Symbolic politics of public time and collective memory. The Polish case

ELZBIETA HALAS

Institute of Sociology, Catholic University of Lublin, Aleje Raclawickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland. E-mail: halas@kul.lublin.pl. http://www.kul.lublin.pl/halas/

Symbolic construction of the state identity is analysed, along with the symbolic politics of the state toward the past. The great systemic change is conceived as a symbolic transformation where the growth of semiotic behaviour is clearly noticeable. The analysis deals with the changes in the public holidays calendar in Poland: the communist symbolic strategies, symbolic politics of the Solidarity movement and the anti-politics of symbolization in the third Republic of Poland. It discusses problems of the symbolic control of historicity.

Symbolic transformation

Despite the ongoing liberal criticism of such ways of shaping social order and of thinking about social life, in which a certain form of community is described as really existing, it is possible to notice the increase of value of what is communal. Here, the interest in the issue of collective identity is the best example. There is no doubt that the identity of the nation-state has been the principal organizing social unit and symbolic formation in Europe.[1] This symbolic coding undergoes transformation as the politics of European integration proceeds. On the other hand the post-communist transformation has been channelled by symbolic politics of emancipated nation-states.

Poland, the case in question – usually a question of a nation and its identity has been in the centre of interest for Polish sociologists who, as a rule, follow Florian Znaniecki[2] and assume a culturalistic understanding of the imagined, and thus a symbolically constructed, national community of values. It has been perceived as distinct from the identity of the political society – the state. As I intend to show in the following paragraphs, the state identity is also an extremely important manifestation of Polish collective identity. Moreover, it is the identity

of a nation-state that, after the breakthrough of 1989 and the change of political system, is the object of competing definitions and politics.[3] Among the three terms that can be referred to the discussed issue, i.e. political culture, collective memory and politics of symbolization, the last one seems to be the best expression of a perspective with which to analyse the Polish nation-state identity.

After the fall of communism, historians, most eagerly covering the new research ground, describe it as a 'promised land of collective memory'.[4] Repeatedly, they are close to turning collective memory into a hypostasis as if memory could be a social-cultural force acting independently. It is a delusive assumption because it is not the past and memory of it that shape the present, but the present that makes use of the past, creating memory or, rather, it is done by the actors of social change drama. Images of the past legitimate a present social order but also knowledge of the past affects experiences of the present.[5] The 'great' social change, as the epochal character of the fall of communism is often described, unveils, to use a metaphor, the structure and functioning of a social organism that unavoidably is affected by social trauma,[6] which appears to be a characteristic for collective mentalities. The symbolization practices regarded as obvious, almost imperceptible in the period of a systemic *status quo* become persistent. The great social change provides strong arguments for a constructivist approach to social reality. Travestying the title of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's work *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966) we can deal with the symbolic construction of social reality. At the same time, it is to be remembered that symbols should not be fetishized, although they happen to function as such in social experience. Symbols are not like 'things' even if they are embodied in material objects. Their meaning as symbols is derived from their use in action, discourse, practice, ritual or ceremony. The changes of symbol use are the result of competition and conflict over the control of constructing social reality, competition for its meaning. As Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspienski pointed out, during periods of radical social change there is a noticeable increase of semioticism of behaviour.[7] The politics of remembering and forgetting different aspects of collective historical experience conducted by means of social symbolism is a form of social struggle in the field of culture.

Identity, a symbolic complex, is a construct, both in the case of individual and collective identity. Following the analogy between an individual and collective agent it can be said that collective identity is actually a multitude of identities, of situational identities and role identities in a historical drama. It also consists of more permanent historical meanings, as in the biographical identity of an individual. In the public area, the calendar of holidays is an important framework of collective identity, both in primitive and post-modern societies. Social change obviously affects the temporal order of a social group and its recollection of the past. This fact is often registered by inaugurating a new calendar. It is the

embodiment of the social memory transmitted by explicitly backward-looking rites.[8] Great changes, of which the French Revolution is a paradigmatic example, require new qualifications of collective identity to serve the coordination of collective action and take place by means of that very symbolic instrument. The transformation of the public holidays calendar in Poland after 1989 and its diversity of meanings will be briefly presented here.

