

General History in Polish Historiography 1945-1974

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EUROPE FROM 1918 TO 1947

In the ample historiographical production devoted to the period of the two interwar decades, studies in general history *sensu stricto* are of quite rare occurrence. On the other hand, scholars take general history into consideration rather frequently as the international background of Poland's political history. This is due to the fact that the attention of Polish historians has been concentrated on the rebirth and existence of the independent Polish State and on those international events which influenced the history of the Second Republic.

Only very few works deal with the internal history of European or non-European countries or regions. If we leave out the relatively numerous publications of textbook character which, as a rule, do not devote more than one chapter to the period between the two World Wars, we shall be able to cite only a few works of some value from the point of view of the subject matter that interests us here.

Among such noteworthy works are some dealing with the history of Austria and Germany. H. Batowski pointed to Hungarian dualism and obstinacy, rendering impossible the creation of a federation of nations with equal rights, as the principal reason of the disintegration of Austria-Hungary.¹ Jerzy Kozeński

¹ H. Batowski, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier, 1914-1918. Sprawy międzynarodowe i działania dyplomatyczne* [The Disintegration of Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918. International Affairs and Diplomatic Actions], Wrocław 1965.

described how the idea of the Anschluss had been taking shape among Austrian political groupings and how it had at first met with little response in German society.² The same author presented in a popular study a general picture of Austria's social and political history in the years 1918–1968, bringing out into relief the rise of the First Republic, the Anschluss and the rebirth of Austrian statehood after World War II. Particularly interesting are the author's observations on the origins of these three events. Kozeński justifies convincingly the creation of a democratic Austrian Republic by the configuration of internal social and political forces and by Austria's international situation. As regards the origin of the Anschluss, he sees it above all in the policy of the Austrian governments evolving towards Fascism. As for the rebirth of Austria, he considers the most essential factor that brought it about, the national self-consciousness of the Austrians, developed during World War II.³ A synthetical presentation of political history, of a similar type, concerning German society in the period of existence of the unified German State, can be found in Jerzy Krasuski's book. While dealing with many threads and problems, it contains above all a picture of transformations in Germany's political system — from the Empire, to the parliamentary-democratic Republic, to the fascist régime. Especially interesting is the characterization of the Nazi system and, apart from constitutional problems, the presentation of Germany's participation in the two World Wars.⁴ The article by Jerzy Holzer induces to reflection on the political evolution of the Weimar Republic, seen through an analysis of the elections to the Reichstag and to the Land parliaments.⁵

Equally interesting considerations are to be found in studies on authoritarian régimes. The evolution of the political system

² J. Kozeński, *Sprawa przyłączenia Austrii do Niemiec po I wojnie światowej, 1918–1922* [The Problem of the Incorporation of Austria with Germany after World War I, 1918–1922], Poznań 1967.

³ J. Kozeński, *Austria 1918–1968. Dzieje społeczne i polityczne* [Austria 1918–1968. Social and Political History], Poznań 1970.

⁴ J. Krasuski, *Historia Rzeszy Niemieckiej 1871–1945* [History of the German Reich 1871–1945], Poznań 1971.

⁵ J. Holzer, *Niemcy 1924–1929. Stabilizacja polityczna czy prolog kryzysu politycznego?* [Germany 1924–1929. Political Stabilization or Prologue to a Political Crisis?], „Przegląd Historyczny”, vol. LVII, 1956.

in Central-European countries from parliamentarism to authoritarianism, the analogies and differences between the various dictatorships and the role they played in the history of Europe, were the subjects of a conference organized by the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1971.⁶ These interesting problems with regard to the three Baltic countries, are shown in Piotr Łossowski's monograph presenting the little-known history of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian States. Concentrating on problems of political systems and approaching them in a comparative and, at the same time, dynamic manner, the author has demonstrated the difference between the Baltic régimes and Fascism. Without negating the outside influence that brought about constitutional changes in these countries, he pointed to the features peculiar to each of these three States.⁷ The influence of Italian Fascism upon the Baltic States was also stressed by Jerzy Borejsza.⁸ Finally, the Italian Fascism itself which, as we have seen, influenced Central-European countries, became the object of research in S. Sierpowski's monograph, showing the origin of this movement and its evolution up to 1926.⁹

Crucial international problems and developments, above all those related to the history of Central Europe, have enjoyed greater interest on the part of historians.

Research was focussed on the Versailles Order conceived as the ensemble of political relations that had emerged in Central Europe as the result of national and revolutionary movements and of the Central Powers' defeat in World War I. This Versailles order was the subject of a scientific conference organized by the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw

⁶ *Dyktatury w Europie środkowo-wschodniej 1918-1939* [Dictatorships in Central-Eastern Europe 1918-1939], Wrocław 1973.

⁷ P. Łossowski, *Kraje bałtyckie na drodze od demokracji parlamentarnej do dyktatury 1918-1939* [The Baltic Countries on the Road from Parliamentary Democracy to Dictatorship 1918-1939], Wrocław 1972.

⁸ J. Borejsza, *Włochy a tendencje faszystowskie w krajach bałtyckich 1922-1940* [Italy and Fascist Tendencies in the Baltic Countries 1922-1940], „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, 1974, No. 1.

