

Solidarity

Solidarity is close unity among individuals or groups. (The Latin word *solidus*, *firm*, grounds the usage of this term in the implication that the bond in question is firm as cement.) Such firmness of solidarity would characteristically apply to the relations of the members of a close knit family, team, military group, or community. One can feel solidarity with ideas as well. In the early years of Communism there was great solidarity among the many splinter groups who depended on one another for support and information. Their solidarity was firm as rock.

In our age of easy coalescence—fragments of community gathered on social media, political parties which share nothing but mutual self-interest, sports teams held together by dreams of yet higher salaries—it is easy to forget the intensities that bind members of truly solidary groups—Greek antartes fighting occupiers from isolated mountain peaks in the Peloponnesus, and flashing life and death information to their cohorts across the valleys; rows of urban police dense in their closeness to one another, after the shooting of a buddy. Solidarity, for good or bad, can bind actions to the death.

Two of my closest school friends, C and R, have passed away, but they remain with me. Today I was playing chess with another vet, when I hit a familiar and deadly snaggle not far into my Ruy Lopez opening. I panicked, for a minute, then heard Ross, over my shoulder, whispering that I should bring in my knight. As in the past, God bless him, it worked. Charles rumbled through my sleep one wondering night, two years ago, when I was sweating through the feeling that I should step away from my marriage. Thank God I suffered his maddening presence and kicked the devil down the road.