The analysis of change in a public holidays calendar can show the function of public symbol construction as far as the collective identity of a nation-state is concerned. It led to the conclusion that the Solidarity movement failed to define historicity. Solidarity did not take control over historicity[9] through symbolic objectivization of its achievements. The construction of the Solidarity identity referred to the memory of the past being regained as well as to dialectics of a socialist utopia and real socialism, but not to the historical future. Before I attempt to analyse the different politics of symbolization during the Polish People's Republic, the Solidarity period and the Third Republic of Poland, I will outline the basic ideas related to the 'social labour' of symbols in general and for the state's identity in particular.

Social symbolism

There is a rich tradition inscribed in the works of George H. Mead, Kenneth Burke, Robert M. MacIver, Harold Duncan and others of investigating the relation between symbols and society, but still we do not know well enough how symbolic forms shape social life and vice versa. The term 'symbolism' was permanently inscribed into the sociological dictionary in Europe by Émile Durkheim and his disciples, and in the USA by G. H. Mead, followed by the symbolic interactionists. The present ideas of Pierre Bourdieu[10] provide yet another synthesis and integration of at least the two sociological traditions mentioned above. It does not mean, however, that there is an adequate theory of social symbolism and several justifications can be given. The main reason seems to be what Raymond Boudon and François Bourricau[11] describe as a split of that theory into two distinct directions. On one hand, a symbol is identified with what is imagined, contrary to the principle of reality, on the other hand, a symbol is reduced to a cognitive code in culture. Too much attention has been paid to content – meaning – instead of symbolic forms and their functions. Here Durkheim's *Les formes élementaires de la vie religieuse* is not outdated for the analysis of modernity but the argument that society is actually symbolic remains to be thoroughly researched.[12]

The functional point of view on social symbolism as an integral part of established social relations led to research into symbolization politics, because the relationship of power remains central in all types of social relations. According to Abner Cohen *homo symbolicus* is simultaneously *homo politicus*, a two-dimen-

sional man,[13] hence the proposal of the systematic study of interdependence of power relations and symbolic actions in society.

An outline of the theoretical problems of social symbolism, or symbolic sociology, requires a pragmatic orientation to be emphasized, as the most commensurate with the sociological perspective, based on the theory of social action. It means investigating not symbols standing for themselves but the use of symbolism. Here, sociology also meets history. The investigation of symbolization politics enters the area of competition, or, as Alain Touraine says, the definition of the meaning of historicity.[14] The analyses presented here enter the tradition of research on symbolic or semantic creativity and symbolic aspects of power.[15] Public ceremonies and rituals are manifestations of wielding power. Through the creation of such cultural forms, the symbolic construction of social reality and the definition of objects of political action take place. Power or authority manifests itself first in its own symbolism and ceremonies.[16] Geertz also stresses that policy requires mystification with the help of various semantic cultural frameworks.[17]

With these remarks, one should come closer to the definition of the notion of symbolism. Symbols should be understood as objective, collective phenomena, pointing to patterns of normative actions that are different from utilitarian or technical ones, which are manipulated during the struggle for power, are expressive and, at the same time, instrumental. They are objects, symbolic vehicles, actions, behavioural symbolism, as well as notions and linguistic formations. Discursive symbolism, which in an ambiguous way points to meanings, being about sentiments, induces action.[18] Symbolism is a means of introducing conformism into society.[19] It provides the foundation for the institutionalization of actions.

The above outline of social symbolism questions allows the diminution of the basis of analysis presented here. It covers the change of political system in a symbolic dimension that I regard as constitutive. Therefore, if society is imminently a symbolic phenomenon, the means of its change consist of the use of symbolism. In Poland, the establishment and observance of the calendar of holidays, as a form of symbolic action, will be presented as an expression of power relations between the main collective actors of change – Solidarity and Post-communist groups. It is a functional and pragmatic approach to the calendar of public holidays as a means of using the meaning of historical events in the context of political system change.

