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'Seidler's List': On One Overly Broad Concept of Collaboration during the Second World War

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł opiera się na wieloletniej krytyce nieproporcjonalnego rozszerzenia pojęcia kolaboracji w kontekście II wojny światowej (Hans Lemberg, Werner Röhr). W tekście skupię się na krytycznej analizie jednego z tych nadmiernie rozszerzonych pojęć kolaboracji w ujęciu niemieckiego historyka Franza Wilhelma Seidlera w jego książce *Die Kollaboration: 1939–1945*. Chociaż została opublikowana po raz pierwszy w 1995 r., natura problemu niewiele się zmieniła. Moim celem nie jest krytyka samej pracy, ale skorzystanie z okazji, jaką daje jej treść, aby przeanalizować kontrowersyjne lub graniczne przypadki i przedstawić opisane interakcje domniemyanych kolaborantów.

Słowa kluczowe: kolaboracja podczas II wojny światowej, okupacje i okupanci, ludność okupowana, zdrada i zdrajcy, informatorzy i prowokatorzy, zachowania i działania społeczne, Franz Wilhelm Seidler.

Abstract: This article is based on a long-standing critique of the disproportionate magnifying of the term collaboration in the context of the Second World War (Hans Lemberg, Werner Röhr). In this text, I will critically analyse one such swelling and disproportionately widening scope of understanding of the concept of collaboration: how the German historian Franz Wilhelm Seidler worked with it in his publication *Die Kollaboration: 1939–1945*. Although this book was first published in 1995, the nature of the problem has not changed much. My aim in this contribution is not to criticise the work itself but to take the opportunity offered by its content to analyse controversial or borderline cases and present the described interactions of the alleged collaborators.

Keywords: collaboration during the Second World War, occupations and occupiers, occupied populations, betrayal and traitors, informers and agent provocateurs, social behaviour and action, Franz Wilhelm Seidler.

The Problem: An Expanding Concept of Collaboration

Specific cooperation between the occupying power and occupiers on the one hand and the occupied on the other is often referred to as collaboration in the context of the Second World War. The term itself has excited much controversy in the historical community and is fraught with misunderstandings arising from its different interpretations and conceptions, as well as from various ideas of what collaboration should or should not entail. Not all historians in the past have used the term collaboration exclusively to refer to cooperation between occupiers and occupied, and it is one such, in my view, an overly broad conception that I wish to address now. Its critical analysis will allow, regardless of conceptual preferences, a more accurate view of an area that remains, and will probably remain for a long time to come, a space of many questions and problems.

This article is based on a long-standing critique of the disproportionate magnifying of the term collaboration, which the German historian Hans Lemberg already undertook at the beginning of the 1970s when he pointed out the practice of unjustified use of this term in reference to the cooperation of politically, socially or economically incompatible entities, and analysed some inappropriate applications of this term in the public space.¹ Another German scholar concerned with collaboration, the philosopher and historian Werner Röhr, unequivocally rejected the use of the term to describe the relations between social classes or politically antagonistic forces struggling within the same country, to characterise relations between the states of different size and power that are not at war or occupied, or the relations between the state and the Church.²

In this text, I will focus only on a critical analysis of one such swelling and disproportionately widening scope of understanding of the concept of collaboration: the way the German historian Franz Wilhelm Seidler worked with it in his publication *Die Kollaboration: 1939–1945*,³ an otherwise in many ways useful ‘encyclopaedia of collaborators’ – useful also because nothing more appropriate in the way of ‘encyclopaedia’ is available, and not only in the German context. Although this book was first published in 1995 and then in a somewhat revised and expanded version in 1999,⁴ the nature of

¹ H. Lemberg, ‘Kollaboration in Europa mit dem Dritten Reich um das Jahr 1941’, in: *Das Jahr 1941 in der europäischen Politik*, ed. by K. Bosl (München–Wien, 1972), pp. 143–62 (at pp. 143–46).

² W. Röhr, ‘Kollaboration. Sachverhalt und Begriff. Methodische Überlegungen auf der Grundlage vergleichender Forschungen zur Okkupationspolitik der Achsenmächte im Zweiten Weltkrieg’, in: *“Kollaboration” in Nordosteuropa. Erscheinungsformen und Deutungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by J. Tauber (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 21–39 (at p. 23).

³ F.W. Seidler, *Die Kollaboration 1939–1945* (München–Berlin, 1995).

⁴ F.W. Seidler, *Die Kollaboration 1939–1945. Zeitgeschichtliche Dokumentation in Biographien* (München–Berlin, 1999).

the problem has not changed much since, and so it can be taken as a model example of a publication which is, on the one hand, useful in practical terms, but on the other also misleading in some respects. Yet it is such a rich and geographically varied collection of individuals cooperating with Hitler's Germany, Fascist Italy or their allies for various reasons and often with very different motivations that it can be considered representative. While the cases I describe here are geographically located in Western Europe, my conclusions can also be applied to other occupied territories and used as inspiring analogies in analysing local cases.⁵ Seidler's publication, though now dated, remains relatively widely cited. However, the primary reason for revisiting it is the problems it raises, which are not satisfactorily resolved even today.

Given the absence of a theoretical definition of the concept of collaboration in the opening part of the text, the work effectively leaves it up to the reader to interpret it, and the reader may end up concluding that collaboration is, in fact, any cooperation with Nazis, fascists and their followers. Indeed, the misconception of such collaboration was pointed out two decades ago by the Polish historian Czesław Madajczyk in a review for the local specialist historical periodical *Dzieje Najnowsze*, when he stated that according to Seidler, 'anyone who acted in favour of the German cause was a collaborator'.⁶ His son, Piotr Madajczyk, also a historian, then laconically expressed his father's assessment by stating that 'for Franz W. Seidler, 'collaboration' does not mean cooperation with the occupation authorities, but he uses the term as a label for all supporters of the Third Reich'.⁷

My aim in this contribution is not to criticise the work itself, which has already been evaluated from various positions since it came out – incidentally, it has also been criticised for being 'too understanding' of collaboration and collaborators⁸ – but to take the opportunity offered by its content to analyse

⁵ However, due to the limited scope of this article, it is not possible to analyse the cases of individuals from the allied countries and the 'client states' of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy (Finland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria; Ludaks Slovakia and Ustashi Croatia). I intend to publish my analysis of them in the future as a follow-up to this study.

