social dimension of change – encompassing changes in all spheres of social life.

In addition to the above- enumerated, I would also like to distinguish:

7. Emotional and intellectual reactions characterized by revolutions, such as the eruption of mass mobilization, enthusiasm, excitement, joy, euphoria, optimism and hope, sense of power and power, joy of activism and a sense of life reasserted by exuberant aspirations and utopian visions of the near future³⁶.

Since the philosophy of liberalism adopts an evolutionary model of change in society, a revolution in the sense given above is not in line with the liberal idea. According to Karl Popper, the leading proponent of liberalism, the optimal model of social change is the partial social engineer, which consists of:

1. Institutional approach to social problems – focusing on improving the actions of individual institutions, avoiding holistic goals³⁷;
2. Small-scale social experiment that determines gradual social change in one institution at a given time³⁸;
3. Rationalism implies partial compromise and openness to criticism, so you can focus on ski indirect goals, rejecting the ultimate solution.

If the interpretation of the liberal position is the point of view of K. Popper, the term "liberal revolution" is intrinsically contradictory. In

³⁵ **Kolakowski L.**, Revolution as a Beautiful Disease, (in): Idem, "Can the Devil Be Saved and 27 Other Sermons", Wydawnictwo Trio, London, 1984, p. 101.

³⁶ **Sztompka P.**, Sociology of Social Change, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, Cracow, 2005, p. 279.

³⁷ **Popper K. R.**, Open Society and its Enemies, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw, 1993, 1, p. 120.

³⁸ **Popper K. R.**, Op. cit., p. 125.

the meantime, the Gdansk liberals, when they existed as a compact ideological group, invoked the concept³⁹.

By popularizing liberalism, D. Tusk was aware that the liberal idea could not be applied to the reality of real socialism as "it is impossible to take liberal heritage uncritically because it becomes rather embarrassing: the mechanical transfer of the concept of programs of democratic societies was and is impossible. Adopting liberalism as an ideological foundation for political action is an unprecedented experiment that requires original, interpretative and specific way of acting"⁴⁰. The term "liberal revolution" can be considered a significant novum modifying the liberal tradition. This idea has never been more widely developed, but it can be conventionally included in all those activities that do not fall within the evolutionary concept of social change⁴¹. These are:

1. Non-compliance with the law, consisting of writings, circles, groups, political parties capable of mobilizing people to mass actions such as demonstrations and strikes, whose "effect ... was to be aware of the proposal for a new social construction remaining solidarity in action with Everyone who is close to the idea of Free Poland"⁴²;
2. Exerting pressure on power – "tearing up the power of social space, which must be managed by, on the one hand, organizing social pressure, coercive coercion and, on the other, by building social, economic and political infrastructure"⁴³.

After 1989, the term "liberal revolution" was referred to the radical economic change in economics. W. Gadomski, the spokesperson for this understanding, remarked that "the transition from the stage of evolution to the stage of the so – called liberal revolution seems to be inevitable, because the possibilities for continuing the reforms according to the existing evolutionary scenario are exhausted"⁴⁴. As W. Gadomski noted, "Despite the introduction of market mechanisms into the economy,

³⁹ Popper K. R., Op. cit., p. 127.

⁴⁰ Tusk D., The Right to Politics, *Political Review*, 1989, 12, p. 24.

⁴¹ Popper K. R., Op. cit., p. 140.

⁴² Barycz A. (D. Tusk), Why? Review, *Political Review*, 1984, 2, p. 2.

⁴³ Tusk D., The Right..., Op. cit., p. 32.

⁴⁴ Gadomski W., Liberal Revolution, *Political Review*, 1991, p. 9.

it remained largely dominated by state – owned enterprises that behaved otherwise than private"⁴⁵. According to the author, "The Liberal Revolution can not be made by democratic means"⁴⁶. The only chance to do so is to find support among the beneficiaries of capitalist change. Privatization and economic policy must be subordinated to the creation of this class, which, as W. Gadomski writes, "Entrepreneurs must have access to cheap credit, even if this is contrary to anti-inflationary policies. There must also be exceptional facilities for those who want to become entrepreneurs"⁴⁷. As I tried to show, the Gdańsk liberals used the term "liberal revolution" in a different sense than in the social sciences. Referring to the definition of the concept of "revolution" presented at the beginning of this subsection, it can be stated that the Gdansk liberals have defined them apart from such features of the revolution as:

1. Violence – its role in the liberal revolution was negated by D. Tusk by the statement:

"The political ethos of the opposition of our generation is clearly changing. Until recently radical, revolutionary, believing in the sense of violent coup today, we are ready to give importance to values and concepts such as political and civic responsibility, the power bill, political culture, reason and moderation, imagination and predictability"⁴⁸;

2. The social dimension of change – The Gdansk liberals focused on the political and economic spheres bypassing the cultural sphere and in the 1990s only limited to the economic sphere⁴⁹;
3. Exchange of social elites – one of the main goals of the Gdańsk liberals was to create a middle class rather than overthrow the old social elites⁵⁰;
4. Violence – was completely negated by the Gdansk liberals.