Symbolic representation of community

It is impossible to pass over the research of symbolization in the process of constructing sociological theory. Symbols bring about social integration, sustain

the order of social relations whose principles are determined by the differentiation in the horizontal dimension between familiars and strangers and, in the vertical dimension, differentiation in the social hierarchy. Classification (Bourdieu), or typization (Schütz), is abasis of creating the participants in social life out of concrete individuals. Society is not however a sum of individuals, or even a set of relations between them and their social identities. Society is a system of groups and institutionalized inter-group relations. As Alfred Schütz has observed, society manifests itself in symbolism. Social communities and institutionalized relations are not within the reach of everyday experience of the individual. They are only symbolically accessible constructs of common sense thinking.[20] Referring to Eric Voeglin, Schütz analyses the way social and political organizations appear in experience. He states that the more stabilized and institutionalized social relations are within a given organization, the more perceptible are their symbols. Schütz, similarly to other representatives of different trends of structural constructivism, analyses the culturally objectivized way of society's existence. Objectivization of the community takes place by means of symbolic practices and their symbolic representation. They create the collective identity of a community. Every group, not only a primary one, is a community, has common values and a communication system. The reality of the community is expressed and distinguished symbolically. A community is distinguished as an entity by symbolic boundaries. The metaphor of a 'boundary' refers to everything that appears as a contrast replacing its opposite. 'The boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world; it is the community's public face,' says Cohen.[21] The features of objective unity are thus given to communities by means of symbolization, beginning with their name, through symbols of group authority, to all symbolic suggestions of common values, including continuity of existence. The social history of a group is thus a counterpart of an individual biography. Similarly, both in the case of an individual biography and a collective social history, they are a result of the selective construction of the past. It should be stressed that the individual's or group's way of referring to the past indicates first of all a situation in which that characteristic reference to the past takes place.

All the above statements relate also to the sociological concept of a state as a political community of which a particular aspect is the subject of the present analysis. According to sociological understanding, the state is not the legal and political system, but the social group. It is a kind of collective identity, or a social value, an object and a subject of social actions of individuals and groups. Objectivization of the state takes place through the use of symbolism: territory, name, emblems, buildings, monuments, etc, symbolize a state group that confirms its existence in rituals. The past of a state group, or a political community, is a specific common value.

Symbolic politics of the state towards the past

The national state, and the European nation-state in particular, is a historical formation. Similarly, the symbolization of its identity emerged historically. Here, I refer to a well-known study by Eric Hobsbawm.[22] He showed that the period between 1870–1914 was a time of modern symbolic inventions, discovering traditions, the institutionalization of symbols and symbolic practices: capital cities, flags, national anthems, and state holidays. (The first national anthem appears to have been the British one (1740) and the first national flag was the French.) Hobsbawm distinguished three types of 'invented traditions': symbolizing the social cohesion, the membership in the group of a real or artificial community; legitimizing institutions, statutes, or relations of authority; socializing, conveying beliefs, systems of values, and principles of behaviour.[23] They were the instruments of keeping obedience and loyalty, and the legitimization of the modern state in the experience of its citizens. After the French Revolution, those problems became extremely important, together with the development of mass movements impairing the existing social order, particularly the divine legitimization of state authority through the King and the Church.

Different methods of consolidating loyalty ties were used. Hobsbawm claims that 'In the nature of things, the consequent invention of political traditions was more conscious and deliberate, since it was largely undertaken by institutions with political purposes in mind'.[24] Symbolic inventions helped to define people as citizens and determined their civic existence. Among these, an important role was assigned to the new public holidays for which the revolutionary calendar of 1789 was a new attempt at defining social time and a collective memory framework, and which remained a paradigmatic pattern.[25] The reform of the calendar expressed the revolutionary attitude towards time. The French Revolution was characterized by the conviction of the coming of a new Era of Freedom. Intensified ideological and symbolizational activity was its visible sign. The reform of the calendar was seen as a historical imperative. The irreversibility of historical change was to be institutionalized. Among the characteristic features of invented traditions, I would like to point to their functional relationship with the present, the response to novel situations by reference to old ones.