⁶ 'Dla niego kolaborantem był każdy, kto występował na rzecz sprawy niemieckiej', C. Madajczyk, 'Franz W. Seidler, *Die Kollaboration 1939–1945. Zeitgeschichtliche Dokumentation in Biographien*, wyd. II poprawione i rozszerzone, München 1999, ss. 598', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2000), pp. 184–87 (at p. 185).

⁷ '[...] für Franz W. Seidler, Kollaboration nicht Zusammenarbeit mit den Besatzungsbehörden bedeute, sondern als Bezeichnung für alle Anhänger des Dritten Reiches verwendet werde', P. Madajczyk, 'Bedeutung und Nutzen des Begriffs "Kollaboration" für Forschungen über die Zeitgeschichte Polens', in: *"Kollaboration" in Nordosteuropa. Erscheinungsformen und Deutungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by J. Tauber (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 314–23 (at p. 315).

⁸ While the Hungarian-born Swiss historian Peter Gosztonyi, in his review published in 1997 in the Swiss military-historical journal *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift*, gave Seidler's 'encyclopedia of collaborators' a positive evaluation, some writers and researchers noted the author's veiled sympathy for the attitudes of collaborators and criticised the work

controversial or borderline cases and present the described interactions of the alleged collaborators, which in my opinion cannot be collaborative interactions – assuming, of course, that we conceive of collaboration as cooperation between the occupiers and the occupied.

To proceed to an analysis of the various forms of interaction represented in Seidler's 'encyclopaedia', it is, of course, necessary to at least briefly introduce the concept of collaboration to which I subscribe. I draw on the text of Werner Röhr's excellent theoretical essay on a collaboration entitled 'Kollaboration: Sachverhalt und Begriff' published in 2006.⁹ According to Röhr, collaboration has three basic constitutive features: (1) It is a reaction to the occupation of one's own country and the occupation rule; (2) the collaborators have a social and political base independent of the occupiers and have their own resources and influencing potential; (3) 'while being in full submission to the occupation policy', the collaborators' short- and possibly even medium-term interests and goals are effectively respected and their institutional and organisational bases tolerated.¹⁰ The first point precludes considering as collaborators persons who do not have the status of the occupied, i.e. who are, for example, citizens of neutral countries or even of those at war with the occupiers, but also of the states allied to the occupiers, however unequal and disharmonious such alliance may be in terms of power.¹¹ The second and third points exclude individuals who are merely instruments of the occupying power from being classed as collaborators, such as Gestapo informants or SD agents, or members of such groups which have been created, organised or maintained by the occupiers themselves. Consequently, they have no political and social base of their own.¹²

In the context of considerations on collaboration, it is important to remember that an individual under occupation rule – the Nazi and fascist ones during the Second World War, even more so – is exposed to a specific and exceptional form of power that is incomparable to the conditions of a person living in a country that is not occupied. He is affected not only by his own state and society, by his 'we-group', but also by the 'they-group'

on these grounds. Political scientist Kurt Sontheimer, in an article 'Eine Weisswäsche für Hitlers Helfer' published in the Munich newspaper *Abendzeitung* on 24 May 1995, bluntly accused Seidler of sympathy for collaborators. Also, Czesław Madajczyk, in his review for *Dzieje Najnowsze*, mentioned this aspect when he wrote in its conclusion that 'Seidler tries to be objective, factual; nevertheless, the researcher who reaches for the book under review will find in it a certain clandestine sympathy for collaborators or sympathizers of the Third Reich'. Cf. P. Gosztory, 'Franz W. Seidler: Die Kollaboration, 1939–1945', *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift*, no. 10 (1997), p. 36; K. Sontheimer, 'Eine Weisswäsche für Hitlers Helfer', *Abendzeitung*, 24 May 1995, p. 15; Madajczyk, 'Franz W. Seidler', p. 187.

⁹ Röhr, 'Kollaboration', pp. 21–39.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 27–28.

¹¹ Initial alliances could evolve towards subjugation as satellite states and eventually occupation (e.g. Italy in 1943, Horthy Hungary after March 1944).

¹² Röhr, 'Kollaboration', p. 28.

of the occupiers, which is different in its identity and in the degree of its political and, above all, military power, factually and legally underpinned by social privilege. The occupier has a different nationality, is part of different political and military organisations, usually belongs to a different national community, speaks a different language than the occupied, is often immediately identifiable by their uniforms, etc. Therefore, the specific occupation experience¹³ is the crucial element, the condition that makes it possible to speak of collaboration at all. Along with that, it should be borne in mind that the living conditions of the local population in the occupied countries during the Second World War varied considerably, depending on the objectives of the occupation policy and with regard to their ethnic origin, given the Nazi division of the occupied into so-called Aryans and members of the Jewish and Roma minorities who were then outright exposed to physical genocide.

Collaboration cannot be, in my opinion, reduced to a political or ideological issue, as some scholars (e.g. Jan Tomasz Gross¹⁴) do, but it should be seen in its complexity as a cooperative interaction of a social nature. Some collaborators may not have had any political goals and were ideologically indifferent, that is, they only feigned political and ideological zeal. Their collaboration had purely social reasons, e.g. they wanted to acquire hitherto unavailable material goods or to retain existing ones, while at the same time, they wanted to gain, strengthen or maintain social prestige as a *sui generis* social good. To understand collaboration – regardless of its function and results – it is therefore always important to understand the motivations of the collaborators. According to one of the fathers of sociology, Max Weber, in this context, we can distinguish four basic reasons why individuals act in particular ways: their actions are motivated by value-rational, purposive-rational, affective or traditional reasons.¹⁵ I consider Weber's 'theory of action'

¹³ The act of an occupying intervention is a violent trigger mechanism – i.e. armed or backed by the use of armed force – for everything else to follow, the occupation itself being a power factor present in the occupied country while at the same time a factor influencing the social behaviour and actions of the occupied. Its logic is relentless, demanding a clear answer to where one belongs, and thus forcing a sometimes cruel and tragic external clarity which is at the same time fundamentally alien to the complexity of social life and the internal struggles in the consciousness and conscience of each individual.

