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RUSSIAN CRIMES IN UKRAINE: BETWEEN GUILT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Abstract: *Is the confrontation in Ukraine Putin's war, or also that of the Russian nation? Can the crimes of the Russian state be hidden in the shadows of Tolstoy or Tchaikovsky?*

This article distinguishes between the guilt or responsibility of individuals (criminal, political, moral); the international legal responsibility of states; and finally the political, moral, and historical responsibility of nations. In the legal or moral sense, guilt must be individualized. However, the extralegal (political, moral and historical) responsibility (not regulated by law) affects the whole nation and concerns responsibility both for the past and for the future. Nevertheless, if the nation is deemed entirely responsible for the actions of the state or of some national groups, it is not about attributing guilt to the whole nation, but about the collective recovery of the sense of humanity.

Thus, suggesting the guilt of the entire nation is based on a misunderstanding. But if the responsibility does not imply guilt, neither does the lack of guilt imply the lack of responsibility. By definition, the moral and political responsibility of the nation does not take a legal (judicial) form. Other forms and instruments are applicable here. In this context such terms as regrets, forgiveness, shame, apologies, or reconciliation appear. Such actions, based on fundamental values, require political courage, wisdom, and far-sightedness.

The passivity of the social environment favours the perpetrators of crimes. but does not release the other members of the nation from moral responsibility, and in particular from the obligation to distinguish good from evil. Not all Russians are guilty of crimes, but they all (whether guilty or innocent) bear some moral and political responsibility.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Russian aggression, guilt, responsibility, international responsibility, Germany, German-Polish Relations, forgiveness, reconciliation

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States and nations are responsible for peace and international security, but the results are often far from satisfactory. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a historic and geostrategic moment, and the reaction of the democratic world must be characterized by courage and political imagination.

Western policy towards Russia was often accompanied by fallacies such as *Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through rapprochement); *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade); *Frieden schaffen ohne Waffen* (make peace without guns); and *reden statt rüsten* (talk instead of arming). Today the extreme position is expressed in the view that Russia cannot lose this war, and Ukraine cannot win it (in other words, the possession of nuclear weapons is a guarantee of impunity).

After 1990, the appeasement policy (e.g. the Minsk agreements of 2014/2015) was regarded somewhat perversely as an investment in European peace, and was accompanied by tolerance of Russia's sphere of influence.¹ From this perspective, it is easy to conclude that Ukraine's armed resistance threatens peace, but such a view is tantamount to humiliating the victims of Russian imperialism.

It is difficult to understand the cultural disorientation of the West, which for more than 20 years has stubbornly ignored the growth and maturation of the new version of totalitarianism in Russia, as if deliberately repeating all the patterns of behavior from the 1930s that "bred" Hitler.² The reflections of *drôle de paix* or *drôle de responsabilité* come to mind.

An important aspect of this conflict is not only the unequivocal assessment of the Russian aggression, but also the hesitation regarding the manner and scope of response to obvious and massive international crimes (e.g. is it worth dying for Kyiv?).³ According to some contemporary politicians (i.e. President Macron), Russia is looking for its own identity, and surviving the period after 1991 – when communism collapsed – has been hard for her. For this reason, the future European security order must take Russia's security needs into account. It should however be recalled that whoever demands security for Russia must first spell out the security guarantees for Ukraine. Who is to ensure security for whom? – Russia for Ukraine or vice versa? This is not just a rhetorical question.

¹ See M. Kundera, «Un occident kidnappé» ou la tragédie de l'Europe centrale, 5(27) Le Débat 3 (1983) (English translation: *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, 31(7) New York Review of Books 33 (1984)).

² See O. Zabuzhko, *No guilty people in the world? Reading Russian literature after the Bucha massacre*, Times Literary Supplement, 22 April 2022, available at: <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/russian-literature-bucha-massacre-essay-oksana-zabuzhko/> (accessed 30 April 2023).

³ See J. Kranz, *Russian Aggression in Ukraine: Demons in the War for "Peace" or Crime without Punishment?*, 60(3) Archiv des Völkerrechts 243 (2022).

In the context of the crimes of the Russian hordes, the German *Fingerspitzengefühl* triumphed recently in the form of demonstrations and appeals against military aid for Ukraine. Pope Francis distinguished himself not only by his (un)diplomatic lack of precision in identifying the perpetrator of the aggression, but also noted: “May the Lord have mercy on us, on each of us. We are all to blame!” Only a few steps separate us from the so-called *Rußlandversteher*. The “*tu quoque...*”⁴ argument is also used with pleasure by both Putin and some peace-loving people (i.e. Russia is following in the footsteps of US violations of international law). In this regard, it is worthwhile to quote an aphorism of Stanisław Jerzy Lec’s – “Reflect before you think!”

The first part of this text focuses on outlining the essence of Russia’s aggression and policy towards Ukraine. In the second part, we present considerations about the extralegal responsibility of the nation. In conclusion, the annex cites selected examples of moral, political, and historical responsibility in Polish-German relations after 1945.

In the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine, we are confronted with the issue of international crimes (war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, aggression). Imposing punishment for the crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine and collecting evidence for them is a civilizational challenge for the democratic world – the failure to punish or the toleration of such crimes encourages their repetition.

On 17 March 2023 the Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants of arrest for two individuals: Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Ms. Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, allegedly responsible for the war crime of unlawful deportation or transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation (under Arts. 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b) (viii) of the Rome Statute). *Il faut que la peur change de camp...*

The arrest warrant for the leader of one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council seems to be wise and of significant importance – regardless of the still unknown outcome of the war in Ukraine and the likelihood of Putin’s actual appearance before the ICC. This decision counters reports that Russian war crimes are the excesses of individual soldiers. It also proves that this Court is not just prosecuting the leaders of some African countries.

⁴ Tu quoque – a fallacy consisting in repelling criticism by pointing out that the other side is not without fault.

The international legal responsibility of states is usually regulated in treaties (e.g. reparations and compensation), while actions by national courts are limited by the jurisdictional immunity of the state (with a few exceptions in US law). The criminal guilt of individuals is in turn subject to the jurisdiction of international courts (if they exist) and national law in this respect is governed by the principle of universal jurisdiction.