Pierre Nora calls these symbolic inventions 'places of memory' (*les lieux de mémoire*). He terms them as a game of memory and history, which is always a questionable reconstruction.[26] Iwona Irvin-Zarecka rightly points out not only the theoretical but also the social importance of research into the dynamics of collective memory. The ways of describing the Communist past can prove to be an important factor in the future of the former Soviet Bloc countries.[27] It is a unique laboratory, drawing and directing the attention of researchers towards symbolic transformation and history written anew.[28] These problems are not exhausted by

focusing on regained memory but only stolen or negated.[29] It is necessary to analyse the strategies of using collective memory and its symbolic objectivization. The analysis of symbolization politics in the People's Republic of Poland presented by Jan Kubik[30] is helpful here. He showed that as early as in the 1970s, the pragmatization of Communist politics required a symbolic diversity of meaning in discourse and ritual. On one hand there were fixed references to Communist ideology, and on the other, new symbolic hybrids – for instance, Socialist Patriotism – were created. Another strategy of Communist propaganda consisted of oscillating between continuity and discontinuity concerning the cultural symbols and history of Poland.

During the Stalinist period, rituals of discontinuity were employed. In a revolutionary way, the national tradition was broken and a new tradition of Communism was introduced (the crown was removed from the emblem of Poland, the holidays of 3 May and 11 November were abolished, the commemoration of the beginning of Bolshevik revolution was introduced, etc). During those years, the symbolic system of Communism rejected all non-ideological cognition, but at later periods of relative stability the ambiguity of symbolic continuity and discontinuity was observed. On the other hand, the dominant strategy of the hierarchical Catholic Church and the opposition consisted of destroying symbolic hybrids by means of reconstructing the public arena independently of the Communist state and by reinvention of different traditions and symbols other than official state symbols. The holidays of 3 May and 11 November played a particularly important function. They interfered with the mythology of the power elite and its hegemony in politics. The visit of Pope John Paul II in Poland in 1979 fulfilled an exceptionally important function in this respect. Nominally identical principles, patriotism and democracy, were interpreted in completely different ways. They were derived from different traditions and mythologies.

In developing the Hobsbawm concept, Kubik distinguished three strategies of using tradition: preservation, rejection and remodelling. He showed the predominance of the use by the Church and opposition of the strategy of preserving symbols, while the Communist state employed, above all, the strategy of rejection or remodelling. The strategy of preservation is based on the principle of continuity. Rejection is based on the principle of discontinuity – a complete replacement of existing traditions, symbols and rituals. Remodelling consists of introducing different new symbolic forms. The typology, presented by Kubik, of the strategy of employing tradition by the Communist authorities on one hand and hierarchical Church and opposition on the other, is a convenient starting point for the analysis of the politics of symbolization in the third Republic of Poland. The durability of a cultural framework and its meaning and its renewability for politics should be taken into account.

Politics of symbolization in the third Republic of Poland

In the sphere of public symbolism, the political breakthrough of 1989/1990 manifested itself, among other ways, in the modification of the state holidays calendar. That change, however, was based on conservative symbolization politics, consisting of the restoration of holidays abolished by the Communists. The absence of symbolic innovations resulted in the lack of a defined identity of the Third Republic of Poland in contrast to the clear identity of the Second Republic and the explicit identity of Polish People's Republic.

The analysis of the state holidays calendar in the Third Republic of Poland, largely a result of symbolic strategies and, more broadly, symbolization politics, requires a continuation of a cursory analysis of the way of using symbols in constructing the identity of the People's Republic of Poland and its deconstruction by the Solidarity movement. It requires, above all, an analysis of the symbolic functions of the public holidays calendars of the Polish People's Republic before and during the Solidarity period. It would be possible then to present different symbolization politics that are actions within the scope of the political and historical game, as a symbolization game, and to evaluate the efficacy of those policies.