⁹ S. Sierpowski, *Faszyzm we Włoszech 1919-1926* [Fascism in Italy 1919-1926], Wrocław 1973.

in 1969.¹⁰ The system of national States arising from the Versailles Order in Central Europe, and the factors integrating and disintegrating that system, have been discussed in numerous articles by Wiesław Balcerzak, L. Buczma, Antoni Czubiński, Tadeusz Jędruszczak, and Andrzej Skrzypek.¹¹

Attempts have also been made to present the policy of the Powers with regard to the Central-European region. E. Cytowska has shown the Italian policy which in the early 1930s strove to establish in that area its own sphere of influence.¹² Maria Nowak-Kielbikowa has presented the endeavours of the British diplomacy in the first years after the termination of World War I, aimed at creating new and effective factors of European equilibrium.¹³ However, only German policy has been fully presented, chiefly from the point of view of its role in disintegrating the Versailles system. Janusz Pajewski has characterized the earlier "Mitteleuropa" programme as a manifestation of Germany's imperialistic plans with regard to Central and Eastern Europe that had revealed themselves during World War I.¹⁴ On the other

¹⁰ *Ład wersalski w Europie środkowej. Konferencja naukowa Instytutu Historii PAN 1969* [The Versailles Order in Central Europe. A Scientific Conference of the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1969], Wrocław 1971; also: J. Zarnowski, *W sprawie genezy systemu państw narodowych w Europie środkowej i południowo-wschodniej po 1918 r.* [On the Origin of the System of National States in Central and South-Eastern Europe after 1918], „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, 1970, No. 3.

¹¹ W. Balcerak, *The Disintegration of the Versailles System in Central-Eastern Europe (1919–1939)*, „Acta Poloniae Historica”, vol. XXVI, 1972; L. Buczma, *Z genezy Małej Ententy* [On the Origins of the Little Entente], „Studia z Dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej”, vol. VI, 1970; A. Czubiński, *Państwa narodowe w Europie środkowo-wschodniej między I i II wojną światową* [National States in Central-Eastern Europe between World War I and II], „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, 1970, No. 3; T. Jędruszczak, *Europa Środkowa w przededniu II wojny światowej, 1933–1939* [Central Europe on the Eve of World War II, 1933–1939], „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1971, No. 1/2; A. Skrzypek, *Kłajpeda jako zagadnienie międzynarodowe 1918–1939* [Memel as an International Problem 1918–1939], „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1971, No. 3.

¹² E. Cytowska, *Z zagadnień polityki włoskiej w Europie środkowej w początkach lat trzydziestych* [From the Problems of Italian Policy in Central Europe in the Early 1930s], „Studia z Dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej”, vol. VIII, 1972.

¹³ M. Nowak-Kielbikowa, *Polityka Wielkiej Brytanii wobec Europy środkowo-wschodniej w latach 1918–1921* [The Policy of Great Britain with Regard to Central-Eastern Europe in the Years 1918–1921], „Studia z Dziejów ZSRR i Europy Środkowej”, vol. VI, 1970.

¹⁴ J. Pajewski, *Mitteleuropa. Studia z dziejów imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie I wojny światowej* [Mitteleuropa. Studies from the History of German Imperialism in the Time of World War I], Poznań 1959.

hand, the directions of German political and military expansion throughout the two interwar decades, with special consideration given to the implementation of that expansion as regards Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel and Poland, have been presented in the monographs and studies by Henryk Batowski, Kazimierz Piwarski and Stefania Stanisławska. These works give an idea of the role played by Nazi Germany and by the French and English policy of appeasement in wrecking the Versailles system and preparing World War II. We have been offered above, all, a detailed picture of the diplomatic negotiations between Germany and the Western Powers; Germany had expected to obtain through these negotiations the consent of England and France for satisfying her revisionistic demands by diplomatic means; indeed, in the course of these negotiations, the Powers showed themselves inclined to make concessions in favour of Germany at the expense of Central-European countries. The authors concentrate their main attention on Munich as a turning-point in international relations and on the developments that took place between the Conference of Munich and the outbreak of World War II. Irrespective of the discussible character of the arguments presented, especially as regards the share of responsibility of the various Powers for the outbreak of war (where the proportions seem to have been unbalanced), the principal merit of these works consists in the detailed and even meticulous review of events illustrating the gathering drama. It should be pointed out that H. Batowski's works take into consideration not only the better-known policy of the Great Powers, but also the less-known position of the Balkan States. One should also draw attention to the precision with which this author has established the course of international negotiations aimed at reducing the tension between Germany and Poland in the last week of peace.¹⁵

¹⁵ H. Batowski, *Ekspansja niemiecka w Europie środkowej w latach 1919-1939* [*German Expansion in Central Europe in the Years 1919-1939*], „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1971, No. 1/2; by the same author, *Austria i Sudety 1919-1939. Zabór austriacki i przygotowanie agresji na Czechosłowację* [*Austria and the Sudeten 1919-1939. The Annexation of Austria and the Preparation of Aggression against Czechoslovakia*], Poznań 1968; by the same author, *Kryzys dyplomatyczny w Europie, jesień 1938 — wiosna 1939* [*The Diplomatic Crisis in Europe, Autumn 1938 — Spring 1939*], Warszawa 1962; by the same author, *Zdrada monachijska*.

Some works reach beyond Central Europe and even beyond the European continent. In this respect, interest has been shown mainly in the French and British diplomacy which strove to preserve the Versailles system by modifying it. The aggressive policy of Italy also attracted attention. S. Mikulicz described the contests among Powers at the Conference of Genoa.¹⁶ In a work on Polish foreign policy at the time of Locarno, W. Balcerak devoted much place to the characterization of French, British and German diplomacy at that Conference and to the indication of the moment — so important to international relations — when Germany joined the concert of European Powers; this was indeed the first deviation from the letter of the Treaty of Versailles.¹⁷ A. Bartnicki has presented another and no less crucial problem of international politics: the Italian-Abyssinian conflict which was an important contribution to the origin of World War II. Apart from studying the circumstances that accompanied the origin, the course and the outcome of the bilateral conflict, the author took up the analysis of a broader problem, namely the test of forces between the aggressive Fascist States and the countries wishing to preserve the *status quo*. As a result, the author gave a picture of the withdrawal of France and Great Britain from the policy of sanctions, applied at first against the aggressor, and at the same time, a picture of bankruptcy of the system of collective security. It should be noted here that