We omit these aspects, which already have a wide bibliography, as well as a number of related new ideas which are discussed and developed in connection with the Russian aggression in Ukraine.⁵ Instead, we intend to focus on the issue of the extralegal responsibility of the nation for the crimes committed by its state, i.e. responsibility in the political, moral, and historical perspectives. In this case, the criterion of guilt is not of primary importance.

At the beginning one should ask whether the confrontation in Ukraine is Putin's war, or also that of the Russian nation, and whether it is waged against the "Nazi leadership of Ukraine" or against the Ukrainian nation (whose existence is questioned by Putin)? Are the crimes committed by ordinary Russians or also by Putin, Lavrov and Shoigu? Should all Russian citizens be subject to international sanctions? Should Russian citizens have unrestricted entry rights to third countries? Should Russian citizens be allowed to participate in international sports competitions? Should we promote the Russian repertoire and Russian artists under any circumstances? (or can the crimes of the Russian state be hidden in the shadow of Tolstoy or Tchaikovsky?)⁶

The answers to these questions are varied, but their basis is undoubtedly the political and moral responsibility of the nation. Let us quote, for example, the opinion of two Polish intellectuals who remind us that the whole nation cannot be blamed for the crimes:

Let us help Ukraine and Ukrainians but let us not turn our backs on the Russians. Let us especially remember those brave democrats imprisoned, exiled, and gagged today. [...] It

⁵ See e.g. various texts available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/tag/crime-of-aggression/> and <https://www.justsecurity.org/82513/just-securitys-russia-ukraine-war-archive/> (both accessed 30 April 2023); see particularly C. Kreß, S. Hobe, A. Nußberger, *The Ukraine War and the Crime of Aggression: How to Fill the Gaps in the International Legal System*, Just Security, 23 January 2023; J. Trahan, *Don't be Fooled By U.S. Smoke and Mirrors on the Crime of Aggression. Weak Proposals Carry the Risk of Weak Results*, Just Security, 14 April 2023; see also P. Grzebyk, *Classification of the Conflict between Ukraine and Russia in International Law (Ius ad Bellum and Ius in Bello)*, XXXIV Polish Yearbook of International Law 39 (2014); N. Cwincinskaja, *The Legality and Certain Legal Consequences of the "Accession" of Crimea to the Russian Federation*, XXXIV Polish Yearbook of International Law 61(2014); P. Grzebyk, *Escalation of the Conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 in Light of the Law on Use of Force and International Humanitarian Law*, XLI Polish Yearbook of International Law 145 (2021).

⁶ See Zabuzhko, *supra* note 2.

is a drama of two nations. [...] The Russian government [...] decided to attack Ukraine militarily. This decision resulted in the cruel death of many thousands of people, not only Ukrainians, but also Russians. [...] The world's media repeat [...] that the vast majority of Russians support the shameful invasion of Ukraine. This is a sophisticated lie. The victim of the crimes of the Russian government is not only the Ukrainian people, but also the Russian people. Young Russian citizens are treated like cannon fodder and protesters like criminals. [...] The crimes of Hitler and his gang were to be blamed on Hitler, his collaborators, and zealous executors of their orders, not Germans like the Scholl siblings or Dietrich Bonhoeffer, murdered by the Nazis [...], or great exiles like Thomas Mann or Bertolt Brecht. Declaring that all of Russia is behind Putin is an act of faith in Putin's imperial religion or some bizarre anti-Russian racism. [...] True peace and international brotherhood will not be built on tanks. We believe that the key to real peace is in the hands of the Russian people. That key is not spectacular assassinations of those in power, not a military putsch, nor actions with the use of weapons – but a peaceful struggle “without violence.”⁷

This view, however, is not widely shared.
According to the Belarusian Nobel laureate:

[e]very Russian bears share of responsibility. [...] The fictional idea of a nation oppressed and disgraced by its elites is too easy, it explains nothing. [...] We left the camp fence, but we had no idea what freedom was. Neither does Putin.⁸

In the opinion of the Ukrainian intellectual, the suffering of the victim and the aggressor cannot be equated:

Would you say – even today, and not in the face of the burning ghetto and dying people – words of sympathy for the “poor” young Germans who shoot the ghetto because they are treated like cannon fodder? For the German (and Austrian) society, whose support for Hitler is just an appearance, because in fact they are against the war he unleashed? [...] Astonishment is also caused by the path of change that you indicate – the path of peaceful opposition. Even embarrassment – pointing out Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King as models for imitation.⁹

⁷ A. Michnik, L. Wiśniewski, *Wybiła godzina sądu przedostatecznego!* [The hour of the penultimate judgment has struck!], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 March 2023, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/4tmjzjda> (accessed 30 April 2023).

⁸ Svetlana Alexievich (Belarusian Nobel laureate, 2015), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28-29 May 2022.

⁹ O. Hnatiuk, *Przekleństwo symetryzmu. Nie można zrównywać cierpienia ofiary i agresora* [The curse of symmetry. The suffering of the victim and the aggressor cannot be equated], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20 March 2023, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/55jbujt2> (accessed 30 April 2023).

Contemporary Russian writer Viktor Yerofeyev believes that the war in Ukraine is “supported by the majority of the Russian people, who see Putin as their boyfriend, their concept of life. [...] We must spare the ‘beautiful Russia of the future’, a fiction of our brave liberals”.¹⁰

According to another Russian writer:

We cannot say that all Russians are guilty – they were dragged into it. At the same time, they are responsible for what is happening. This war is waged by Putin on behalf of the people, the state, and every Russian. So, anyone who does not openly refuse to support is de facto supporting this war. Most Russians meanwhile want to ignore it. They go about their daily lives and hope to wait until the war is over. It’s a survival strategy developed over hundreds of years – hide so the state doesn’t find you. The fear of it is often passed down from generation to generation.¹¹

Suggesting the guilt of the entire nation is based on a misunderstanding and false from the beginning, because it does not distinguish between the nation’s guilt and its extralegal responsibility (not regulated by law). The moral, political, and historical responsibility of the whole nation remains to be considered (more on this below).