The construction of the public holidays calendar of the Polish People's Republic reveals symbolization strategies typical for that Communist state, taking into account the historical context and the Polish collective mentality. First, symbolic inventions were used that allowed the creation anew, and in a revolutionary way, of their own tradition, i.e. a new genealogy and a new canon of collective identity, best described by the triad: state-nation-people. Secondly, to manifest the dissimilarity of a new state identity, impassable boundaries between old and new meanings were established. These boundaries comprised rejection of the identity symbols of the Second Republic of Poland. Ideological authoritarianism manifested itself in disallowing the crossing of those boundaries and severe sanctions against all such attempts. Thirdly, the practices of remodelling existing tradition and symbols and the employment of (speaking in post-modernist language), blurred genres and the creation of hybrid symbolic forms should be stressed. One can say that the Polish People's Republic was characterized by a specific symbolic plasticity.

The new National Holiday of the Rebirth of Poland was made an identity symbol of a new state. It was a symbolic copy of 11 November, the holiday of the rebirth of an independent state after the First World War. It was introduced by the Act of 22 July 1945, and from then on observed on 22 July, the anniversary of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) Manifesto proclamation in 1944 that was a symbolic act legitimizing the new political system. The Communist PKWN proclaimed 'for all time' (control of historicity) the rebirth

of an 'independent', 'democratic' 'Polish state'. Thus, it symbolically objec-
tivized history being made and usurped the status of a sovereign authority of the
Polish Nation. The self-styled representative had been subsequently creating the
collective identity of the society it was to represent.

On 26 April 1950, the holiday of 1 May was established to be observed for the
first time on the 60th anniversary of the first celebration of the proletariat holiday
as an expression of strengthening of the 'people's authority,' 'for documenting
the achievements and victories of the workers' class, the leading force of socialism
building the Nation'. In the Polish People's Republic, 1 May was a holiday of
power centralism.

The strategy of rejection as an expression of the politics of symbolization in
the People's Republic of Poland covered the state holiday of the Second Republic
of Poland, namely that of 11 November. That holiday should be regarded as a core
of the Second Republic's identity. It commemorated the anniversary of regaining
independence in 1918, after a period of partitions that lasted for over 120 years.
That holiday was eliminated by the Communists beyond the symbolic borders of
the system. It became a holiday of the opposition and its rebellion rituals. The
holiday of 3 May, however, became the object of strategy aimed at symbolic
remodelling, carried on by the People's Republic propaganda, of a plastic merging
of old and new meanings.

The holiday of 3 May occupies a very important place in Polish symbolism.
3 May 1791 marks the beginning of modern constitutionalism and democratic
reform. One can say that it is the basis of Polish political symbolism shaping the
identity of the state. The primary semantic layer of that symbol carries civic and
democratic connotations. The holiday of 3 May was nevertheless symbolically
modified by the Communists who started to use it symbolically right after the
Second World War. From 1949, referring to the symbolic layer of the
Enlightenment Constitution, 3 May marked the beginning of Education, Book and
Press Days as a form of symbolic remodelling of the old holiday. In 1982, after
the introduction of martial law, 3 May was transformed into an official holiday
of the Democratic Party, an ally of the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR). Thus,
the Communist authorities were again legitimized with nationalist phraseology.
The holidays of 1 May and 3 May coexisted during the People's Republic of
Poland as vehicles of populist political culture: socialist and nationalist.[31]

Despite different evaluations of the Solidarity movement, researchers agree that
it conducted, first of all, symbolic politics.[32] Actions of the movement were
outright oversymbolized. Ritualization that helped coordinate the collective
non-violent action of the symbolic movement was thus possible. The term
'symbolic movement' seems to be more adequate than 'ceremonial revolution'
although Solidarity made use of ceremonies, or rituals rejecting symbols and
values of the status quo that legitimized the existing Communist political order.