¹⁴ J.T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation. The Generalgouvernement, 1939–1944* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 118–19.

¹⁵ Max Weber distinguishes four reasons that can determine the types of social behaviour on the basis of 'ideal types': (1) goal-oriented rational: weighs the advantages and disadvantages, estimates the implications of one's actions, and tries to act in a way that is most effective with respect to the future; (2) value-oriented rational: based on internally accepted values and motives (ethical, aesthetic, religious, etc.), which guide actions regardless of their potential for success or failure; (3) affective (emotional): guided by the saturation of immediate affects and emotional states; (4) traditional: based on long-lasting habits, customs, M. Weber, *Metodologie, sociologie a politika*, selected and transl. into Czech by M. Havelka (Praha, 1998), pp. 156–58.

to be well suited for bringing a deeper understanding of the motivations of collaborators and collaboration itself, and in this sense, it will also be used in the following text.¹⁶

'Non-Occupied' Foreigners

A distinctive group on Seidler's 'list of collaborators', perhaps the most noticeable in its apparent difference from the others, is the 'Anglo-Saxon traitors', people who collaborated with the Nazis or the fascists freely and voluntarily as citizens of the two Anglo-Saxon liberal democratic powers, i.e., Great Britain and the United States. These are the Englishman John Amery (1912–1945),¹⁷ the US-born Briton of Anglo-Irish descent William Brooke Joyce (1906–1946)¹⁸ and the famous American writer Ezra Pound (1885–1972),¹⁹ who, each led by differently motivated opposition to the establishments of their respective countries, for ideological and political, but probably also social and psychological reasons went over to the side of the enemy and then, on its territory, mainly propagandistically attacked their mother countries. All three cases are notorious, and there is a wealth of scholarly literature and non-fiction, sometimes even works of art, on all of them.²⁰

The non-conformist Amery, the son of a prominent British Conservative politician, was a supporter of British fascism and was involved on Franco's side in the Spanish Civil War; his anti-communism and sympathy for the far right led him, among other things, to try to organise British compatriots into fighters against the Soviet Union and to work as a propagandist on English-language programmes on Radio Berlin. The violent Joyce, possessing a highly dubious British citizenship, was also a supporter of fascism there, though of its National Socialist wing; he and his wife fled to Germany in 1939

¹⁶ When using the aforementioned Weberian terms, the source will no longer be referred to in the following text, as this would unnecessarily burden the annotation apparatus.

¹⁷ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 44–45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 273–77.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 419–23.

²⁰ On John Amery see, for example, A. Weale, *Patriot Traitors. Roger Casement, John Amery and the Real Meaning of Treason* (New York, 2001); D. Faber, *Speaking for England. Leo, Julian and John Amery, the Tragedy of a Political Family* (London–New York, 2005); R. West, *The meaning of Treason* (London, 2000). On William Brooke Joyce, see, for example, W. Cole, *Lord Haw-Haw and William Joyce* (London, 1964); F. Selwyn, *Hitler's Englishman* (London, 1987); A. Weale, *Renegades. Hitler's Englishmen* (London, 1994); M. Kenny, *Germany Calling. A Personal Biography of William Joyce, Lord Haw-Haw* (Dublin, 2003); N. Farndale, *Haw-Haw. The Tragedy of William and Margaret Joyce* (London, 2005); C. Holmes, *Searching for Lord Haw-Haw. The Political Lives of William Joyce* (Abingdon, 2016). A very extensive literature of a varied character exists on Ezra Pound, comprising dozens of entries.

to become employees of Goebbels' propaganda ministry and, as Lord Haw-Haw von Zeesen, the protagonist of the known radio programme Germany Calling. Ezra Pound, differing from the former two men in age, was a distinguished modern poet and translator of Romanesque poetry into English who spent most of his life in Europe, where he watched with anxiety as the Old Continent was menaced by the uncultured mass capitalist production, the 'Americanism' he had left his homeland to escape. He saw the salvation in Italian fascism and the Mussolini regime, which he supported, and worked for the Radio Roma during the Second World War. He was then transferred to the USA, where he spent twelve years in a mental institution.

From a purely legal point of view, cooperation with the enemy during a state of war can be defined as treason which the law naturally punishes very severely. These people had certainly betrayed their country, but it was more than that; they had, in a way, converted to the wartime enemy of their countries by accepting its ruling ideology, or even citizenship, and adapting to it politically but also culturally, socially and mentally. It is, therefore, possible to view them not only as traitors but also as *sui generis* converts and, in the context of conversion, as individuals who changed their original community for another, across traditions, on the basis of adopted ideological beliefs that they placed above their original initial ethnic and socio-cultural commonality. This change was not forced upon them by any external power; it was the result of their individual free decision, a more or less premeditated act by which they, in a sense, excluded themselves from their own 'we-group'. They wanted to subjugate and fundamentally transform their homeland politically, socio-economically and culturally through violence against the hostile 'they-group'. Their decision to cooperate was primarily motivated by values and rationality, by the consciousness of their belonging to the German National Socialists or the Italian Fascists, although the potential affective motivation of revenge against one's own society, country and state cannot be disregarded. On a legal level, their acts can thus be seen as treason, as defined by law, while in the social context, such behaviour stemmed from the process of conversion, primarily of an ideological-political nature, and it was further reinforced by the time they lived in the countries at war with their homelands.

To categorise these individuals as collaborators would mean misunderstanding what real collaboration actually involves: diversely motivated and differently manifested association and cooperation with the occupier within one's own 'we-group'. The countries from which the traitors mentioned above and converts came were never occupied, true, except for the British Channel Islands – only there, in my opinion, it would be appropriate to speak of possible local collaborators.