Unlike the difficult emigrations from fascist Germany, the thousands of Russians who left their country after 24 February 2022 are mostly not victims of political persecution and do not distance themselves from Great Russian nationalism. Broad public support for Putin and the war in Ukraine does not show a downward trend, and it is not only enlightened and liberal Russians who are fleeing Putin’s Russia (the Russian secret services are already taking care of this).

Democrats have always been a tiny minority in Russia, and Russian democracy constantly requires a qualifying adjective (socialist, sovereign etc.). The change of power in Russia does not guarantee a change in the falsified consciousness of this nation. Theoretically, such a change is possible in future generations, but until then Russia will still (like autocratic China) remain one of the great threats to international peace and security. In short, it is impossible to expect that the Russian democrats will put an end to Russia’s aggressive and imperial policy.

At this point, however, it is advisable to put a stop, because we are entering the realm of political predictions.

¹⁰ W. Jerofiejew, *Ci irytujący hedoniści Ukraińcy* [Those annoying Ukrainian hedonists], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25 March 2023, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2enj96tb> (accessed 30 April 2023).

¹¹ D. Glukhovskiy, *Rosja zamienia się w jeden wielki bunkier* [Russia turns into one big bunker], *Polityka*, No. 17/2023, pp. 56-57, available at: <https://bit.ly/42wLNyE> (accessed 30 April 2023).

Karl Jaspers proposed in 1946 four categories of guilt: (i) criminal guilt on the grounds of breaking obligatory legal norms by an individual; (ii) political guilt coming from the acts of leaders and state organs; (iii) moral guilt based on the framework of carrying out the tasks of state institutions, including obeying orders, and (iv) metaphysical guilt coming from co-responsibility for all evil, especially for crimes committed in the presence of an individual or with his or her knowledge.¹² The proper instance for evaluation and judgment in the first case is the court; in the second, political authorities or organs (for example the victors in the case of war); in the third, one's own conscience; and in the fourth, God.

In Jaspers' categorization, in one or the other case we should replace the term "guilt" with the notion of responsibility, because guilt, in the legal or moral sense, must be individualized, and the responsibility of a nation is not based on guilt. In this context, we distinguish between the guilt, or the responsibility of individuals (criminal, political, moral); the international legal responsibility of states; and finally the political, moral and historical responsibility of nations. The lack of guilt does not imply a lack of responsibility (for both the past and the future), and responsibility does not imply guilt.

Essential for our reflections is the idea of collective moral and political responsibility.

Crimes are committed by individuals, who undergo punishment.¹³ Here it is necessary to determine the extent of their guilt and distinguish, for instance, different levels of intention (*mens rea*), conspiracy, complicity, or incitement. This type of individual attribution is not always easy, especially in the case of mass crimes.

If it is an individual who commits crimes, this does not mean his actions always come only from his personal intention or choice. They may also come from a structure of criminal behaviour organized by the state. In other words, apart from individual criminals, there also exists a state-based system of organized crime (national-socialist, fascist, communist, religious, etc). Thus, the legal responsibility is incumbent on the state, on the direct perpetrators, and on those who organize the system.

¹² K. Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage*, Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg-Zürich 1946.

¹³ See C. Kreß, *International Criminal Law*, Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law, 2009, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ypff6vec> (accessed 30 April 2023).

In the case of the international legal responsibility of the state, it is essential to attribute to it concrete actions that violate international law.¹⁴ This attribution may result from the (effective or overall) control; from the lack of due diligence; or from strict liability.

The international legal responsibility of states differs from individual criminal responsibility because of the specific character of the perpetrator, which is the state and not an individual (although this does not exclude the criminal responsibility of the latter). According to the principle of state continuity, a change in its political system or its government does not exempt the state from its international responsibility. This responsibility takes the form of reparations, restitution, or satisfaction. It is essentially restitutive, disciplinary, and preventive in nature and is usually reflected in a treaty form.

The consequences of the international legal responsibility of states inevitably affect their population, which shares the fate of the state, both in times of peace and in war. Thus, after losing a war the people suffer because of the destruction of the national infrastructure and at the same time they carry the burden of war reparations,¹⁵ to which both the innocent and the guilty must contribute. States' borders are often changed, which is not without its effect on citizens.¹⁶ International sanctions by states or international organizations also have consequences for private parties. However, this should not be equated with collective guilt (the guilt of individuals remains a separate issue).

¹⁴ International Law Commission, *Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts* (2001): "Article 1. Every internationally wrongful act of a State entails the international responsibility of that State. Article 2. There is an internationally wrongful act of a State when conduct consisting of an action or omission: (a) is attributable to the State under international law; and (b) constitutes a breach of an international obligation of the State. Article 3. The characterization of an act of a State as internationally wrongful is governed by international law. Such characterization is not affected by the characterization of the same act as lawful by internal law. Article 4.1. The conduct of any State organ shall be considered an act of that State under international law, whether the organ exercises legislative, executive, judicial or any other functions, whatever position it holds in the organization of the State, and whatever its character as an organ of the central government or of a territorial unit of the State."

¹⁵ J. Kranz, *Kriegsbedingte Reparationen und individuelle Entschädigungsansprüche im Kontext der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen*, 80 *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* 325 (2020); P. d'Argent, *Reparations after World War II*, Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law, 2009, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3d8mdd> (accessed 30 April 2023).

¹⁶ See J. Kranz, *Wollt ihr den totalen Krieg? Political, Moral and Legal Aspects of the Resettlement of German Population After World War II*, 7(2) *Polish Review of International and European Law* (2018), available also at: https://www.academia.edu/42224936/Wollt_ihr_den_totalen_Krieg_Political_Moral_and_Legal_Aspects_of_the_Resettlement_of_German_Population_After_World_War_II (accessed 30 April 2023).