It created symbols confirming alternative values, legitimizing an alternative social order, an anti-Communist society: us, not them.

Solidarity's politics of symbolization was, in major part, a politics of restoring symbols, in particular, the independent Second Republic was made a symbol. That conservative and restorational symbolic activity has solidified in the symbolism of the Third Republic, particularly in its calendar of state holidays but also in rituals accompanied by liturgical and para-liturgical acts typical for the Polish version of civil religion. Thus, Solidarity restored the holidays of 11 November and 3 May. The holidays of the People's Republic were treated with a peculiar passive resistance. The self-limiting revolution of the Solidarity movement did not eliminate them directly but by means of negligence and oblivion. Only 1 May, a paradigmatic workers' holiday required remodelling. Obviously, Solidarity as a workers' movement, could not reject symbolic connotations originating from the genesis of that anniversary date, the Chicago workers massacre of 1890, a symbol of struggle for workers', civil and human rights. It was stated, however, that the symbol in question remained a current symbol of universal democratic values present in the tradition of workers' struggle. In that concept, Solidarity restored the true meaning of that symbol. At the same time the inseparability of 1 May and 3 May was suggested and, from the symbol sustaining Communist state power, it was to become what it was before, a symbol of the emancipation movement and not contrary to the national symbol of the 3 May holiday. The previous Communist meaning, however, was not removed and its ambiguity is visible in the new context. 1 May a symbol shaped during the People's Republic and established as a state holiday during the Stalinist period, remains a troublesome holiday in the calendar of the Third Republic. There emerges a problem of what sense and what meaning that symbol can have in a post-modern society in which the importance of the great industry working class is disappearing.

In its politics of symbolization, Solidarity referred not only to restoration of symbols but, to a certain degree, also to symbolic innovations, successfully building the identity of the movement and mobilizing participation. That innovative symbolizational project should be regarded as unfinished in the Third Republic. The politics of symbolization started during the 16 months of the union's activity (August 1980 – December 1981) was called 'an explosion of collective memory'. That description is not fully adequate because the policy was not limited only to the 'return of confiscated past'. Solidarity referred, as a matter of facts, to the past acts of collective protest of 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976 that culminated in August 1980. The symbolic condensation of those acts was the series of monuments erected by Solidarity in Gdansk and in Poznan. That series of symbolic commemorations was going to lead first of all to creating the union's own myth as a vehicle of collective identity.

It is particularly meaningful that the rise of Solidarity in August 1980 was not symbolically inscribed in the calendar of the Third Republic. Although Solidarity created its own symbolism, this symbolism remains beyond the main public arena – without gaining full legitimization and giving the state its identity. Only after the 20th anniversary of August 1980 did demands emerge for a proper politics of symbolization, functional for both the internal and international political scene where the symbolic standing of Solidarity yielded to the Prague 'velvet' revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Contrary to the symbolizational strategies of the People's Republic and the strategy of constructing the identity of the Solidarity movement, the Third Republic did not employ strategies of symbolic innovations. It used only the restoration strategy of the Second Republic symbols and of rejecting symbols of the People's Republic and this led to the ambiguity of the Third Republic's identity.