Sprawa Czechosłowacji w dyplomacji europejskiej w roku 1938 [The Munich Treason. The Problem of Czechoslovakia in the European Diplomacy in 1938], Poznań 1973; by the same author, *Agonia pokoju i początek wojny* [The Agony of Peace and the Beginning of War], Poznań 1969; K. Piwarski, *Monachium 1938. Polityka rządów Anglii i Francji wobec faszystowskich Niemiec* [Munich 1938. The Policy of the Governments of England and France with Regard to Fascist Germany], Warszawa 1952; by the same author, *Polityka europejska w okresie pomonachijskim, X 1938 — III 1939* [European Policy in the Post-Munich Period, October 1938 — March 1939], Warszawa 1960; S. Stanisławska, *Polska a Monachium* [Poland and Munich], Warszawa 1967; S. Mikulicz, *Aneksja Kłajpedy przez III Rzeszę* [The Annexation of Memel by the Third Reich], „Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny”, 1971, No. 1; R. Torzecki, *Kwestia ukraińska w polityce III Rzeszy 1933–1945* [The Ukrainian Question in the Policy of the Third Reich, 1933–1945], Warszawa 1972.

¹⁶ S. Mikulicz, *Od Genui do Rapallo* [From Genoa to Rapallo], Warszawa 1966.

¹⁷ W. Balcerak, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski w dobie Locarno* [The Foreign Policy of Poland at the Time of Locarno], Wrocław 1967.

A. Bartnicki is also the author of a popular book on colonial conflicts in the years 1869-1939, and the co-author of a comprehensive *History of Ethiopia*.¹⁸

Nearly all the above-cited works deal with the problem of European security and of the origins of World War II. This problem has also special literature of its own. Waldemar Michowicz's article outlines the question of European security in connection with that of disarmament, against the background of the play of the Big Powers, especially England and France, that took place in the League of Nations from 1920 to 1939.¹⁹ Jarosław Jurkiewicz has presented the history of the abortive initiative taken up by France and the U.S.S.R. in 1934-1935, aimed at creating a system of collective security in Europe of which the Eastern Pact was to be the basic core.²⁰ T. Jędruszczak gave a synthetical review of the motives and events that went into the making of the complex origin of World War II. From the economic premisses, the evolution of the European system, the internal changes taking place in Germany and the expansion of the fascist States, there emerges in Jędruszczak's work the decisive role of German policy in unleashing World War II.²¹ The article by Jan Żarnowski contains also theoretical considerations of the impact of Fascist ideology upon the laying-out of the expansive goals of the Fascist States and, at the same time, upon the outbreak of World War II.²²

As has already been mentioned, dealing with general history are also numerous works the proper subject-matter of which is either the origin of rebirth of the Polish State, or Poland's

¹⁸ A. Bartnicki, *Pierwszy front II Wojny światowej. Konflikt włosko-etiopski 1935-1936* [*The First Front of World War II. The Italian-Ethiopian Conflict, 1935-1936*], Warszawa 1971; by the same author, *Konflikty kolonialne 1869-1939* [*Colonial Conflicts 1869-1939*], Warszawa 1971.

¹⁹ W. Michowicz, *Rozbrojenie a bezpieczeństwo 1920-1939* [*Disarmament and Security 1920-1939*], „Kwartalnik Historyczny” 1970, No. 3.

²⁰ J. Jurkiewicz, *Pakt wschodni. Z historii stosunków międzynarodowych 1934-1935* [*The Eastern Pact. From the History of International Relations 1934-1935*], Warszawa 1963.

²¹ T. Jędruszczak, *Geneza II Wojny Światowej* [*The Origin of World War II*], „Najnowsze Dzieje Polski, Materiały i Studia z okresu 1919-1939”, vol. XIII, 1968.

²² J. Żarnowski, *Faszyzm a II wojna światowa* [*Fascism and World War II*], „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1971, No. 1/2.

foreign policy and, above all, her bilateral relations with other countries.

The conceptions of the Powers with regard to Polish problems, formed during World War I have been presented in a number of interesting studies. In a book of popular-scientific character, *Poland in World War I*, Jerzy Holzer and Jerzy Molenda show how first the conflict between the partitioning Powers, and then the revolutionary factor, created conditions — first for giving the Polish problem international character, and then for the regaining of independence by Poland.²³ The place of Poland in the far-reaching plans of German and Austrian economic, political and military expansion has been presented in a comprehensive monograph by Leon Grosfeld²⁴ who took into due account the differences between the German and the Austrian policy with regard to Polish territories. On the other hand, the evolution of the policy of the Coalition Powers with regard to Polish problems, in connection with their general aspirations and war plans, found reflection in the synthetical study by Remigiusz Bierzanek, in J. Pajewski's essays and in Marian Leczyk's monograph.²⁵ The political conceptions of the Coalition Powers concerning the Polish State, revealed only after the victory in war, particularly in the course of the peace conference in Paris, have been presented in the collective work *The Polish-German Problem in the Treaty of Versailles* and in numerous articles on the negotiations of the representatives of Big Powers over Poland's western frontiers.²⁶

²³ J. Holzer, J. Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej* [*Poland in World War I*], Warszawa 1973, 2nd ed.

²⁴ L. Grosfeld, *Polityka państw centralnych wobec sprawy polskiej w latach pierwszej wojny światowej* [*The Policy of the Central Powers with Regard to the Polish Problem in the Years of World War I*], Warszawa 1962.