The second identified group, similar to the previous one, can be described as national socialists and fascists or far-right Germanophiles in neutral

countries. These were the ideological followers of National Socialism and fascism in the European countries that retained their neutrality throughout the Second World War, such as Switzerland and Sweden, or remained neutral until Nazi Germany militarily invaded and occupied them (Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg). In these countries, too, there were founders, organisers and ideologues of political parties that could be described as fascist, or these political formations more or less imitated German National Socialism. As regards the motivation of these individuals in the Weberian context, a combination of value-rational and affective reasons can be assumed, as with the previously discussed group.

Switzerland and Sweden, although under varying degrees of pressure from Hitler's Reich at different times, internally maintained their liberal democratic character during the war and sought armed neutrality in foreign policy. The countries were fortunate in avoiding occupation, and so it lacks point to label Swiss and Swedish citizens with fascist or outright National Socialist views²¹ as collaborators, as Franz Wilhelm Seidler does in his publication. They were sympathisers of (Italian) fascism or (German) national socialism, which is undoubtedly repulsive, but if their activities did not violate the applicable law of their home countries, they might not even be traitors. The same applies to possible collaboration between the local National Socialist and Fascist parties on the one hand and the German Nazis and Italian Fascists on the other – again, only on the theoretical assumption that these contacts did not contravene the applicable law. In principle, neither collaboration nor treason should be used to describe legal transnational political cooperation between those entities whose countries are not in a relationship between the occupier on the one hand and the occupied on the other or whose cooperation does not exceed the legal frameworks of their respective countries, even though it is absolutely reprehensible from a moral-political point of view. There is, of course, a considerable difference as to the content and form of these collaborations, and it is, therefore, possible to debate the limits of what is still permissible and what is already illegal, what is only 'innocent' international political coordination, and what is already legally treasonous interaction with a foreign power.

With regard to the considerations on collaboration, it certainly makes sense to pay special attention to these 'collaboration activities' since it was from the ranks of extremist far-right movements that collaborators were

²¹ Seidler's book lists the following names as protagonists of the Swiss Nazis: Heinrich Büeler, Franz Burri, Theodor Fischer, Rolf Henne, Ernst Hofmann, Max Leo Keller, Ernst Leonhardt, Karl Meyer, Hans Oehler, Franz Riedweg, Jakob Schaffner, Robert Tobler and Alfred Zander. In Sweden, this was the case of the National Socialist Sven Olof Lindholm and the famous Swedish traveller Sven Hedin, who openly admired Hitler and preferred his country's orientation towards Nazi Germany, but his political position was based more on Pan-Germanism. Cf. Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 237–41, 331–34.

recruited in large numbers after the Nazi occupation of parts of Scandinavia and Benelux in 1940, but in no case can these activities be automatically identified with collaboration before the occupation. Besides, not everyone who was an admirer of fascism or even a sympathiser of domestic national socialism before the occupation necessarily became a collaborator during the occupation.

On the other hand, there may have been individuals whose collaboration was preceded by a political conspiracy or military betrayal in favour of the future occupying power; of the leading collaborators listed in Seidler's publication, two prominent figures of the Western European far right in the 1930s are speculated on in this context, the notorious Norwegian Vidkun Quisling (1887–1945),²² a leader of the pro-German National Samling (NS) influenced by national socialism, whose name has become synonymous with both collaborator and traitor in English. Quisling was in frequent contact with different leaders of Nazi Germany before the invasion of Norway, and was even received by Hitler, but whether he betrayed his country to the Nazis in the context of the forthcoming invasion remains unclear;²³ the most controversial in this context was his meeting with Nazi intelligence officers in Copenhagen on 3 April 1940.²⁴ Quisling's attempted *coup d'état* against the legitimate Norwegian government at the moment the Germans invaded the country, on 9 April 1940, was treasonous, but it was probably not planned and resulted from German improvisation after the original plans, which had relied on the capitulation of the Norwegian royal government and the Norwegian armed forces not to put up (much) resistance, had failed – it would therefore have been treason that only resulted from the beginning of the occupation.²⁵

Quisling's Dutch ideo-political twin, Anton Adriaan Mussert (1896–1946),²⁶ the founder of the similarly pro-Nazi Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB), was received too at the highest level in Berlin, as was the case of the other high-ranking men of both the movements who had suspicious pre-war contacts with the Nazis, such as the Norwegian Jonas Lie (1899–1945),²⁷ the future Police Minister of occupied Norway, or Josef Terboven (1898–1945) who became Reich Commissioner in occupied Norway, and the Dutchman

²² Ibid., pp. 431–38.

²³ Norwegian historian Oddvar K. Høidal, in his extensive biography, assessed his actions as a conspiracy with the Nazis, see O.K. Høidal, *Quisling. A Study in Treason* (Oslo, 1989).

²⁴ D. Littlejohn, *The Patriotic Traitors. A History of Collaboration in German-Occupied Europe, 1940–45* (London, 1972), pp. 9–12.

²⁵ H.-D. Looock, *Quisling, Rosenberg und Terboven. Zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Revolution in Norwegen*, Series Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte, 18 (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 587.

²⁶ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 390–98.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 327–31.

Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen (1894–1945),²⁸ a capable economist and Mussert's rival in the NSB leadership, with the infamous Arthur Seyss-Inquart, the future Reich Commissioner of the occupied Netherlands.²⁹ While the Norwegian National Socialist sympathisers managed to organise a *coup d'état* against the Norwegian government with German support right as the occupation was launched, the state authorities in the Netherlands were already better prepared in anticipation of a possible pro-German subversion by the NSB, and by the time of the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands on 10 April 1943, it had been ordered to intern all the members of the NSB.³⁰ This is also a *sui generis* testimony to the potential treacherous connections of the Dutch Nazis, which were then logically followed by the collaboration and even organically, so to speak, resulted from the preceding betrayal.