The present calendar of state holidays was created in 1989, 1990 and 1992. A typical strategy of symbolization politics of the initial (transitory) period of transformation consisted of restoration, a renewal of symbols, which for many decades functioned as symbols of opposition, and neither rejection nor symbolic innovation including the inclusion of Independence Day, 11 November. That first change was made on 15 February 1989, by the People's Republic Diet during negotiations between the Communist authorities and a selected representation of the opposition, held during so-called Round Table talks. Thus, the existing rituals of rebellion, i.e. various kinds of demonstrative patriotic and opposition gestures of martial law and the People's Republic period (among others, Masses for Homeland), were recognized as legal within the public order and became rituals of legitimization of system change as symbolic transformation. On 6 April 1990, during the term of so-called Contract Diet, the holiday of 22 July, constituting the identity of the Communist state, was abolished. At the same time the national holiday of 3 May was reinstated. As late as 1992, the Communist Holiday of the Polish Armed Forces was abolished. On 30 July 1992, the Diet of the first term established 15 August as a Holiday of Polish Armed Forces. Because of its specific character, namely the fact that it was established on an important religious holiday (the Feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary) and on an anniversary of the so-called Miracle on the Vistula during the Polish–Bolshevik War of 1920, it has an important identity function. It should be stressed, however, that the holiday of 15 August is yet another example of the political manipulation of time and collective memory, consisting of a compensatory function of the Second Republic's memory being regained and in leaving the experience of People's Republic generations without symbolic objectivization.

The holiday of 1 May has neither been eliminated nor given a new justification. It is an object of symbolic struggle taking every year the form of a street

socio-drama, mutual degradation of its advocates and opponents. It is worthwhile stressing here that a symbolic policy towards the memory of the past and its ambiguity, reflects the configuration of power of post-Communist and post-Solidarity political forces in the present situation.

The symbolic inventions in building the collective identity of the People's Republic – nation-state-people – making the identification with it easier for the 'working masses', were neglected during liberal transformation after 1989. State holidays of the People's Republic were both short narrations referring to the 'great' ideological narration of the proletarian revolution and ritual performances referring to the drama of history leading to the Communist epoch of egalitarian utopia. They were mediated by a narration on the nation's emancipation. It is not easy to deconstruct that kind of nation-state-people identity and that is why a simple removal of identification symbols resulted in an empty space, a peculiar vacuum after the symbolic mobilization of People's Republic collective identity, that can be filled with different kinds of populist and nationalist mobilization referring to the experience, problems and values of ordinary people and the good of the nation's masses.

The hitherto symbolic politics, mainly restorational, have not been able to give the Third Republic its own identity as a nation-state. In that respect, because of both its innovation strategies and the remodelling of meanings, the People's Republic was a more coherent construct of collective identity. The Third Republic remains without symbolic distinguishing marks of its distinct identity. If the integration ideology of the European Union and the ideology of globalization, as well as empirical proofs of change towards a global information society provide arguments for the decline of the nation-state, then the symbolization, or anti-symbolization politics of the Third Republic of Poland are commensurate with those assumptions. However, it is doubtful that the deconstruction of the nation-state and the renouncing of sustaining modernist symbolic forms of its sublimation[33] are not premature. The new construct, a civil society without older identification entities, state, nation and the Church, is not capable of providing meanings for the construction of a collective identity.

It is symptomatic that not a single historical event marking the subsequent struggle with Communism – including the most important of the previous century, the Solidarity breakthrough that changed the map of Europe, the day of signing the so-called Gdansk Agreements – has not been included in the calendar of public holidays. Thus, Solidarity has not been objectivized temporally and symbolically and does not contribute to the state's identity. The lack of a Solidarity holiday can be regarded as a symbolic termination of the process of self-limiting revolution and of the process that led to the symbolic limitation of the definition of history. Post-communism and its ambiguity manifest themselves, most of all, in a symbolic dimension, including the ambiguities of the calendar of meaningful,

identity-creating historical events. The official calendar of state holidays does not include commemorative dates of struggle against Communism, of which Solidarity of 1980 was a pregnant symbol.

Finally, the deficit of a socializing function of the current calendar of public holidays should be pointed out. The omission of Communism and Solidarity is not conducive to the transmission of collective memory between generations and to the identification of the young generations with the new state. It is also not conducive to the socialization of civil society, civil roles, nor to democracy, the values of which also need symbolization and the vehicle of which was the myth of Solidarity. The nation-state identity of the Third Republic of Poland in reference to the People's Republic remains inadequately defined and ambiguous.