²⁵ R. Bierzanek, *Państwo polskie w politycznych koncepcjach mocarstw zachodnich 1917–1919* [*The Polish State in the Political Conceptions of the Western Powers 1917–1919*], Warszawa 1964; J. Pajewski, *Wokół sprawy polskiej. Paryż — Lozanna — Londyn 1914–1918* [*Political Activities Relating to the Polish Problem. Paris — Lausanne — London 1914–1918*], Poznań 1970; M. Leczyk, *Komitet Narodowy Polski a Ententa i Stany Zjednoczone 1917–1919* [*The Polish National Committee, the Entente and the United States 1917–1919*], Warszawa 1966.

²⁶ *Problem polsko-niemiecki w traktacie wersalskim* [*The Polish-German Problem in the Treaty of Versailles*], ed. by J. Pajewski, Poznań 1963; B. Dobrowolska, *Stosunek mocarstw sprzymierzonych*

We learn relatively much about the history of European states and, in particular about their foreign policy, from the many works devoted to the bilateral relations of the Second Republic. These works concern for the most part Poland's relations with the neighbouring states. Especially valuable are the monographs by Jerzy Krasuski and by Marian Wojciechowski which cover the whole of Polish-German affairs (without the year 1939) and indicate the internal and international motives behind the political activities on both sides, against the broad background of international diplomatic play. In Krasuski's study, the more important international developments are the object of investigation, even irrespective of their possible connection with the history of Poland; M. Wojciechowski's work, on the other hand, brings a more profound analysis of the Third Reich's internal and foreign policy.²⁷ General history, and chiefly the history of Germany, was also the subject of an international session organized in Poznań in 1971 on the theme "Poland — Germany — Europe 1871-1971". Out of the abundant but thematically dispersed literature on bilateral Polish-Soviet relations, particularly noteworthy are numerous studies on the international significance of the October Revolution and on its position in the Polish question.²⁸ The policy of Soviet Russia striving after the stabilization of the Socialist State found reflection in the works by W. Gostyńska and Jerzy Kumaniecki.²⁹ Adolf Juzwenko's mo-

do sprawy zachodnich granic Polski w pierwszej fazie konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r. [The Attitude of the Allied Powers towards the Problem of Poland's Western Frontiers in the First Stage of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919], „Najnowsze Dzieje Polski. Materiały i Studia z okresu 1919-1939”, vol. I, 1958; H. Zieliński, *Znaczenie traktatu wersalskiego dla rozwoju stosunków polsko-niemieckich po I wojnie światowej* [The Importance of the Treaty of Versailles to the Development of Polish-German Relations after World War I], „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, 1963, No. 1.

²⁷ J. Krasuski, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1919-1925* [Polish-German Relations 1919-1925], Poznań 1962; by the same author, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie, 1926-1932* [Polish-German Relations, 1926-1932], Poznań 1964; M. Wojciechowski, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie, 1933-1938* [Polish-German Relations, 1933-1938], Poznań 1965.

²⁸ The problem of the October Revolution in Polish historiography has been discussed by L. Bazyłow, „Najnowsze Dzieje Polski. Materiały i Studia z okresu 1918-1939”, vol. XII, 1967.

²⁹ W. Gostyńska, *Stosunki polsko-radzieckie, 1918-1919* [Polish Soviet Relations, 1918-1919], Warszawa 1972; J. Kumaniecki, *Po trak-*

nograph deals with the activities of "White" Russia aimed at restoring the status quo ante.³⁰ The anti-Habsburg and anti-Hungarian foreign policy of Czechoslovakia, endeavouring to avoid controversies with Germany and with Soviet Russia, has been shown in the works by Szklarska-Lohmanowa, J. Kozeński and M. Pułaski.³¹ Maciej Koźmiński's monograph informs on the policy of Hungary. The author, concentrating on the peak phase of Polish-Hungarian cooperation in the years 1938-1939, has at the same time characterized the Hungarian revisionism which had found expression chiefly in the attempts to break up the Little Entente by participation in creating other south-European groupings and in designs to recover territories lost after World War I.³² Piotr Łossowski deals in his work with the foreign policy of Lithuania in the initial period of the existence of this State and, in particular with the diplomatic and military activities aimed at incorporating the city and region of Vilna into Lithuania, and with the international repercussions of the Polish-Lithuanian dispute.³³ Another aspect of the history of Baltic States has been presented by A. Skrzypek, namely the relations between Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, as confronted with the political action of the U.S.S.R., to a certain degree also with that of Germany and Great Britain, against the background of the unsuccessful attempts to form the Baltic

tacie ryskim. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1921-1923 [After the Treaty of Riga. Polish-Soviet Relations, 1921-1923], Warszawa 1971; a detailed review of historical works on Polish-Soviet relations published in People's Poland, has been compiled by A. Skrzypek, „Kwartalnik Historyczny”, 1972, No. 4.

³⁰ A. Juzwenko, *Polska a „biała” Rosja, od listopada 1918 do kwietnia 1920* [Poland and "White" Russia, from November 1918 to April 1920], Wrocław 1973.

³¹ A. Szklarska-Lohmanowa, *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918-1925* [Polish-Czechoslovak Diplomatic Relations in the Years 1918-1925], Wrocław 1967; J. Kozeński, *Czechosłowacja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej w latach 1932-1938* [Czechoslovakia in Polish Foreign Policy in the Years 1932-1938], Poznań 1964; M. Pułaski, *Stosunki polsko-czechosłowacko-niemieckie od roku 1933 do wiosny 1938* [Polish-Czechoslovak-German Relations from 1933 to the Spring of 1938], Poznań 1967.

