



Preface

The international academic conference “The Onset of the New Order: Europe 1939–1940,” organized in September 2019 by the Pilecki Institute, aimed to present the results of interdisciplinary research on issues related to the origins and early phases of the Second World War. The first part of the papers published in the wake of the conference was presented in volume four of the “Totalitarian and 20th Century Studies” yearbook. The texts presented in this fifth volume complement the previous edition and create a more comprehensive picture of the issues discussed during the conference.

The first point for consideration is the paper by Henryk Stroński, which examines the deportations carried out by the Soviet authorities in 1935 of people living in the borderlands of Ukraine. The victims of these actions were primarily Poles and Germans, and the main criterion for selecting people for deportation was their nationality. The strategic interests of the superpower were paramount, and the cost of human life irrelevant. Meanwhile, specific interests combined with sympathy played a role on the other side of Europe. Under General Franco’s rule, Spain found itself in an ambiguous position: on the one hand, it had been supported by the Third Reich in its civil war, but on the other it did not see Germany’s decision to go to war as percipient or in-keeping with its own goals. In this situation, the greatest beneficiary was the Soviet Union, and the fate of Poland, a nation regarded in a positive light for various reasons in the Iberian Peninsula, was clear evidence that Hitler was not to be trusted. A reconstruction of these problems, albeit with differing emphases, is presented in texts by José Luis Orella Martínez and Wayne H. Bowen. The image of the war itself and its consequences may have been a product of geography and the political decisions made in a given country. This is apparent in the case of Slovakia, where the conflict became an expression of hope for a time of prosperity and a chance to improve its international position. It was a kind of death-defying tightrope walk, since it involved maintaining a narrative

of Slovakia as an independent state, which was obviously untrue given its position *vis-à-vis* the Third Reich. Bartłomiej Kucek discusses these issues, drawing on the Slovak press for his research. Founded on propaganda, this new order was not limited to Slovakia. Its pan-European dimension is presented by Valentine Aldebert and Sabrina Proschmann, who also depict the technocratic facets which pervaded this order just as much as propaganda. Propaganda was a real and effective tool of power, which is clearly visible in the case of the cooperation between the American press agency Associated Press and the Third Reich, discussed by Norman Domeier. As a result, a false image of the German aggression against Poland in 1939 was created, while simultaneously covering up the crimes committed by the Germans and misleading international public opinion. These crimes were part of the aggressor's broader plans and methods, especially the system of mass extermination and enslavement, with its concentration camps at the fore. The role of the Gusen concentration camp in German extermination policy is examined by Wanda Jarzabek. German repressions affected various social groups, including the clergy. Testimonies given after the war before the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland include traces of these repressions, documented in descriptions of individual fates, which Karol Kalinowski presents in his article. In the same vein, the text by Agnieszka Dąbek describes the activities of Bishop Jan Kanty Lorek and Father Ignacy Życiński, who aimed to support as many people as possible during the occupation. Lisa Payne Ossian writes about aid campaigns carried out by institutions from outside Poland.

Legal theory and its interpretation, the memory of the aggression against Poland in 1939, and the occupation imposed by the Third Reich and the USSR, constitute separate issues. The post-war disputes involving Polish lawyers on these topics are described by Joanna Lubecka. Moreover, Bartosz Gralicki discusses the legacy of the Documents Bureau of the Polish II Corps and the research potential hidden in this archival resource. Paweł Lesisz analyzes the problem of the memory of the camps in which the Soviets interned Polish soldiers, which appears in the documentation produced by the Historical Section and the Documents Bureau of the Polish Army in the East. Finally, Jakub Witt examines the issue of Holocaust memory in the context of its violations in art.

These texts conclude the issues discussed at the conference "The Onset of the New Order." We hope that this broad and interdisciplinary approach to these issues enriches historical reflection on the period under examination.

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