References

1. U. Hedetoft (ed.) (1998) *Political Symbols, Symbolic Politics. European Identities in Transformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate) p. 1.
2. F. Znaniecki (1952) *Modern Nationalities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).
3. E. Halas (2000) Transformation in collective imagination. *Polish Sociological Review*. **3.** 309–322.
4. A. Brossat *et al.* (1990) *Introduction*. In Brossat A. *et al.* (eds) *Á l'Est. La mémoire retrouvée* (Paris: La Découverte) pp. 11–35.
5. P. Connerton (1989) *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) p. 3.
6. P. Sztompka (2000) *Trauma wielkiej zmiany* (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk) pp. 76–86.
7. J. Lotman and B. Uspienski (1975) *O semiotycznym mechanizmie kultury.* In E. Janus and M. R. Mayenowa (eds) *Semiotyka kultury* (Warszawa: Palstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy), pp. 177–201.
8. P. Connerton (1989) *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp. 3, 45.
9. A. Touraine (1981) *The Voice and the Eye. An Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
10. P. Bourdieu (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
11. R. Boudon and F. Bourricaud (eds) (1982) *Dictionnaire critique de la sociologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), p. 547.
12. R. Heiskala (1997) *Society as Semiosis. Neostructuralist Theory of Culture and Society* (Helsinki: University of Helsinki), pp. 306f.
13. A. Cohen (1976) *Two-dimensional Man. An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
14. A. Touraine (1981) *The Voice and the Eye. An Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 31.

15. M. Edelman (1985) *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).
16. D. I. Kertzer (1988) *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
17. C. Geertz (1983) *Local Knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, Inc), p. 143.
18. A. Cohen (1976) *Two-dimensional Man. An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 23.
19. A. N. Whitehead (1985) *Symbolism. Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Fordham University Press) pp. 1, 74.
20. A. Schütz (1962) *Symbol and Society*. In A. Schütz, *The Problem of Social Reality. Collected Papers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers), pp. 347–356.
21. A. P. Cohen (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Routledge) p. 74.
22. E. Hobsbawm (1983) *Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914*. In E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 263–307.
23. E. Hobsbawm (1983) *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*. In E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 10.
24. E. Hobsbawm (1983) *Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914*. In E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 263.
25. B. Baczko (1984) *Le calendrier républicain. Décreter l'éternité*. In P. Nora (ed.) *Les lieux de mémoire* I, *La République* (Paris: Gallimard), pp. 37–83.
26. P. Nora (ed.) (1984) *Les lieux de mémoire. I. La République* (Paris: Gallimard), pp. XXXIV–XXXV.
27. I. Irvin-Zarecka (1994) *Frames of Remembrance. The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers), p. 20.
28. B. Stråth (2000) *Introduction. Myth, Memory and History in the Construction of Community*. In B. Stråth (ed.) *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community. Historical Patterns in Europe and Beyond* (Brussel: Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes), p. 31.
29. J. Le Goff (1990) *Préface*. In A. Brossat *et al. A l'Est, la mémoire retrouvée* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte), pp. 7–10.
30. J. Kubik (1994) *The Power of Symbols against the Symbols of Power: the Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press), pp. 248–259.
31. P. Zawadzki (1990) *Le 1er ou le 3 Mai? Un chassé-croisé commémoratif*. In A. Brossat *et al. A l'Est, la mémoire retrouvée* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte), pp. 342–364.
32. D. Ost (1990) *Solidarity and the Politics of Antipolitics: Opposition and Reform in Poland Since 1968* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).
33. J. F. Lyotard (1998) *Odpowiede na pytanie: co to jest postmodernizm?*

Translated by M. P. Markowski. In R. Nycz (ed.) *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekwadów* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Baran i Suszczynski), p. 54.

About the Author

Elzbieta Halas is a Professor of Sociology at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. She was Fulbright visiting scholar at the University of Illinois in 1987–1988. In 1992–1993 she won the American Council of Learned Societies Award and was affiliated at the University of Georgia. Her interests are in interpretive social theory, symbolic interactionism, social symbolism, and history of sociology.