³² M. Koźmiński, *Polska i Węgry przed drugą wojną światową, październik 1938 — wrzesień 1939* [Poland and Hungary before World War II, October 1938 — September 1939], Wrocław 1970.

³³ P. Łossowski, *Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1918-1920* [Polish-Lithuanian Relations in the Years 1918-1920], Warszawa 1966.

Union.³⁴ In Tadeusz Cieślak's essays, we find elements of the history of Scandinavian countries showing Scandinavian isolationism and the ensuing restraint of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland in their economic and diplomatic contacts with Poland.³⁵ The works devoted to Poland's bilateral relations with the Western Powers offer the relatively fullest picture of the policy of France. Józef Kukułka has presented the origins and principles of the political and military treaties and economic agreements between Poland and France against the background of the French conception of collective security of which Poland was a steady though secondary element.³⁶ Z. Wroniak has discussed mainly the policy of "Briandism" and its consequences for Poland,³⁷ and T. Kuźmiński has dealt with Polish-French-German relations in the context of selected problems of preventive war, of the Eastern Pact and of the Polish-German declaration of 1934.³⁸ Finally, the history of the Polish-French military alliance which was an essential problem of the French policy in Central Europe, was exhaustively presented in Jan Ciałowicz's monograph.³⁹

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World War II is a matter of interest to Polish historians both as a phenomenon of general history and from the point of view of its impact on the destinies of the Polish nation. This latter aspect is decidedly predominating in Polish historiography.⁴⁰

³⁴ A. Skrzypek, *Związek Bałtycki: Litwa, Łotwa, Estonia i Finlandia w polityce Polski i ZSRR w latach 1919-1925* [The Baltic Union: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland in the Policy of Poland and the U.S.R.R. in the Years 1919-1925], Warszawa 1972.

³⁵ T. Cieślak, *Polska-Skandynawia w XIX i XX wieku. Szkice historyczne* [Poland and Scandinavia in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Historical Essays], Warszawa 1973.

³⁶ J. Kukułka, *Francja i Polska po traktacie wersalskim, 1919-1922* [France and Poland after the Treaty of Versailles, 1919-1922], Warszawa 1970.

³⁷ Z. Wroniak, *Polska — Francja, 1926-1932* [Poland and France, 1926-1932], Poznań 1971.

³⁸ T. Kuźmiński, *Polska, Francja, Niemcy 1933-1935. Z dziejów sojuszu polsko-francuskiego* [Poland, France and Germany 1933-1935. From the History of the Polish-French Alliance], Warszawa 1963.

³⁹ J. Ciałowicz, *Polsko-francuski sojusz wojskowy 1921-1939* [The Polish-French Military Alliance 1921-1939], Warszawa 1970.

⁴⁰ *Historia Polski* [History of Poland], vol. IV, 1918-1939, part I:

The first volume of Włodzimierz T. Kowalski's comprehensive work *The Great Coalition 1941-1945*, deals with the relations within the Great American-British-Soviet Coalition in the years 1941-1943. The second volume covering the period 1944-1945 is still under preparation. The source basis of the work consists of the numerous published collections of documents, memoirs and the literature of the subject. The author has utilized both American, West-European and Soviet publications which makes his book richer and less onesided than many other works dealing with those problems. Kowalski has closely linked together diplomatic history and military developments on all fronts; hence, his considerations are solidly based on the changing realities of the war situation. The author not only describes the games between the Big Powers but also characterizes the figures of the principal political and military leaders, the relations between them and the circumstances under which they were acting. Thus, the diplomatic history as presented by W. T. Kowalski, is not only the play of anonymous forces and interests but also a picture of actions by concrete people, the actors of the events.

The origins of the German-Soviet conflict of 1941, as outlined in the book, comprise the aggressive designs of the German side, the Soviet endeavours to preserve peace, the incorrect estimation of the situation by Stalin, and the main tendencies of the British policy. The British Government were warning the Soviet leaders at that time of the imminent German attack; these warnings "were by no means an expression of idealistic sentiments on the the part of British statesmen, although one should not disregard the traditional philo-Russian attitude of a considerable part of British society; neither were they an expression of particular humanism. They were motivated by an extremely sober evaluation of the political situation according to which any policy — irrespective of its proportions — that made the position of Germany worse, was only correct because it served the interests of Great Britain." ⁴¹

1918-1921, Warszawa 1969; now in printing: part II — 1922-1929, and part III — 1930-1939.

⁴¹ W. T. Kowalski, *Wielka Koalicja 1941-1945* [*The Great Coalition 1941-1945*], vol. I, Warszawa 1972, p. 48.

Soon after the outbreak of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R., the Soviet-British collaboration began and was afterwards followed by the Soviet-British-American collaboration. In the relations between the Big Three, the following matters became the main problems: the question of the second front, the aid in war material for the U.S.S.R., and the vision of the future organization of the world after the termination of the war. An important role was played by the conferences of the Allies in Casablanca and Teheran, and Kowalski devotes to them much room.