Quisling and Mussert and Lie and Rost van Tonningen logically appear on Seidler's 'collaborators list'; however, it is a problematic approach to present as collaborators also those individuals whose ideological ideas and political activities could have led to collaboration but who died before they could become collaborators. An example of this in Seidler's publication is the Romanian Corneliu Z. Codreanu (1899–1938),³¹ a leader of the Legion of the Archangel Michael (the Iron Guard), a reactionary and strongly anti-Semitic movement that was definitely not a mere imitation of the two key far-right formations of interwar Europe, for it developed to some degree an original ideology and achieved considerable popularity, particularly in Romanian rural areas. Codreanu was forcibly deprived of his life a full nine months before the outbreak of the Second World War, on 30 November 1938, by people loyal to the Romanian dictator, King Carol II (reigned 1930–1940). At that time, Romania was not yet in the Axis camp, but Carol's regime, mortally threatened by the Guards in the late 1930s, tried in vain to manoeuvre between the Western Allies, who were closer to him, and the Axis, increasingly powerful in the Balkans. Codreanu could have eventually betrayed his state by liaising with the German Nazis and Italian fascists, but his collaboration with them was made impossible as he, unlike his successor Horia Sima (1907–1993),³² simply did not live long enough to take his chance.³³

Another 'foreign' group of the alleged collaborators on 'Seidler's list' can be described as misguided national liberation activists who typically collaborated with Nazi Germany to rid their homelands of the (British) colonisers. From their 'misconceived' perspective, they saw the National Socialists

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 458–62.

²⁹ Littlejohn, *The Patriotic Traitors*, p. 89.

³⁰ H. van der Horst, *Dějiny Nizozemska* (Praha, 2005), p. 399.

³¹ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 143–46.

³² Ibid., pp. 498–502.

³³ Czesław Madajczyk pointed out this absurdity in his review, Madajczyk, 'Franz W. Seidler', p. 186.

as potential allies with whom they associated the hope of liberating their countries or their parts from colonial subjugation (India, Palestine) or from the dependence of their states reminiscent of the colonial conditions (Iraq, Egypt). These people quite rightly viewed colonial rule as an occupation,³⁴ colonialism as a form of exploitation of their own countries by a foreign power, and the colonialists as occupiers.³⁵ In doing so, they hoped that their enemy's enemy, i.e. Nazi Germany at war with Britain, would be their 'friend', which they could take advantage of and, with its help, gain (real) independence for their countries. These were individuals such as Subhas Chandra Bose (1897–1945),³⁶ an Indian National Congress politician and national liberation leader revered in India to this day, who fled India for Germany in the winter of 1941, and from 1943 lived in Japan, from where he organised anti-British propaganda and armed resistance in the British forces of his compatriots, or the Arabs Fawzi al-Qawuqji (1890–1977) from Lebanon, Rashid Ali al-Qaylani (1893–1965) from Iraq, the Mufti of Jerusalem Muhammad Amin al-Husseini (1897–1974) from Palestine, and Aziz Ali al-Misri (1879–1965)³⁷ from Egypt, who refused to accept the dependence of their countries on the British Empire, but also, for example, Sean Russell (1893–1940),³⁸ one of the activists of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)

³⁴ In the work of Eric Carlton, who analysed the forms of control of various occupied countries throughout history, colonialism and neo-colonialism represent specific forms of occupation, see E. Carlton, *Occupation. The Policies and Practices of Military Conquerors* (London, 1992).

³⁵ Mandatory, colonial, semi-colonial or neo-colonial British domination of the aforementioned countries was sanctioned by contemporary international law, which, however, only confirmed the colonial violence carried out by European conquerors in the early modern period or the 'long nineteenth century'. I therefore view such international legal sanctioning as a reality of legality which was profoundly at odds with the ideas of the subjugated entities, whose aspirations only recognized true independence as right and acceptable in the constitutional, political, socio-economic and cultural context. This conflict between legality as the legitimization of the prior violence and the demand for independence as a legitimate claim to self-determination also negatively affects the resulting evaluation of some of the partial, objectively beneficial aspects of colonialism for the dominated nations. This issue affects, in a broader sense, not only countries outside Europe, but also nations on the Old Continent, specifically the situation of Poland after its partition among the neighbouring powers in the last third of the eighteenth century: this was eventually also sanctioned by international law, with the usurpers forming part of the 'concert of the great powers'. Even the partial positive modernisation that objectively took place in partitioned Poland was, in my view, worth less than the trauma of tripartition that Polish society went through (and deals with, to some extent, even today). Yet national self-determination cannot be absolutised, as it could lead to international political chaos. National minorities, whose ethnic majorities have their own state, can also be easily used for aggression against the state on whose territory they live, as can be illustrated, for example, by the dismantling of Czechoslovakia in 1938–1939.

³⁶ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 93–98.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 193–95, 212–16, 263–68, 380–82.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 462–64.

and leaders of Sinn Féin, from whose point of view Northern Ireland was a British-occupied part of 'Free Ireland'.

Their motivation for the cooperation with the Germans was primarily goal-oriented rational, mainly intended as a more or less tactical affair, although the strategic goal they had, i.e. to liberate their countries, fell, of course, into the sphere of value rationality, likely accompanied by a good deal of affective motivation, especially revenge against the colonialists oppressing their countries, and the positive effect of hope that this state of affairs might end with their fall. It is nonetheless impossible to overlook that they may have had sympathy for National Socialist ideology, or rather that they valued its anti-Semitism as Arab leaders, most notably the Mufti of Jerusalem, al-Husseini, who sought to prevent the migration of the Jewish population to Palestine, which he saw as a threat to the Arabs and Muslims there. The ideas that these national liberation leaders held were short-sighted, even blinded, certainly naive and foolish, but understandable if they stemmed from despair at the helplessness of their countries in the face of the colonialists. True, the 'emancipated colonies' would undoubtedly have found 'masters' in the Nazis many times more dangerous and cruel, also much more contemptuous and haughty than the British were, moreover capable of almost anything. The result would certainly not be any real liberation but a fall into a new, even worse subjugation.