Some of the components of the revolution in turn have been selectively accepted in the discussed concept, e.g.:

⁴⁵ Gadomski W., Op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁶ Gadomski W., Op. cit., p. 11.

⁴⁷ Gadomski W., Op. cit., p. 13.

⁴⁸ Barycz A. (D. Tusk), Op. cit., 19 – 23; Gadomski W., Op. cit., p. 17.

⁴⁹ Gadomski W., Op. cit., p. 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

5. The radical resilience of the revolution was limited to the economic sphere⁵¹;

It is also worth stressing the attitude of the Gdansk liberals to:

6. Massive – this feature of the revolution has fully endorsed;
7. Emotional reactions that would be a kind of catalyst for change in the "liberal revolution"⁵².

In conclusion it can be stated that the redefinition of the term "revolution" in the thinking of the Gdansk liberals was due, on the one hand, to the social conditions of real socialism, which were fundamentally incompatible with values accentuated by liberal traditions such as free market and democracy, and, on the other, limiting the role of coercion in social change. The formation of the term "liberal revolution" by social conditions – the experience of totalitarian communism and fascism draws the attention of Bruce Ackerman. For him, "the goal of revolutionary liberals is not a radical transformation of human nature. Liberalism wants to support, not suppress, the extraordinary variety of human aspirations. It aims to work for social justice in terms of the distribution of opportunities for individual growth and development"⁵³. This is how "liberal revolution" was understood by the liberal Gdansk.

The Gdańsk Liberals and Liberal-Democratic Congress

The road to their own political party for the Gdansk liberals began on 24th of February 1989, when an application was submitted for registration of the Gdansk Socio-Economic Society "Congress of Liberals". Their ideological declaration, which was signed by all the leading representatives of the "Political Review" (D. Filar, J. Lewandowski, Lech Mażewski, D. Tusk, J. Szomburg) was, as they wrote about it, "long distance work"⁵⁴ and boiled down to the following:

1. Support for private entrepreneurship and other forms of economic activity of citizens;

⁵¹ **Doniecki T.**, Op. cit., p. 11.

⁵² **Gadomski W.**, Op. cit., p. 11.

⁵³ **Ackerman B.**, The Future of the Liberal Revolution, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw 1996, p. 16.

⁵⁴ Ideological Declaration of the Gdansk Socio-Economic Society, Congress of Liberals, *Political Review*, 1989, 12, p. 28.

2. Actions for the re-privatization of the Polish economy and the appropriation of citizens;
3. Rebuilding the ethos of entrepreneurship, working culture and the climate of social trust in market institutions and private property;
4. Inspire the authentic forms of self – organization of the economic environment for the defense of his interests;
5. The pursuit of full democratization of life at the basic and regional level;
6. Action for the gradual democratization of central political institutions and the reconstruction of constitutional order⁵⁵.

Most of the above mentioned points were in principle common to people with different political orientations at the turn of the 80s and 90s. Among them are the theses 2, 3 and 4, which appear to be the result of the influence of the concept of democratic capitalism of M. Novak. The Declaration was not a political program. It was about to come out a year later during the founding conference of the Liberal Democratic Congress. There were loudspeaker slogans implicitly included in the "Political Review", repeated later in "Marriot Hotel Theses" (November 15, 1990), together with statements from the already mentioned article by J. Lewandowski and L. Szomburg, on:

1. Freedom is understood as "the value of the superior and the first principle of social order that can and will be guaranteed only where respect for the permanent values of human settlements among moral norms"⁵⁶. Freedom that leads to material inequalities according to the Gdansk liberals "a price worth paying for creativity and social wellbeing," favoring "the formation of political, economic and cultural elites appreciated especially in the development and civilization of every society"⁵⁷;
2. Private property – the "material guarantee of human freedom" that justifies and restricts "property in freedom" by creating "civil society"⁵⁸;

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Program Declaration of the Liberal Democratic Congress, D. Tusk (eds.), "Ideas of Gdansk Liberalism", Wydawnictwo Gdanskich Liberalow, Gdańsk, 1998, p. 190.

3. Economic rebirth which could only be achieved "through the development of private entrepreneurship organized in a market competition system" based on the "freedom of transaction and individual ownership"⁵⁹.