From the point of view of Poland's problems, particularly important was the Conference of Teheran where the delegation of the U.S.S.R. expressed their interest in the destinies of Central-Eastern Europe. It was decided that the Red Army would enter Germany from the East and the Western Allies would carry out "Operation Overlord" during the month of May 1944. The questions of Poland's frontiers were also discussed. Writes the author: "The Polish problem became — beside Turkey and the future of Germany — the subject of political talks and, in the opinion of Feis and Eden, was the most difficult matter to have a bearing on the maintaining of harmony among the Big Three. It was an autonomous problem although discussed at the same time was the question of Germany's Eastern frontiers (mentioning the line of the Odra in that connection) as well as the problems of the frontiers of the U.S.S.R.[...]"⁴²

Analysing the conceptions and goals of each of the main Allies, Kowalski devotes much attention to controversies around the so-called Balkan strategic conceptions. He does not share the view that these conceptions were aimed at checking the march of the Red Army into Central Europe.⁴³

An opposing attitude in this matter is represented by Kazimierz Rosen-Zawadzki. He writes: "After the German defeat of Stalingrad, in the face of the successes of the Soviet armies and their rapid advances towards Poland and the Balkans (in the years 1943-1944), [...] the British High Command consider-

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 702.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 212.

ed [...] it necessary to fill promptly the vacuum emerging in Central-Eastern Europe behind the retreating units of the Wehrmacht, and thereby to stop by a manoeuvre from the South the Soviet Army units moving forward in pursuit of the Germans. The British General Staff set about therefore with great haste elaborating plans for Balkan operations. This is how the "Balkan strategic conceptions" were born; one of their variants was [...] the campaign in Italy."⁴⁴

Summing-up his studies of the "Balkan strategic conceptions" of the British, K. Rosen-Zawadzki states that "they ended in complete failure" which, however, must not be tantamount to underestimating the importance of the 22 months of fighting by the Allies in Italy."⁴⁵ Since Polish units also took part in that fighting and covered themselves with glory by taking Monte Cassino, the military operations in Italy 1943-1945 enjoy vivid interest in Poland and have abundant scientific and journalistic literature. The authors of works on this subject include, among others, Wincenty Iwanowski,⁴⁶ Franciszek Skibiński,⁴⁷ Kazimierz Rosen-Zawadzki⁴⁸ and Melchior Wańkowicz.⁴⁹

Henryk Batowski's work *War and Diplomacy 1945* is devoted to the problems of diplomatic activity in the final stage of World War II. Chronologically, the work covers a period of nine months, from the turn of 1944-1945 to September 1945. The author presents the capitulation of the allies of the Third Reich: Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and Finland, and the rise of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. He brings out in relief the role of the Potsdam Conference, discusses the capitulation of Japan

⁴⁴ K. Rosen-Zawadzki, *Balkańskie koncepcje strategiczne a kampania we Włoszech 1943-1945* [*Balkan Strategic Conceptions and the Campaign in Italy 1943-1945*], Warszawa 1964, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 307.

⁴⁶ W. Iwanowski, *Bitwa o Rzym 1944. Planowanie strategiczne, sztuka operacyjna, taktyka* [*The Battle for Rome 1944. Strategic Planning, Operational Art, Tactics*], Warszawa 1969.

⁴⁷ F. Skibiński, *Dowodzenie jednostkami polskimi na Zachodzie w skali operacyjnej — wybrane przykłady* [*The Command of Polish Military Units in the West on the Operational Scale — Selected Examples*], Warszawa 1973.

⁴⁸ K. Rosen-Zawadzki, *Z dziejów 2 Korpusu Polskiego. Uwagi i polemiki* [*From the History of the Polish 2nd Corps. Observations and Polemics*], Warszawa 1964.

⁴⁹ M. Wańkowicz, *Monte Cassino*, Warszawa 1957.

and its importance, and the problem of decolonization in Asia. He stresses the increased role and importance of the U.S.S.R. in the diplomatic arena in the final phase of the war, and the cooperation of the countries of Central-Eastern Europe, allies of the U.S.S.R. Batowski writes: "The winter crisis of 1944-1945 brought about a decided increase of the Soviet Union's position on the diplomatic scene — which was to be strongly marked in the developments that followed; foundations were also formed for the new diplomacy of countries in Central-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans embarking on the road of socialist development. The diplomats of these countries cooperated closely with the Soviet diplomacy which could therefore legitimately claim that it was representing in the various contacts not only its own State, the U.S.S.R., but also several other friendly and allied countries: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Roumania and Hungary." ⁵⁰

The U.S.S.R. concluded new treaties of alliance with the newly-established States of People's Democracy in Central-Eastern Europe and, in particular, with Yugoslavia and Poland. This gave rise to controversies between the Soviet Government and the Governments of the Western Powers.

Batowski states that the final stage of the war brought an increase in the role of diplomacy and diplomatic actions. The United Nations became the scene of animated diplomatic activity, the Conferences of Yalta and Potsdam played an important role. Polish problems held an important place at these both Conferences. This is how the author evaluates the Potsdam Conference: "The general assessment of the Potsdam Conference (or, of the Berlin Conference, as it is also called sometimes in the West), boils down above all to the fact that it was a successful termination of several years of cooperation between the three Big Powers fighting jointly against international Fascism and against its main exponent and armed tool — Nazism. The atmosphere in Potsdam, however, was not as frank and friendly as in Yalta, less than half a year earlier [...]. The Polish problem,

⁵⁰ H. Batowski, *Wojna a dyplomacja 1945* [War and Diplomacy 1945], Poznań 1972, p. 58.

questions relating to Germany's former satellites in Eastern Europe, the frontier dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy, the situation in the Balkans (the conflict between Greece and her northern neighbours), the Soviet-Turkish misunderstandings and, moreover, the problems relating to the destinies of the former common enemy, Germany — all these were areas of friction generating sparks which in turn could bring about even an explosion of great intensity.”⁵¹

Stefan Boratyński's study is devoted to the international conferences in the period of World War II, and chiefly to their legal aspects.⁵²

The work by Olgierd Terlecki is of a journalistic rather than scientific character. It deals with military as well as political problems.⁵³

Polish historiography has been devoting much more attention to the political relations within the anti-Nazi coalition than to those between the Third Reich and her allies and satellites and the neutral countries. Relatively much, on the other hand, has been written on the Nazi occupation policy in the Polish territories in the years 1939–1945. The most comprehensive presentation of this problem is to be found in the two-volume work by Czesław Madajczyk.⁵⁴ The author starts with the Nazi aggression against Poland in 1939, the organization of the occupation system and Hitler's war aims, then proceeds to characterize the nationality policy, the Germanization programme, the economic policy, the living and working conditions of the population, the Nazi terror and policy of genocide against the population of the occupied Polish territories. While, in consistence with the subject as expressed in the title, Madajczyk's work concentrates on the German policy in Poland, it contains a great number of observations and fragments concerning Nazi international conceptions

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 208–209.

