

# Book on solidarity in Poland will interest general public

If you think you know the story of the solidarity movement in Poland but haven't read "Heroes of Solidarity: Political, Philosophical, Psychological Perspectives," the new book by Casimir J. Kowalski, Joseph P. Cangemi and Hilary S. Czaplicki, then you'd better think again. There's more to the story than you ever imagined. Much more.

Although the solidarity movement in Poland is most closely identified with Lech Walesa, its most visible and charismatic leader, the struggle to overcome Soviet domination was actually the result of a number of individuals working in concert to bring about the end of communist rule. "Heroes of Solidarity" tells the story of 11 activists who contributed to the movement in different ways and at different levels. For the most part, their stories have received very little attention – until now.

Kowalski is a professor of educational leadership and former dean of the School of Education at South Carolina State University. Cangemi is an emeritus professor of psychology at Western Kentucky University and Czaplicki is an editorial consultant and former vice president of the Polish American Congress.

"Heroes of Solidarity" is the product of a team of 13 scholars who provide unique and multidimensional perspectives into the events that unfolded in Poland beginning in the late 1970s. The book begins with a "pictorial prelude" made up of an array of photographs and captions that serve to personalize the people and events described throughout the book. These images, primarily from 1980-81, set the stage for the stories that are to come; they provide a kind of visual backdrop that helps the reader put faces with the names.

Much of the factual information in the first chapter, "The Rise of Lech Walesa," is fairly well-known, especially among historians and political scientists. What makes this account especially intriguing is the intimate manner in which the events are described. Walesa is presented as a human being as much as a player on the world stage.

Most of the 11 chapters include references that let the reader know where the information was acquired, although it is interesting to note that some chapters are more extensively documented than others. Moreover, the book could have been more accessible if a comprehensive bibliography had been included, and an index would have been particularly useful as it would have aided in cross-referencing the individuals and events described throughout the volume. These potential deficiencies notwithstanding, however, "Heroes of Solidarity" remains relatively easy to navigate and the conscientious reader should be able to see the connections that are readily apparent across the various sections.

A few of the chapters, most notably the one by Ewa Nalewajko profiling Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, are based on interviews with those who were close to, and intimately familiar with, the principal characters in the book. These firsthand accounts add to the overall credibility of "Heroes" and help to present the leaders of solidarity in a more human and empathetic light than is sometimes the case with comparable literary projects.

Of all the "heroes" included in the book, perhaps the one I find most inspirational is Monsignor Henryk Jankowski, who is profiled by Jerzy Zaleski. Jankowski was a very courageous and influential religious figure who was named "Prelate and Honorary Chaplain of His Holiness" by Pope John Paul II in 1990. The pivotal role he played is succinctly captured in a quote by Walesa: "Without Monsignor Jankowski, there would have been no solidarity and there would have been no Lech Walesa."

"Father Jankowski belonged to those who, by word and deed, risked their lives every day during the years of subjugation," Zaleski writes. "In spite of many threats and constant repression, Monsignor Jankowski remained undaunted; this gained him many friends among the leaders of the solidarity movement, which was then illegal.

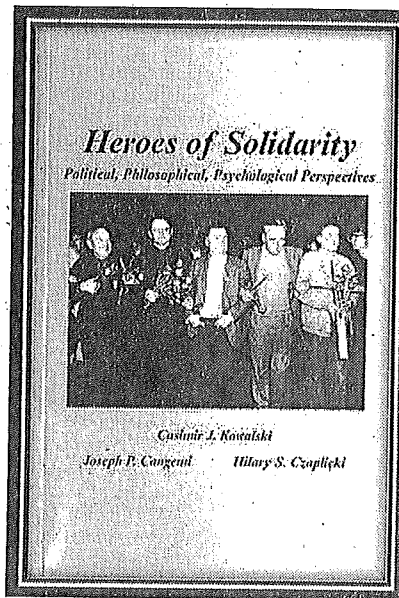
"Even when people close to him gained power, he critically evaluated their actions and stated this publicly," he adds.

"Heroes of Solidarity" should be of considerable interest to a general audience; i.e., anyone who wants to know more about one of the most important political and social movements of the late 20th century. It is also an invaluable resource for historians, psychologists, sociologists, religious scholars and political scientists who are still trying to make sense of the solidarity movement and determine its ultimate place in the human chronicle. At its core, the book is an adventure story with heroes and villains – a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of dire circumstances. The never-ending battle between good and evil is self-evident on virtually every page.

As was noted in remarks at the 68th annual Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America Conference in June: " 'Heroes of Solidarity' is an important book. It provides new insights into the story of the Solidarity Trade Union movement, the heroic and farsighted individuals who led it, and its extraordinary contribution in changing the world."

After reading about the 11 amazing leaders profiled in this book, I could not agree more.

— Reviewed by Aaron W. Hughey, Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Western Kentucky University.



"Heroes of Solidarity: Political, Philosophical, Psychological Perspectives, 2nd Edition" by Casimir J. Kowalski, Joseph P. Cangemi and Hilary S. Czaplicki. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011. 286 pages, \$29.38.