During the presidential campaign in December 1990 the Gdansk liberals gained an unexpected promoter – Lech Wałęsa – who benefited from their help (especially Janusz Merkel, Andrzej Zarębski and Jacek Kozłowski), established a plenipotentiary Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, the chairman of the Liberal Democratic Congress political council. The influence of Congress in Walesa's center of power was one of the sources of Congress's election success. The party gained 7.5% of the support in the parliamentary elections (October 27, 1991), which allowed it to enact 37 Members of Parliament (J. K. Bielecki won the nationwide 115,000 votes). Despite its success, however, this was the beginning of the end of ideological liberalism. This period was named by Bogusław Mazur, journalist of "Wprost", "a quarter of the liberals"⁶⁰ due to the participation of their representatives in the highest authorities of the state from 12th of January 1991 to 5th of December 1991. J.K. Bielecki became Prime Minister, J. Lewandowski Minister of Property Transformations, Andrzej Zawisłak Minister of Industry and Trade, Press Spokesman A. Zarębski, next ministers joined Michał Boni (Minister of Labor and Social Policy), Krzysztof Żabiński (Head of the Council Office of Prime Minister), Robert Głębocki (Minister of National Education) and J. Kozłowski (Director of the Government Press Office). Paweł Piskorski and Lech Mażewski were also nominated as special advisers to the Council of Ministries. Bielecki's government was, however, a return to "pragmatic liberalism", characterized by: "expecting that liberalism will ever be in Poland, because today the response of economic operators to market signals is limited or very weak. This is no longer a liberal proceeding. Going further, it can be said that the purpose of this government is to participate in the state building market economy, and this is not quite a liberal slogan, but that is reality"⁶¹. The "invisible hand

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ **Mazur B.**, The Quadrant of the Liberals, *Wprost*, 1991, 8, p. 13.

⁶¹ J. K. Bielecki was aware that the Congress was promoted thanks to him. In discussion ("Political Review" 1991, No. 13, p. 9) Bielecki spoke of this fact as follows: "Let us not forget that the political advancement of the Congress is directly

of the market" disappeared – it was the title of one of the commentaries on the action of Bielecki's government. At that time widespread opinion was that "it is a paradox that the liberal-led government is going to take a decision from liberalism so distant"⁶². Exposé of Bielecki began by the following statement: "My desire is not to lose hope of those who have it and that those who do not have it can gain it"⁶³. However, in the following paragraphs there are economic conclusions. The goal of reforms was unequivocally defined: market economy and the building of political and economic foundations of freedom. More than about the mechanisms of action, Bielecki spoke about the people and the opportunities offered to them by the free market. He appealed particularly to young people, seeing the future beneficiaries of change. The whole speech was accompanied by the belief that millions of people could be involved in the process of building capitalism. The task of the government was to open the fields for human energy and entrepreneurship. At that time, the liberals of Gdansk began to move away from the universal privatization program. The change in thinking occurred in the Cetniew Program: "Poland: towards democratic capitalism" (May 19, 1991). Their policy has become more "rational and pragmatic"⁶⁴, which de facto meant moving away from the universal privatization program. The road to rapid growth of the middle class has become a popularization of property by "creating the conditions for honest enrichment through entrepreneurship and diligence"⁶⁵. The first step was to open Poland for foreign capital that should participate in "transformations of the nationwide ownership structure and its adaptation to world market requirements"⁶⁶. Transformation itself ceased to be the most important element of the Congress ideology, as economic success began to be defined as "strong money, future – oriented industrial and

related to my person, my promotion. And neither my nor my congressional policy; Paradoxically, the lack of political significance of the liberals and of my person was one of the major leaps up".

⁶² "No I have conflicts of conscience", *Interview with J. K. Bielecki*, Youth Banner, 24-26 May 1991, p.15.

⁶³ Bielecki J.K. (in:) D. Tusk, *Ideas of Gdansk Liberalism*, Op. cit., p. 46.

⁶⁴ *Cetniew Program Poland: towards democratic capitalism*, (in:) D. Tusk (ed.), *Ideas of Gdansk Liberalism*, (Op. Cit.), p. 220.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

agricultural policy"⁶⁷. In the manifesto of the Liberal Democratic Congress, the liberals of Gdansk stated that they must become "a party of the Polish right in the conservative line, referring to the republican tradition of our statehood"⁶⁸. The privatization itself at that time became only a means of "selling large state-owned enterprises to the investor, taking into account their financial obligations"⁶⁹. The last idea for the implementation of Liberal Democratic Congress liberalism in Poland was to tie up its electorate with the quasi – middle class of the early 90s – entrepreneurs. The expression was the Pact with a private company (October 25, 1992), and in particular the statement that it was necessary to "guarantee the representatives of Polish capital more influence on the government's economic policy".

Conclusion

The above presentation proves that the Gdansk liberals issue is worthy of further indepth studies. Their role in the beginning of Polish democracy and Polish capitalism is definitely not appreciated not only by ordinary Poles, but also by researchers. It was not only an original phenomenon but also a very intriguing one. Their deepened analysis would help to understand a number of phenomena not only in Poland but in all of Eastern Europe.

⁶⁷ The identity of the Liberal-Democratic Congress, *D. Tusk (eds.), Ideas of Gdansk Liberalism*, Op. cit., p. 140.

⁶⁸ Pact with a private enterprise, *D. Tusk (eds.), Ideas of Gdansk Liberalism*, Op. cit., p. 160.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*