⁵² S. Boratyński, *Dyplomacja drugiej wojny światowej. Konferencje międzynarodowe 1941–1945* [*The Diplomacy of World War II. International Conferences 1941–1945*], Warszawa 1957.

⁵³ O. Terlecki, *Najkrótsza historia drugiej wojny światowej* [*The Shortest History of World War II*], Kraków 1972.

⁵⁴ C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce* [*The Policy of the Third Reich in Occupied Poland*], Warszawa 1970.

on a wider — European and global — scale, and therefore it can be considered to a certain extent as a study from the borderline of Polish and general history.

Franciszek Ryszka's voluminous book *A Country of State of Emergency* is devoted to a characterization of the system of State and law of the Third Reich. Ryszka maintains that it was the Nazi system of State and law that pushed the Germans on the road of crime because "where State authority, possessed by a criminal purpose, reaches to the smallest social cell and dictates its behaviour, there it easily comes to such terrible depravation to which Germany fell a victim". Ryszka goes on to say: "Another curse of the German people was that dreadful State discipline, that 'Staatsfrommigkeit', that cult of the authority. The country of state of emergency had absolutized these phenomena. It introduced the morals of an entrenched camp, the morals of total war, and it did so long before the guns spoke".⁵⁵ The ideology the Germans were given to believe uncritically, professed the cult of strength and contempt for the intellect, it deluded the Germans into believing that they had been called upon to accomplish a special historic mission. The author stresses that such nonsense was accepted and adopted not by the ignorant masses alone.

Prevailing in the Third Reich was the theory of sovereignty of power which rules above the law and issues decisions on the principle of state of emergency. Power was concentrated in the hands of the Führer who, unrestricted by anything, ruled like an anointed monarch. Around the Führer, a ruling and administering elite was formed. New people had no access to the ruling group "because a gap would result only either from death or from grave political mistake."⁵⁶

Ryszka makes interesting observations on the appearance of Fascism in countries other than Germany and Italy. He states that apart from these two countries, dictatorships tending towards Fascism — to use his own words — "lacked a mass base and

⁵⁵ F. Ryszka, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego* [A Country of State of Emergency], Wrocław 1964, p. 456.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 183.

were therefore unable to monopolize or institutionalize social life in the Italian and later in the German fashion.”⁵⁷

The range of problems dealt with in the book under review is much wider than the above information, by necessity brief and very fragmentary, may suggest.

Bogusław Drewniak's book, *Theatre and Film in the Third Reich* is an interesting study, unique in its kind in Polish literature. It reflects the growing interest in the history of culture in the years of war and occupation. Drewniak comes to the following final conclusions: "The theatre, subordinated to Nazi propaganda was a field in which the Third Reich could not boast many distinguished creative achievements [...]. When it comes to assessing the accomplishments of Nazi film industry, the judgment will have to be somewhat different [...]. In the Third Reich [...] there were [...] not only propaganda films and not only bad films.”⁵⁸

In Polish historiography, the criticism of Nazism is, as a rule, accompanied by emphasizing the anti-Fascist struggle of the German revolutionary Left. Separate research works on this problem have not appeared in Poland so far; one should, however, mention here Antoni Czubiński's pioneer study *The German Left in the Struggle against Nazi Dictatorship, 1933–1945*. This attempt to present that important problem contains numerous digressions in which the author engages in polemics with the existing Polish and foreign literature of the subject.⁵⁹

The past few years have seen an increased interest of Polish historiography in the recent history of Central Europe, including the problems of World War II. This found expression in the international colloquy on "Central Europe during World War II," organized in Warsaw in 1970. The records of that session: papers and communiqués presented and statements made in the discussion, have been published in a special volume of more than 400

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁵⁸ B. Drewniak, *Teatr i Film w Trzeciej Rzeszy* [*Theatre and Film in the Third Reich*], Gdańsk 1972, pp. 308–309.

⁵⁹ A. Czubiński, *Lewica niemiecka w walce z dyktaturą hitlerowską, 1933–1945* [*The German Left in the Struggle against Nazi Dictatorship, 1933–1945*], Warszawa 1973.

pages of the periodical "Dzieje Najnowsze". We find there names of historians from Poland, the Soviet Union, the G.D.R., Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Hungary, etc. The range of problems dealt with is very wide. The participants discussed the origin of World War II, the Nazi policy in Central Europe, the resistance movement, the strategic significance of that part of Europe and its liberation by the Soviet Army in 1944-1945.⁶⁰

A very large group of studies concern problems from the border area of Polish and general history or, more precisely, those aspects of the history of Poland that border directly on general history.

These matters have been presented most exhaustively by W. T. Kowalski in his work *The Diplomatic Struggle for Poland's Place in Europe 1939-1945*. Kowalski begins his exposition with the termination of the campaign of September 1939 and the formation of the Polish government-in-exile, and concludes it with the Potsdam Conference of 1945 where the decisions of the Big Three concerning Poland's frontiers were made.