In turn, the extralegal (political-moral-historical) responsibility of a nation concerns both its past (sometimes a distant one) and the future; times of war and times of peace; failures and successes. This responsibility relates above all to state's actions or omissions (or in some instances those of some national groups) that are equivalent to violations of international law or merely politically or morally reprehensible (such as refusing financial or military assistance or concluding treaties harmful to third countries). A good example is the appeasement policy that preceded the Second World War, but also the policy of some states towards the Soviet Union and then Russia, which obviously facilitated the Russian aggression against Ukraine in both 2014 and 2022. An individual may be held morally or politically responsible for his or her actions (or omissions), e.g. for his or her own public statements or, as in the case of the resignation of a minister, for the reprehensible actions of subordinates.

Belonging to a particular nation, however, does not allow moral and political responsibility to be treated selectively, according to a subjective choice. In this context the nation is a community which is usually not chosen, and which is bound by the shared history of many generations. It is also irrelevant in this case that only a (small) part of the nation has supported the unworthy or illegal actions of the government or has been aware of its criminal intentions. Individual guilt here does not matter, and the collective aspect comes from the fact that the state authority determines the fate of the nation.

This distinction helps us to avoid confusion resulting from equating guilt with extralegal responsibility. The nation as an entirety is not to blame, because the concept of guilt does not apply to the nation. Nevertheless, the nation (both guilty and innocent persons) is entirely morally and politically responsible for the actions of the state or of some national groups. In this case, however, it is not about attributing guilt to the whole nation, but about the collective sense of responsibility or a collective recovery of the sense of humanity.

The dictatorial nature of state power, ignorance or helplessness, or permanent indoctrination (intoxication) with a specific ideology do not release the nation from collective, moral, and political responsibility. Moreover, the protests or resistance of a handful of opponents of the regime do not absolve the remaining majority from responsibility. Similarly, the so-called "late birth privilege" (*Gnade der späten Geburt*, a concept developed in post-war Germany) does not play an important role here. Thus, the concept of the collective responsibility of the nation does not presuppose arbitrary exceptions.

Every nation must account for its past. There are times in which passivity, and especially “loud” silence, lead to historical and political responsibility for evil deeds.¹⁷ Bertolt Brecht asked: “Was sind das für Zeiten, wo / Ein Gespräch über Bäume fast ein Verbrechen ist / Weil es ein Schweigen über so viele Untaten einschließt!”¹⁸

Dictators and criminals gladly take advantage of the passivity of the public and also of the so-called *Realpolitik* of democratic countries. It happens that false historical memory is the basis of a nation’s existence. Sometimes there is a situation referred to as “the inability to regret”.¹⁹ This is why historians are a “threat” to national unity, because their task is to seek to tell the truth, and not only what people say they want to hear and/or remember. Gesine Schwan is right in recognizing that the psychological and moral consequences of silence harm future generations.²⁰

Not all Germans supported National Socialism; and certainly not all Poles were supporters of the communist dictatorship. Nevertheless, both nations bear the responsibility for the unworthy or illegal actions of these regimes as organizational and planning structures (the individual guilt is irrelevant here). A nation that is proud to host over a million Ukrainian war refugees on its territory cannot pretend that it is not aware of and is not morally and politically responsible for the deliberately brutal pushbacks carried out by its state on the border with Belarus.²¹

Finally, not all Russians are guilty of crimes, but they all bear the moral and political responsibility for not seeing these crimes. In other words, the passivity of the social environment favors the perpetrators of the crime, but does not release the other members of the nation from moral and political responsibility, and in particular from the obligation to distinguish good from evil, especially evil in its extreme forms.

The extralegal collective responsibility of the nation, however, has nothing to do with the collective responsibility imposed on citizens by totalitarian regimes. In other words, the collective responsibility of the nation is conceivable only in democratic conditions, and unrealistic in autocratic or totalitarian systems. For this reason, the situation in Russia is not optimistic.

¹⁷ See K. Jaspers, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?*, Tatsachen, Gefahren, Chancen, München: 1966; R. Giordano, *Die zweite Schuld oder von der Last Deutscher zu sein*, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, München: 1990.

¹⁸ What are these times when / Talking about trees is almost a crime / Because it involves silence about so many misdeeds! (B. Brecht, *An die Nachgeborenen*).

¹⁹ A. Mitscherlich, M. Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens*, Piper, München: 1977.

²⁰ G. Schwan, *Politik und Schuld. Die zerstörerische Macht des Schweigens*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main: 1997.

²¹ *Situation on the Polish-Belarusian border July-October 2022. The Humanitarian Aid Border Group brief*, available at: https://nomada.info.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EN_Border_Group_brief_July_October_2022.pdf (accessed 30 April 2023).

The moral and political responsibility of the nation by definition does not take a legal (judicial) form. Other forms and instruments are applicable here, which however do not exclude individual legal responsibility.

In this context such terms as regrets, forgiveness, shame, apologies, or reconciliation appear.²² These moral feelings can have both an individual dimension (between the perpetrator and the victim) or a collective one (between states/nations/social groups).²³ In the latter case they are expressed by figures representing the nation in a more or less formal manner, but these feelings do not have to be shared by everyone. Practice shows that such actions are rarely the work of official state authorities, but rather autonomous circles or even individuals. Such actions, based on fundamental values, require political courage, wisdom, and far-sightedness, because they apply not only to the responsibility for the past, but also to the responsibility for the future.

Collective forgiveness applies to wrongs done by one group (nation) to another group, usually assuming that the first group publicly admits wrongdoing and expresses remorse. Reconciliation, in turn, results from a social need and concern for the future. These actions have a moral and political dimension, not financial or material (as in the case of reparations, compensation or restitution).

According to Anna Wolff-Powęska:

Forgiveness must be preceded by mature reflection [...] and understanding that without forgiveness there is no chance for change. [...] Forgiving is directed toward the past. It means working on memory, which does not mean forgetting but a kind of therapy – freeing oneself from obsessions, hostility, and the desire for revenge. Forgiveness, as Paul Ricoeur says, has a healing value – ‘it takes away one’s debt.’ Reconciliation, meanwhile, is directed towards the future. It is an expression of responsibility for the peaceful co-existence of future generations. It is a departure from focusing on yourself and turning oneself toward the general good.²⁴

²² See Ch. Daase, S. Engert, M.-A. Horelt, J. Renner, R. Strassner (eds.), *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations: The Importance of Being Sorry*, Routledge, New York: 2016; V. Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 2005; P. Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Seuil, Paris: 2000; H. Arendt, J. Kohn, *Responsibility and Judgment*, Schocken Books, New York: 2003; A. Schaap, *Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility: Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the 'German Question' in Politics of Reconciliation*, 49(4) *Political Studies* 749 (2001).