However, the above has no bearing on the fact that classifying these people as collaborators, as Seidler does, is structurally nonsensical – these activists were just their opposite. They would have been collaborators if they were collaborating with their colonisers, i.e. with the real occupying power in their colonised countries, but since they were waging a struggle against them using their archenemy, they were representatives of anti-colonial resistance, however misguided. Taken to its logical consequences – albeit with a certain amount of irony – those who moved directly into the Reich to influence Germany in pursuit of their 'national liberation' goals were in a structurally similar position to, for example, the exiled leaders of the occupied states who settled in London during the Second World War or, in the case of the communists, in Moscow – after all, they too were seeking to liberate their countries with the help of their enemy's enemies.

Special in its character is the 'Menemencioğlu case', which illustrates the politics of 'holy national egoism' taken to extremes. Among the collaborators in Seidler's book is also the name of the Turkish politician and diplomat (Hüseyin) Numan Rifat Menemencioğlu (1893–1958),³⁹ Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry from 1933–1942 and its Head from 1942–1944. His name is associated with Turkish foreign policy from the rise of Hitler until almost the end of the Second World War.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 375–78. Seidler does not mention the name Hüseyin, but it is used in most European languages, primarily in Turkish.

Menemencioğlu unquestionably supported a policy of friendliness towards Hitler's Germany in the 1930s, but his motivation did not come from any possible affinity for National Socialism nor from any Germanophile sympathies – he received his education in Lausanne, Switzerland, and was culturally oriented towards France.⁴⁰ In the shadow of Germany's destruction by the Versailles peace settlement, Menemencioğlu wanted to make his own revisionist policy, which, incidentally, earned Turkey the favourable Montreux Straits Treaty (1936) and the regaining of the Sanjak of Alexandretta with the towns of İskenderun and Antakya (1939), which was until then part of Syria administered as a League of Nations mandate territory by France.⁴¹ He was a diplomat guided by the logic of 'holy national egoism' and, in this context, he had begun to fear the Axis power appetite in the Balkans even before the outbreak of the Second World War. The Italian occupation of Albania in April 1939 seems to have been a 'wake-up call' for him; Menemencioğlu himself was partly of Albanian descent on his mother's side.⁴² During the war, while he was in charge of the ministry, he manoeuvred between the warring parties to keep Turkey out of the war for as long as possible. His permission to open the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles⁴³ to German and Romanian ships during the evacuation of the Crimea in May 1944 led to his downfall. Then, in the summer, the Anglo-American landings in Normandy and the Red Army's entry into the Balkans led to Turkey's gradual, if not enthusiastic, alignment with the Allies, culminating in a late declaration of war on Nazi Germany in February 1945, which cleared Turkey's path to the United Nations.⁴⁴

During the pre-war and war years, Menemencioğlu had acquired a reputation as a Germanophile, which was, however, misconceived.⁴⁵ In fact, his foreign policy bore the hallmarks of cynical, egotistical utilitarianism, despite his kind, helpful and outwardly very polite nature.⁴⁶ In Weber's perspective on social action, this was a purpose-oriented rational tactic aimed at a value-rational goal: it drove the logic of his objectively pro-German stance. Seidler actually assessed Menemencioğlu's motivation quite correctly when he wrote that his 'foreign policy was determined by a concern for the

⁴⁰ Y. Güçlü, 'Portrait of a Secretary-General of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Numan Menemencioğlu', *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, no. 48 (2000), pp. 837–56 (at pp. 839–40).

⁴¹ K. Kreiser, C.K. Neumann, *Dějiny Turecka* (Praha, 2010), pp. 194–95.

⁴² His mother Feride Hanım was the daughter of Namık Kemal, a prominent Ottoman intellectual, writer and social and political reformer of Albanian origin.

⁴³ K. Kreiser, *Geschichte der Türkei: von Atatürk bis zur Gegenwart* (München, 2020), pp. 63–75.

⁴⁴ E. Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1943–1945. Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics* (Princeton, 2015), pp. 295–314.

⁴⁵ Güçlü, 'Portrait of a Secretary-General', p. 845.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 850–51.

preservation of Turkey's freedom of action on all sides',⁴⁷ yet he classified Menemencioğlu as a collaborator – the minister of an independent and essentially also powerful and important state, a regional power that was not occupied by a foreign power, although it had to watch with apprehension the rise to power first of the German Empire and then of the Soviet Union. It is fully justified to criticise the limited, narrowly focused opportunistic policy of this Turkish diplomat and politician, but to classify him as a collaborator is an error which clearly shows the dangers of a disproportionately extended understanding of collaboration as, in principle, any cooperation with Nazi Germany, in this case, international political and advantageous for Turkey in terms of goal-oriented rational benefit, although morally highly dubious.

In the general context, the Menemencioğlu case implies the recognition that foreign policy cooperation or even coordination between two mutually sovereign, though indeed somewhat unequal partners in terms of power potential, cannot be described as collaboration in the sense of the term describing the relations between the occupier and the occupied during the Second World War.

The Rinnan Case: Informer and Agent Provocateur

With regard to informants, who were undoubtedly very effective helpers of the occupying power, I base myself on the already presented approach of Röhr, according to which 'groups created, organised or maintained by the occupiers themselves, without their own social base, SD-agents, Gestapo informers or similar individuals, are not collaborators'.⁴⁸

This definition certainly deserves some refinement, but it can still be taken to mean that informers as individuals serving the occupying security organs (e.g. the Gestapo or the Sicherheitsdienst) were registered and possibly paid by these organisations. It is not possible to say that all of them were merely 'paid' or 'hired rats' and provocateurs, as American scholars Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately explain their status somewhat reductively in their article 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History',⁴⁹ though this is indeed true of many of them – and probably most of them. What is decisive, however, is that the informers did not represent

⁴⁷ 'M's Aussenpolitik war von der Sorge um die Erhaltung der türkischen Handlungsfreiheit nach allen Seiten bestimmt', Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, p. 375.

⁴⁸ 'Von den Okkupanten selbst geschaffene, organisierte oder unterhaltene Gruppen ohne eigene soziale Basis, SD-Agenten, Gestapospitzel oder ähnliche Personen sind nicht einmal Kollaborateure: [...]', Röhr, 'Kollaboration', pp. 28.