Appearing on the pages of this book and carrying-on discussions on the solution of the Polish problem are the leading figures of the anti-Nazi coalition: Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt, Truman, and others. The Polish side is represented by Władysław Sikorski, Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, as well as by Władysław Gomułka and Bolesław Bierut. The author devoted much room to a presentation of the foreign policy of the Polish émigré government and to the diplomatic activities in connection with the establishment in Lublin in July 1944 of the Polish Committee of National Liberation.⁶¹

Analyzing the talks between the Governments of the U.S.R.R., Great Britain and the United States prior to the establishment of the Committee, the author states that the main problem in those talks concerned the normalization of Polish-Soviet relations on the basis of inter-Allied decisions from Teheran on the Polish frontiers and on a reconstruction of the Polish Government. The Polish Government in London rejected these proposals. The form-

⁶⁰ „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 1971, No. 1/2.

⁶¹ W. T. Kowalski, *Walka dyplomatyczna o miejsce Polski w Europie, 1939-1945* [*The Diplomatic Struggle for Poland's Place in Europe, 1939-1945*], Warszawa 1969, pp. 9-131, 406-506.

ing of the Polish Committee of National Liberation in July 1944 made the normalization of Polish-Soviet relations possible but at the same time aggravated the difficulties existing in the relations among Powers.⁶²

Edward J. Rożek's study is devoted to the policy of the Powers — members of the anti-Nazi coalition, with regard to the Polish problem. The author has utilized the documents of the London Government-in-Exile and the private archives of its Prime-Minister, Stanisław Mikołajczyk. He quotes the minutes of Mikołajczyk's talks with Churchill and Stalin and other very valuable sources.⁶³ Stanisław Zabiełło has published a book on the foreign policy of the émigré Government.⁶⁴ Owing to the author's high qualifications, the work is characterized by mature judgment and by comprehensive factual information. The ensemble of the international aspects of the Polish problem during World War II is presented in the collective works: *The War of Liberation of the Polish Nation 1939-1945*,⁶⁵ and *The Polish Working-Class Movement during the War and the Nazi Occupation. September 1939 — January 1945*.⁶⁶ In view of the considerable advances of research, these both books have to be recognized as greatly outdated today.

The international aspects of the Polish-German war of September 1939 are presented by H. Batowski in his already cited book *The Agony of Peace and the Beginning of War*. These matters are also mentioned fragmentarily by L. Moczulski in his work *The Polish War of 1939* which gave rise to an animated discussion.⁶⁷

⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 504-505.

⁶³ J. Rożek, *Allied Wartime Diplomacy: A Pattern in Poland*, New York 1958.

⁶⁴ S. Zabiełło, *O rząd i granice* [For a Government and for Frontiers], Warszawa 1970.

⁶⁵ T. Rawski, Z. Stapor, J. Zamojski, *Wojna wyzwolenicza narodu polskiego w latach 1939-1945. Węzłowe problemy* [The War of Liberation of the Polish Nation in the Years 1939-1945. Crucial Problems], Warszawa 1963.

⁶⁶ M. Malinowski, J. Pawłowicz, W. Peterański, A. Przygoński, M. Wikisz, *Polski ruch robotniczy w okresie wojny i okupacji hitlerowskiej. Wrzesień 1939 — styczeń 1945. Zarys historii* [The Polish Working-Class Movement during the War and the Nazi Occupation. September 1939 — January 1945. A Historical Outline], Warszawa 1964.

⁶⁷ L. Moczulski, *Wojna polska 1939* [The Polish War of 1939], Poznań 1972.

Relatively less light has been shed in Polish historiography on the international affairs of the years 1939-1941. Writing about them was chiefly M. Turlejska in her work *Truths and Fictions*.⁶⁸

The Potsdam decisions of 1945 on Poland's Western frontier on the Odra and Nysa have been one of the central problems in the Polish historiography concerning the history of World War II. Literature on this subject is plentiful. The Polish authors stress the definitive and unequivocal sense of the decisions adopted in Potsdam by the leaders of the U.S.S.R., the United States and Great Britain with regard to Poland's Western frontier. These problems are dealt with particularly in the works of Alfons Klafkowski, Bolesław Wiewióra and Józef Kokot.⁶⁹ The problems of Poland's Western frontier have also been discussed extensively by Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Gerard Labuda and Marian Orzechowski.⁷⁰ The two former authors have presented the problem in a broad historical context.

In concluding this review of major Polish publications dealing with the general-historical aspects of World War II, we wish to remark that it is not complete because it leaves out numerous articles published in scientific periodicals as well as editions of sources. Neither have we included memoirs of which there have appeared a great many, both in Poland and in emigration.

(Translated by Jan Aleksandrowicz)

⁶⁸ M. Turlejska, *Prawdy i fikcje [Truths and Fictions]*, Warszawa 1968.

⁶⁹ A. Klafkowski, *Umowa poczdamska z dnia 2 VIII 1949 r. Podstawy prawne likwidacji skutków wojny polsko-niemieckiej w latach 1939-1945 [The Potsdam Agreement of 2 August 1949. The Legal Bases for the Liquidation of the Consequences of the Polish-German War of 1939-1945]*, Warszawa 1960; W. Wiewióra, *Granica polsko-niemiecka w świetle prawa międzynarodowego [The Polish-German Frontier in the Light of International Law]*, Poznań 1957; J. Kokot, *Logika Poczdamu [The Logic of Potsdam]*, Katowice 1957.

⁷⁰ G. Labuda, *Polska granica zachodnia. Tysiąc lat dziejów politycznych [The Western Frontier of Poland. One Thousand Years of Political History]*, Poznań 1971; K. Skubiszewski, *Zachodnia granica Polski [The Western Frontier of Poland]*, Gdańsk 1969; M. Orzechowski, *Odra, Nysa Łużycka, Baltyk w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu drugiej wojny światowej [The Odra, Lusatian Nysa and Baltic in Polish Political Thought of the Period of World War II]*, Wrocław 1969.