²³ See K. Bachmann, J. Kranz (eds.), *Verlorene Heimat. Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen*, Bouvier, Bonn: 1998.

²⁴ A. Wolff-Powęska, *Wielki dar przebaczenia* [The great gift of forgiveness], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12–13 November 2005, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3z8rb49x> (accessed 30 April 2023).

Nevertheless, answers to some difficult questions remain open. For instance: are there unforgivable crimes?²⁵ Does asking for forgiveness (and only on the condition of first expressing regret and remorse) have to be a premise for reconciliation? Is reconciliation possible without forgiveness? Does forgiveness always lead to reconciliation? Can forgiveness exclude punishment? Can you forgive on behalf of someone else?

It is necessary to take into consideration that forgiveness and reconciliation will bear fruit only when they have a foundation with a relatively wide social consensus, a dialogue in truth, and when they are accepted by both sides. Otherwise, they will remain only empty slogans.²⁶

Finally let us also note that regardless of shame, disgrace, or apology, the collective emotions of an entire nation are often associated with positive attributes. They are expressed against the background of collective pride, glory, a sense of sports victories, the pace of economic development or cultural achievements, etc.

Mikhail Shishkin, a Russian journalist and writer who since 1995 lives in Switzerland, recently wrote (2023) a letter to an anonymous Ukrainian friend. Here are the relevant passages for our consideration:

Our conversations and correspondence have so far been conducted in the language of great Russian literature. Today, for the whole world, Russian is the language of people bombing Ukrainian cities, the language of child killers, war criminals and murderers. They will be judged for crimes against humanity. [...]

Does a dictatorship breed a slave society, or does a slave society breed a dictatorship? Ukraine managed to get out of the circle of hell that is our common experience – the monstrous and bloody past of our nations. And that was the reason why the Russian pretender hated her. After all, the tired Russian people might wish to take an example from a free, democratic Ukraine. And that is why it must be destroyed.

In Russia, we had neither de-Stalinization nor the Nuremberg trials. [...] We can all see the result – a new dictatorship. A dictatorship which, by its very nature, cannot exist without enemies, and therefore without war. [...]

²⁵ See S. Wiesenthal, *Die Sonnenblume*, Europa Verlag, Berlin: 2015; see also the film *Coach to Vienna* (Czech: *Kočár do Vídně*, in USA released as *Carriage to Vienna*) directed by Karel Kachyňa (1966).

²⁶ See *Bischöfe, haben Sie endlich den Mut zur Wahrheit! Brief von Prof. em. Dr. Heinrich Missalla an die deutschen katholischen Bischöfe zum 80. Jahrestag des Kriegsbeginnns*, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfaw89f> (accessed 30 April 2023).

A year ago, when Russian tanks moved towards Kiev, the whole world asked in astonishment – why are there no mass anti-war protests in Russia; why are only single people taking to the streets? At the time, I explained it by fear. Silence is a Russian survival strategy. Those who protested are now in prison. It was through silence that entire generations of Russians ensured their survival. [...] The people remained silent when the aggression against Ukraine began. But in the fall, when mass mobilization was announced and hundreds of thousands of Russians obediently went to kill Ukrainians and die at their hands, this can no longer be explained by fear. It's something deeper and scarier. I can see only one explanation – my country fell out of time. In the 21st century, an individual has a personal responsibility to distinguish good from evil, and if he sees that his country and people have started a vile, shameful war, then he must act against his country and people.

Most Russians still have an archaic mentality. Their identity is closely related to belonging to a tribe. Our tribe is always right, and the other tribes are enemies who want to destroy us. We are not responsible, we do not decide anything – the chief/khan/tsar makes the choices for us. [...]

The rebirth of my country is possible only after the complete destruction of the Putin regime. The Russian should have his empire amputated like a malignant tumor. “Zero Hour” is needed by Russia like oxygen. My homeland has a future only when it experiences a total defeat.²⁷

Contemporary Russian writer Viktor Yerofeyev asks:

Where does this hatred come from? Well, perhaps from [...] the primitive communal system, the division of the world into natives and strangers, from the love of victories in the family yard, in the gym, and then in KGB jobs. [...]

During the period of mobilization, Moscow became sad, but when 200,000 mobilized were sent to the war zone and pardoned convicts were added to them, she became cheerful again. [...]

In order to stop [...] the war, supported by the majority of the Russian people, [...] the new little Khrushchev is a way out of the metaphysical impasse, but it will still require the consent of the Russian elites to a moderate policy; perhaps there will be such an agreement, the world will catch its breath, metaphysics will end. But one way or another, the wounds will last for many generations.²⁸

²⁷ M. Szyszkin, *Mój kraj wypadł z czasu. List do przyjaciela Ukraińca rok później* [My country has fallen out of time. A letter to a Ukrainian friend a year later], *Monitor Konstytucyjny*, 23 March 2023, available at: <https://monitorkonstytucyjny.eu/archiwa/25067> (accessed 30 April 2023).

²⁸ Jerofiejew, *supra* note 10.