⁴⁹ S. Fitzpatrick, R. Gellately, 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, no. 4 (1996), pp. 747–67.

anyone socially or politically; they acted secretly, conspiratorially, operated as agents provocateurs, often in the 'masks' of foreign identities, and they always functioned only as instruments of the occupying power, even though they could decide themselves on the forms and methods of carrying out the tasks assigned to them.

Compared to the pervasive acting of the collaborator, who was valuable to the occupying power precisely in his role as a 'positive' example for other members of the occupied society, the difference in the informer role is particularly striking. Nevertheless, the confusion between these two different forms of cooperation with the occupying power reinforces the misunderstanding of one another. The activities of informers serve primarily the occupying power, although secondarily, their results may also be transmitted to the collaborator structures, but only with the consent of the occupiers and under their control. While the power of the occupiers over the informers is almost total, it is not the case with collaborators, if only just because should they fulfil the functions expected of them by the occupiers, they cannot be merely their instruments or puppets as informers, but their interests and interests of their supporters must be at least partially respected. The reality of their own social base emancipates them from total subordination to the occupiers. The relationship of the occupying power to collaboration is therefore usually ambivalent: the occupiers are aware that they cannot fully rely on the collaborators, and hence their initiative to control them, including with the help of their informers, who may, consequently, come in handy not only in the effort to counter resistance, but also in targeting and testing collaboration, all the more strongly the greater its independence of the occupiers, or the more purpose- or aim-driven its motivation for collaboration. The informer is only strong in the hands of the occupiers; the collaborator's room for manoeuvre, on the other hand, is much wider for a long period of time.

With only one exception, there is no example of an individual in Seidler's publication who could be considered to be only an informer. The one exception is Henry Oliver Rinnan (1915–1947),⁵⁰ a Norwegian who, before the war, made his living as a driver and car dealer, and thanks to the occupation, he established a profitable 'trade' consisting of amoral and unscrupulous 'work' for the occupiers. An SD agent (from June 1940 onward), he 'built up a separate intelligence department starting from 1941 with 60 to 70 men and women acting as provocateurs, activists and torturers. They called themselves 'Sonderabteilung Lola'. Among the people, they were known as the 'Rinnan Gang'. It was the most successful weapon of the Germans in the fight against the Norwegian resistance movement', stated Seidler. Intelligent, capable, efficient, ambitious, but utterly ruthless, Rinnan was known as 'the inventor of subtle and provocative techniques', and notorious for his extraordinary

⁵⁰ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 455–56.

brutality and his emphasis on unrelenting discipline.⁵¹ As to his motivation, I assume it was affective acting, a mixture of the affects of power, benefit, gain and revenge arising from his problematic personality.

The 'Rinnan gang' functioned purely as a tool of the occupiers; they were 'hired rats', maintained and tasked by the occupying power (specifically by Amt III SD), and they, unfortunately, reached very 'successful' results – reportedly they should have contributed to the arrest of up to a thousand Norwegian resistance fighters, and they even took lives of some of them.⁵² Rinnan's inclusion in Seidler's book is questionable: he was not himself a collaborator, his instrumental role as an informer is obvious, and the fact that he also served the Norwegian collaboration through his activities *via facti* and his involvement in the informing services may have been consulted with the head of the Norwegian collaborators, Quisling,⁵³ does not change the nature and essence of his collaboration with the occupier.

The Kratzenberg Case: Could a German Created by the Occupation Collaborate?

An interesting problem in Seidler's book is raised by the 'encyclopaedic entry' under the letter K, Damian Kratzenberg (1878–1946).⁵⁴ He was a Luxembourger who gradually worked his way towards the thesis that the inhabitants of his homeland had no specific ethnicity, but they were Germans and therefore supported the annexation of Luxembourg in the spirit of 'Heim ins Reich' after the occupation of the country in 1940.

Kratzenberg was a secondary school teacher who, in a country at the crossroads of French and German culture, was increasingly inclined to interpret Luxemburgish identity as essentially 'Germanness', and he was also a teacher of German in addition to classical Greek. Politically, until 1938 he was a member of the broadly centre-left Liberal Party, which was critical of the influence of the Catholic Church and of Luxembourg's

⁵¹ 'Ab 1941 baute er eine selbstständige Nachrichtenabteilung mit 60 bis 70 weiblichen und männlichen Provokateuren, Aktionsleuten und Folterern auf. Sie gab sich die Bezeichnung "Sonderabteilung Lola". Im Volk wurde sie "Rinnanbande" genannt. Sie war die erfolgreichste Waffe der Deutschen im Kampf gegen die norwegische Widerstandsbewegung', *ibid.*, pp. 455–56.

⁵² B. Nøkleby, *Krigsforbrytelser. Brudd på krigens lov i Norge 1940–45* (Oslo, 2004), pp. 78, 127; I. Dahl, 'Berit Nøkleby: "Krigsforbrytelser. Brudd på krigens lov i Norge 1940–45"', *NORDEUROPAforum*, no. 2 (2006), pp. 85–87 (at p. 86).

⁵³ As David Littlejohn wrote in his monograph *The Patriotic Traitors*, 'it was said that Rinnan had been recommended for the job by Quisling himself', Littlejohn, *The Patriotic Traitors*, p. 45.

