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POLISH LEAGUE AGAINST DEFAMATION

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Reading your article *The Controversy Around Poland's Proposed Ban on the Term "Polish Death Camps"* one gets an impression, that the history of WW2 is a history of crimes, perpetrated by some mythical Nazis of unidentified nationality against Jews in Polish concentration camps, with the help from some Nazi-recruited Polish government agencies, and against a token, marginal and disorganized opposition from some Polish individuals.

The new law, which is so severely critiqued in your article, is not an attempt to introduce censorship. In the information age, where fake news may be more destructive than a weapon of mass destruction, the defense against slander is a sacred duty of any society. The new law explicitly states, that it is a **false, against-the-facts** assigning Poland with German crimes that will be penalized. Similar laws exist in many countries. Penalizing slander is not a new concept.

The structure of your article, the choice of arguments and the quotations used distorts the intention of the new law.

Poland didn't have its Quisling, as did Norway, or a government of collaborators, as did France, or its volunteer SS divisions, as did most other European countries (and not only those, which were under occupation: see Vichy France or Franco's Spain). Poland did not switch fronts according to the fortunes of the war, Polish crowds did not applaud the entering German armies, as did the Austrians or Ukrainians.

It is not the crimes of individuals, some peasants or members of another social group, which determines collaboration. Collaboration is determined by the general, massive support of a society. In Poland it was the **resistance** that had a massive support. The resistance, an element of which was the resistance against the Holocaust. It is well documented, unlike the supposed complicity, constantly raised against the Polish nation. The most spectacular example is the Righteous Among the Nations. The Poles constitute the largest group in this distinguished company, in spite of the fact, that only in Poland for helping Jews there was a death penalty, and not just for the accused, but also for his or her entire household. For comparison, Germans represent only about a tenth of the Polish number.

In contrast, when there is a question of the Poles, supposedly implicated in the Holocaust macabre, there are word “many”, “numerous” used. In your article, as elsewhere, the isolated, specific case of Jedwabne is exploited to the extreme. But, even today, the Jedwabne massacre is not fully explained. The popular, circulated story is based on often contradictory testimonies of actual witnesses and pseudo witnesses. When the exhumation of the victims began, a Jewish protest interrupted it, which made it impossible to determine the cause of deaths.

Polish legal authorities never negotiated or signed any agreement of collaboration with the occupiers. Quite the opposite. They actively fought the Germans and, as far as possible, also their plans to exterminate the Jewish nation.

Neither the “Blue Police” nor the railway authorities were the agencies of the Polish state, contrary to what your article suggests. The Żegota was. It was an organization, specifically charged with helping Jews. And so was the Home Army, which designated units carried out death sentences on the “shmaltsownics” (blackmailers) and individual collaborators. Accusing Poles of complicity in the Holocaust because there was the “Blue Police” or because the railways employed Polish workers, is an utter misunderstanding. Both these and also other such organizations, based on their pre-war infrastructure and personnel, were incorporated into the German system and served the German war machine.

Creating such services as the Blue Police and staffing them with personnel from the occupied country is not an isolated case. It is dictated by the logic of the occupation: the invader has no human resources of its own to staff such public services as fire departments, post offices, mass transit or municipal administration.

Among the nations of Europe, many of which signed the pact with the devil, Poland was an exception. For this reason the country on the Vistula River does not fit the usual pattern, according to which everybody was guilty, more or less.

Such a country, in post war Europe, may cause a guilty complex in some, because it's citizens demonstrated, that it was possible to behave honourably.

It is interesting to note, that in the article not once the word “German” has been used.

It is unfortunate that, instead of facing the guilt, majority of the media attempt to eject it from their conscience, perpetuating instead the distorted view of the modern Polish history. Your article is a good illustration of this phenomenon.

Sincerely,

Mira Wszelaka

Chairman  
of the Polish League Against Defamation