Let us recall that during Hitler's National Socialist dictatorship, the passivity of the population and obedience to the state, as well as the weak resistance of intellectuals, were striking. As Anna Wolff-Powęska asks: "Did a wave of protests arise when the German officials were defining who is an Aryan?"²⁹

Ludwik Hirszfeld, a Polish scholar and a survivor of the Holocaust, wrote:

Maybe those scholars did not want to murder us and loot our culture. Maybe their sin was only being superficial, vain, and self-aggrandizing. But, for God's sake, why did they not disavow the crimes while the voice of their conscience could shout like a cry of protest. Why did they allow this climate of contempt and hatred, this self-exaltation of their own nation? After losing the war it will be too late to offer one's regrets.³⁰

If during the time of National Socialism the expression of patriotism was supposed to be a way of fulfilling one's duties and obeying orders, what should we think about the actions of the Scholl siblings who, putting their lives at the risk, condemned the behaviour of so many of their countrymen, writing that:

Why are the German people so apathetic in the face of all these most horrid, inhumane crimes? Hardly anyone thinks about it. The fact is accepted as such and put aside *ad acta*. [...] And not only does he [the German] have to feel pity, no, much more: complicity. Because through his apathetic behavior he gives these dark people the opportunity to act in this way, he suffers this government, which has burdened itself with such infinite guilt, yes, it is his own guilt that it was able to come into being in the first place! Everyone wants to absolve themselves of such complicity, everyone does it and then goes back to sleep with a clear conscience. But he cannot acquit himself.³¹

Just punishment draws nearer and nearer! But what is the German people doing? It doesn't see and it doesn't hear. [...] Germans! Do you and your children want to suffer the same fate that befell the Jews? Do you want to be measured with the same standard as your seducers? Shall we forever be the people hated and rejected by the whole world? [...] Decide before it's too late!³²

²⁹ A. Wolff-Powęska, *Niemiecki kłopot z niepamięcią* [The German trouble with oblivion], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 August 2009, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/r7wxb9rb> (accessed 30 April 2023).

³⁰ L. Hirszfeld, *Historia jednego życia*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Warszawa: 2000, p. 523 – first edition 1946 (English translation: *The Story of One Life*, University of Rochester Press, Rochester: 2010).

³¹ *Zweites Flugblatt der Weißen Rose. Nach einem Entwurf von Hans Scholl und Alexander Schmorell*, June 1942, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ytrnr3cr> (accessed 30 April 2023).

³² *Fünftes Flugblatt der Weißen Rose. Nach einem Entwurf von Hans Scholl und Alexander Schmorell mit Korrekturen von Kurt Huber*, January 1943, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yh5ppjez> (accessed 30 April 2023).

Thomas Mann claimed in 1945: “How different everything would have looked if the Germans on their own had been able to free themselves!”³³

The above examples show that it is not always easy to face the past, not only for states, but also for nations and individuals.

Violence was and is the foundation of Russia’s existence as a state. Even disregarding the moment of the end of the war in Ukraine and the forms of legal responsibility, and ignoring the uncertain evolution of Russia’s politics and the mentality of its society, it seems that Russia and Russians are faced with a difficult future.

Let us make clear: the entire Russian nation is not guilty of aggression and not to blame for the crimes committed against Ukraine, but it cannot shirk its moral and political responsibility for the actions of its state. This collective responsibility of the nation takes various extralegal forms, but it is not based on the criterion of guilt. In the long term, taking such responsibility is a premise for peace.

Contemporary Russia grotesquely claims to be the victim of an attack by Ukraine and NATO and is far from recognizing its political and moral responsibility. Moreover, in March 2023 Russia concluded an agreement with Belarus on the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on its territory. Putin’s threats related to the possible use of nuclear weapons often lead to appeals to refrain from actions that could provoke him into committing an obvious crime. Thus, paradoxically the West seems to have only a choice between a nuclear Armageddon and accepting Russian aggression. Meanwhile, this is a trap cleverly set by Russia and its allies.

In order not to fall into Putin’s trap, it is now time to learn how to not be scared...

The opinions of Vladimir Vladimirovich and his acolytes (*lux ex oriente*) on the annihilation of Ukraine as a state and nation³⁴ show a civilizational and cultural gap, and the responsibility of the Russian nation seems left to wander in a desert.

³³ T. Mann, *Deutsche Hörer! Radiosendungen nach Deutschland aus den Jahren 1940-1945*, Frankfurt am Main: 2004 (4. Auflage), p. 154 (Sendung vom 8. November 1945): “Wie anders hätte alles sich dargestellt, wäre es Deutschland gegeben gewesen, sich selbst zu befreien.”

³⁴ V. Putin, *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, 12 July 2021, available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>; T. Sergejzew, *Что Россия должна сделать с Украиной*, RIA Nowosti, 3 April 2022, available at: <https://ria.ru/20220403/ukraina-1781469605.html>; R. Vesper, *Die Ukraine soll entukrainisiert werden*, FAZ, 4 April 2022, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yfme2ax>; C. Apt, *Russia’s Eliminationist Rhetoric Against Ukraine: A Collection*, Just Security, 1 November 2022, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/81789/russias-eliminationist-rhetoric-against-ukraine-a-collection/> (all accessed 30 April 2023).

Faith in the effective awakening of this nation is very limited and belongs to the realm of wishful thinking.

In conclusion, it is worth recalling a fragment of the memorandum of German Catholic intellectuals from 1968:

Those who consciously and light-heartedly violate the international legal order, as Germany (did) in times of Hitler, break not only concrete norms, but also threaten the very existence of such order and thus put themselves in danger of being deprived of the protection of the norms of this order. After such a violation of the peace, peace and mutual respect for law must be restored. This, however, cannot be presumed, taken for granted, and especially used to justify one's own demands. In such a situation peace is possible only under the conditions through which it can be reached.³⁵

ANNEX

In modern times, there are examples of the difficulty in implementing moral, political, and historical responsibility. Limiting itself only to Poland, various forms of dialogue have been conducted in recent years, usually with good but time-consuming results, in relation to the difficult parts of Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-Jewish, and Polish-German relations.

By way of illustration, it is worth briefly recalling some aspects of overcoming the past in Polish-German relations after 1945.³⁶ Let us add that the path to attaining this goal was not always easy. However, it is proof that the moral and political responsibility of the nation is not just theoretical.

In the quoted passages, the word “guilt” is occasionally used instead of (moral and political) “responsibility”. It is obvious, however, that this responsibility extends to the nation as a whole, without distinguishing between the guilt or innocence of its individual members. Its forms and consequences are also different than in the case of legal responsibility.

Germany started the Second World War in an intentional and conscious manner, although it was not threatened by any other country (the reasons for Russian aggression against Ukraine are equally absurd, if not paranoid). Every action can have unpredictable, unintended, and unwanted consequences. The world was set on fire in 1939 by National Socialist Germany, and the fire spread gradually and unrelentingly. The commencement of the Second World War was the beginning

³⁵ B. Kreis, *Ein Memorandum deutscher Katholiken zu den polnisch-deutschen Fragen (Das Bensberger Memorandum) vom 2. März 1968*, Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, Mainz: 1968, pp. 13-14.

³⁶ For more on this subject, see Kranz, *supra* note 16.

of the end of a historic epoch in Central Europe, which brought about irreversible effects (including for Germany and the Germans).

One of the first expressions of moral responsibility is the statement of the German Evangelical Church of 1945:

We are [...] with our people not only in a great community of suffering [...], but also in a solidarity of guilt. It causes us great anguish to state that we have brought unending suffering upon many peoples and many countries. What we have often testified to in our communities, we now declare in the name of the whole church: it is true that we fought for many long years against the spirit that found its terrible expression in the violent National Socialist regime; however, we also accuse ourselves of not having professed our faith more courageously, of not having prayed more faithfully, of not having believed more joyfully, and of not having loved more fervently.³⁷

Heinrich August Winkler recalled in 2009:

When the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany spoke of a ‘solidarity of guilt’ between church and people in the ‘Stuttgart Confession of Guilt’ in October 1945, this also met with widespread opposition within the church. The sentence: ‘We have brought unending suffering upon many peoples and many countries’ was considered as an inappropriate confirmation of the Allied thesis of German ‘collective guilt’. The most terrible of all crimes against humanity committed by National Socialism, the murder of around six million European Jews, was not expressly mentioned in the Stuttgart Confession of Guilt.³⁸

On 16. October 1960, Cardinal Julius Döpfner, Catholic Bishop of Berlin, preached that:³⁹

The German people can only achieve peace with very great sacrifices. It would be a momentous self-deception to assume that a people do not have to pay too much for a policy such as that which that regime has pursued towards other peoples. [...] For the future, the community of peoples and states is more important than border issues [implicitly,

³⁷ Erklärung des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland gegenüber den Vertretern des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen vom 19. Oktober 1945 (Stuttgarter Schuldbekennnis).

³⁸ Ansprache von Professor Dr. Heinrich August Winkler vom 8. Mai 2009 (70. Jahrestag des Endes des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Europa – Gedenkstunde im Plenarsaal des Deutschen Bundestages).

³⁹ R. Żurek, *Gescheiterter Vorstoß?: die Predigt des Berliner Kardinals Julius Döpfner vom 16. Oktober 1960 und ihre Folgen*, 14(2) Religion, Staat, Gesellschaft 223 (2013); H. Stehle, *Seit 1960: der mühsame katholische Dialog über die Grenze*, in: W. Plum (ed.), *Ungewöhnliche Normalisierung: Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu Polen*, Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, Bonn: 1984, pp. 155-178.

the Polish-German border]. A distressed past teaches that in many cases the national borders cannot exactly correspond to the ethnicity.⁴⁰

This sermon took place only three months after Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's speech, who clearly declared: "The annexation of the German eastern territories and the expulsion of the German population are serious violations of international law. [...] The decision on the German eastern territories can only be made in a peace treaty concluded with an all-German government. And until this treaty is concluded, nobody is entitled to decide on this part of Germany."⁴¹

The Memorandum of the German Evangelical Church (1965) recalls that:

The Second World War was triggered in the name of the German people and carried to many foreign countries. In the end, all of this destructive power was turned against the originator himself. The expulsion of the German East population and the fate of the German East areas is part of the serious misfortune [*Unglück*] that the German people culpably brought upon themselves and other peoples. [...] But we must hold on to the fact that all the guilt of others cannot explain or erase German guilt. [...]

Certainly, it must be said that readiness to bear the consequences of guilt and compensation [*Wiedergutmachung*] for injustices [*Unrecht*] committed must be an important part of German policy towards our eastern neighbors too. Based on historical experience and moral insight, we must realize that injustice of the magnitude under consideration here does not remain without historical and political consequences which cannot simply be reversed.⁴²

A memorandum of German Catholic intellectuals stated in 1968:

We Germans have to admit to ourselves that the crimes that were committed in the name of Germany against Poland [...] are of such a nature that any attempt at balancing out the mutual responsibility should not even be attempted. No one can close his eyes to the fact that the nation whose leaders started the war and then lost it has to bear the responsibility, not only in point of fact but also out of a sense of justice. If we seriously want peace, we cannot avoid this responsibility, which burdens the entire German nation. As a consequence we must carry not only the burden of reparations and redress, but also accept the political losses. In this context we also cannot exclude territorial losses.⁴³

⁴⁰ Julius Kardinal Döpfner, Bischof von Berlin, Predigt am 16. Oktober 1960 in der St. Eduardkirche.

⁴¹ Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer, Ansprache anlässlich des Bundestreffens der Landsmannschaft Ostpreußen in Düsseldorf am 10. Juli 1960.

⁴² Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn. Eine evangelische Denkschrift, Hannover, 1. Oktober 1965.

⁴³ B. Kreis, *Ein Memorandum deutscher Katholiken zu den polnisch-deutschen Fragen (Das Bensberger Memorandum) vom 2. März 1968*, Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, Mainz: 1968, pp. 13-14.

It is worth recalling the political and moral context when Chancellor Willy Brandt knelt in front of the monument to the ghetto heroes in Warsaw (7 December 1970). But at the same time, a question arose in Germany whether he was allowed to kneel down, as well as accusations of voluntary humiliation. This symbolic gesture by the Chancellor demonstrated his moral and political farsightedness – an element so often missing from politics.

And then kneels the one who does not have to kneel, on behalf of all those who should but do not kneel, because they do not have the courage, cannot or cannot dare. And then he confesses a guilt that does not burden him and asks for forgiveness that he himself does not need. And so, he is kneeling on behalf of Germany.⁴⁴

The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker, stated in his speech of 8 May 1985:

All of us – the guilty and the innocent, the old and the young – have to accept the heritage of the past. We are all affected by its consequences, for which we are responsible. [...] It is not about overcoming the past, which is in any case impossible. You can't change it or consider that it didn't happen. Whoever closes his eyes to the past becomes blind to the present. Whoever does not want to remember inhuman behaviour, can be infected by new threats. [...] Therefore, we have to understand that memory is a premise of reconciliation.⁴⁵

On the Polish side, an important element was the letter from the Polish Catholic Bishops to the Bishops of Germany on 18 November 1965:

The Polish border on the Odra and Nysa is, for the Germans, as we well understand, an exceptionally bitter fruit of the last war and of the mass destruction, and similarly bitter is the suffering of the millions of refugees and of the resettled persons. [...] We ask you, Catholic Shepherds of the German Nation, that you celebrate our Christian Millennium together with us. [...] And we ask you to pass on our regards and expressions of gratitude to our German Evangelical brothers who, together with you and us, are making efforts to find a solution to the difficulties between us. In this most Christian and most human spirit, we stretch out our hands to you, sitting in the seats at the Second Vatican Council, which is about to end, we forgive you and ask for forgiveness. If you, German Bishops and Fathers of the Council, take our brotherly outstretched hands, only then could we

⁴⁴ H. Schreiber, *Ein Stück Heimkehr*, Der Spiegel, 14 December 1970.

⁴⁵ Ansprache des Bundespräsidenten Richard von Weizsäcker zum 40. Jahrestag der Beendigung des Zweiten Weltkrieges am 8. Mai 1985 im Plenarsaal des Deutschen Bundestages.

celebrate our Millennium with a peaceful conscience and in a way that would be most Christian. We most cordially invite you to Poland for these celebrations.⁴⁶

The response of the German bishops turned out to be distant, and the formula “we forgive and ask for forgiveness” was not fully reciprocated. In fact, the West German episcopate hid behind the legal and political position of the state authorities. In 1981 Jan Józef Lipski, Polish oppositionist and intellectual, wrote:

We have taken part in depriving millions of people of their homeland, some of whom were surely guilty of having supported Hitler, others only of passively accepting his crimes, still others were only unable to find the courage for a heroic fight against his monstrous machine of terror – in a situation where their state was at war. The evil that has been done to us, even the greatest evil, is not, however, and cannot be a justification for the evil that we have done ourselves. Removing people from their homes can be at best a lesser evil, never, however, an act of good. It is true without any doubt that it would not be just if a nation attacked by two rogues had to pay all the costs of the attack by itself. The choice of a solution – which as it seems – is less unjust, the choice of a lesser evil, cannot, however, make us insensitive to moral considerations. Evil is evil, and never good, even if it is a lesser and unavoidable evil.⁴⁷

The attitude of Poles to the Holocaust perpetrated by the Germans on Polish lands during the Second World War was examined by Jan Błoński (1987):

Our fatherland is not a hotel in which it is enough to clean up after a visit by unexpected guests. It is built, above all, out of memories; in other words, we are who we are only thanks to the memories of the past. We are not free to use it in any way we wish, although – as individuals – we are not directly responsible for it. We have to carry it within ourselves, even though it may be sad or painful. [...] In total sincerity and honesty we have to face the question concerning our co-responsibility. We can't hide this: this is one of the most painful questions that we can face. [...] Participation and responsibility are not the same thing. One can share the responsibility for the crime without taking part in it. Our responsibility is for holding back, for insufficient effort to resist. Which

⁴⁶ *Ozędzie biskupów polskich do ich niemieckich braci w chrystusowym urzędzie pasterskim* [Message of the Polish bishops to their German brothers in Christ's pastoral office], available at: http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/oredzie-niem_18111965.html (accessed 30 April 2023).

⁴⁷ J.J. Lipski, *Dwie ojczyzny, dwa patriotyzmy* [Two homelands, two patriotisms], Nowa, No. 144, June 1981 and Kultura, No. 409, 1981). German text was published in Germany in a special issue of the magazine Kontinent (No. 22/1982). Later also in bilingual edition – J.J. Lipski, *Powiedzieć sobie wszystko. Eseje o sąsiedztwie polsko-niemieckim* [Tell yourself everything. Essays on the Polish-German Neighborhood], Wydawnictwo Polsko-Niemieckie, Gliwice-Warszawa: 1996, pp. 192-193.

of us could claim that there was sufficient resistance in Poland? It is precisely because resistance was so weak that we now honour and pay homage to all those who did have the courage to take this historic risk [during the war]. Although it may sound strange, I do believe that this responsibility through failure to act is less relevant for our question. More significant is the fact that if only we had behaved more humanely in the past, had acted in a wiser, nobler, more Christian way, then genocide would have perhaps been 'less imaginable.' It would probably have been considerably more difficult, and almost certainly would have met with greater resistance. In other words, it would not have infected the society that witnessed it with indifference and moral turpitude.⁴⁸

Polish-German relations have followed the historical trail from *Ostsiedlung*, *Ostflucht*, *Ostschutz*, *Ostkunde*, *Ostforschung*, *Ostinstitute*, *Generalgouvernement*, *Generalplan Ost*, *Ostfront*, *Ostrausch*, *Ost-Dokumentation*, and *Ostblock* to the time of *Ostpolitik* and *Ostverträge*. And finally to *Osterweiterung* and the totally new situation in which Poland and Germany are members of the same military alliance and of the same community of values.

The Brandenburg Gate remains open, and Europe has taken a new form.

⁴⁸ J. Błoński, *Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto* [Poor Poles look at the ghetto], *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 11 January 1987 – English version available at: <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/the-poor-poles-look-at-the-ghetto-144232>; French version available at: <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/les-pauvres-polonais-regardent-le-ghetto-144133> (both accessed 30 April 2023). See also A.K. Kunert (ed.), *Polacy – Żydzi. Wybór źródeł. Polen – Juden. Poles – Jews. Quellenauswahl* [Selection of documents], Rytm, Warszawa: 2001.