⁵⁴ Seidler, *Die Kollaboration*, 1999, pp. 296–98.

political Catholicism. However, he was impressed by the achievements of Nazi Germany and the respect he enjoyed in Germany, crowned with his being awarded the renowned Goethe Medal for Arts and Sciences in 1936, which undoubtedly played a role. The year before, he had already taken over the leadership of the Luxemburg Gesellschaft für deutsche Literatur und Kunst (GEDELIT). This organisation emphasised the German character of Luxembourgish culture and represented a counterbalance to the prevailing pro-French Luxembourgishness. After the German armed forces occupied tiny Luxembourg on 10 May 1940, the organisation turned into the Volksdeutsche Bewegung (VdB) and put itself fully at the service of the occupiers⁵⁵ – true Luxembourgishness was now just pure Germanness – intending to achieve the annexation of the country, which eventually and de facto did happen. At the same time, Kratzenberg and some members of his movement also accepted the National Socialist ideology, thereby ending their ethnic and political development by their dissolution into 'National Socialist Germanness'. Regarding his identity, Kratzenberg seems to have progressed from Germanophilic Luxembourgishness and specific Germanness to German nationalism and national socialism at the accelerated pace of the late 1930s. However, the majority of the Luxembourg population rejected the notion of their Germanness, and some even joined the resistance against the occupiers⁵⁶ despite the extremely difficult conditions in the tiny occupied country.

In a narrowly defined civil or state-political sense, Kratzenberg collaborated, there is no doubt about that; in the normative optics of law, he can also be described as a traitor. However, with regard to the interpretation of the concept of collaboration as a social phenomenon, as a matter of social behaviour and action under conditions of occupation, these perspectives are too shallow – one must ask about the subjective positions of the collaborators, their motivations, the purpose and aims of their actions. Kratzenberg lived in a 'frontier' country whose ethnic development was still undergoing a certain belated process of self-awareness, so I do not want to question his

⁵⁵ Initially, there were three circles and tendencies in the VdB: one wing around Kratzenberg wanted to be active primarily in the cultural field, the other emphasised the economic reasons for closer cooperation with the occupiers, and only the third, the 'journalistic' wing, around Camille Dennemeyer, stood on ideological positions closest to National Socialism. Cf. B. Majerus, 'Kollaboration in Luxemburg, die falsche Frage?', in: ... *ët wor alles net esou einfach. Questions sur le Luxembourg et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Fragen an die Geschichte Luxemburgs im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Publications scientifiques du Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg* (X.) (Luxembourg, 2002), pp. 126–40 (at p. 127–28).

⁵⁶ A third of the Luxembourg population has joined the VdB, but the number should not be overestimated. The Luxembourg historian Benoît Majerus points to the pressure that may have been exerted on certain professions, to the marked differences in the various parts of the country, and finally to the wave of resignations from the organisation in the summer of 1942 in connection with the introduction of conscription, *ibid.*, p. 128.

Germanness which he and his determined followers were coming ever closer to – I am aware that nationality is not primarily decided by objective criteria, but by feelings of a subjective nature. I, therefore, understand Kratzenberg as a German and see value-oriented action as decisive in the context of his motivation.

As for the question I posed in the title of this subchapter, it can be said that by becoming a member of the ‘they-group of the occupiers’, i.e. the Germans, Kratzenberg ceased to be part of the ‘we-group’ of Luxembourgers who, for the most part, felt themselves to be members of the occupied and annexed nation – and the occupation further helped them self-realize their own specific national identity. Kratzenberg, along with his followers, excluded himself – by his actions – from his entity and with it from the status of the occupied – and as he became a German, even a Nazi, he could not collaborate in a social sense, because collaboration is the matter of the occupied. Laconically speaking, he would have been such a collaborator if he had collaborated with the German occupiers as an ethnic Luxembourger. However, as a Luxembourgian German fully accepting his new Reich-German identity, he had no opportunity to do so.

Seidler’s classification of Kratzenberg as a collaborator is therefore controversial – I accept it in a civil, state-political sense, but I do not in a social sense. However, it can potentially be a stimulus for another very interesting discussion on the sometimes extremely complicated position of members of the German minority in Nazi-occupied countries in general, which, however, goes far beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion

Seidler’s publication presents some people who did cooperate with Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy but who either could not have been collaborators or whose inclusion is at least questionable, and the decision to include them in the ‘list’ should be accompanied by a thorough explanation of the key pros and cons. In my critical analysis, I have identified several groups of individuals, or the individuals themselves, categorised by Franz Wilhelm Seidler as collaborators, who either cannot be considered collaborators at all or whose potential to collaborate is rather complicated and, more importantly, it is accompanied by a number of unreflected problems.

The first two identified groups represent individuals who were not part of the occupied societies, and as such, they altogether lacked any opportunity for collaboration. These are either citizens of the states at war with Germany, Italy and their allies/satellites who betrayed their countries, nationals of neutral countries (ideological sympathisers of National Socialism and fascism) or allied states which were not occupied. The prerequisite for their actions

was the awareness of ideological-political belonging to the agents of German National Socialism or Italian Fascism in the social context, accompanied by a more or less profound conversion process.

Rinnen and Kratzenberg represent individuals who, although they lived in Nazi-occupied countries during the Second World War and who cooperated intensively with the Nazi occupying power in their countries, the former as an informer whose denunciatory, ‘informatory’ and provocateur activities constituted a form of cooperation other than collaboration, the latter as a convert who, from being a member of the occupied community, became a German, i.e., a de facto member of the occupiers’ ‘they-group’.

Translated by Věra Vystavělová

Summary

This article critically examines the broadening definition of collaboration during the Second World War, particularly in the work of German historian Franz Wilhelm Seidler. Seidler’s publication *Die Kollaboration: 1939–1945* presents a wide-ranging list of alleged collaborators, some of whom, upon closer scrutiny, do not fit the traditional understanding of the term. The author challenges Seidler’s approach by identifying cases where individuals either lacked the necessary occupied status or were miscategorised.

The article discusses different groups, including pro-Nazi figures from neutral or non-occupied states, foreign nationalists who sought German support for anti-colonial causes, and individuals whose actions stemmed from ideological conversion rather than collaboration. It also distinguishes between informers – who acted as mere instruments of the occupiers – and real collaborators, who maintained some degree of freedom of action and a social base within their occupied societies.

By applying theoretical perspectives, notably from Hans Lemberg, Werner Röhr, and Max Weber, the article emphasizes the need for a nuanced and context-aware definition of collaboration. The author argues that indiscriminate use of the term, as seen in Seidler’s work, risks the distortion of historical reality and overlooking of the key socio-political dynamics.

„Lista Seidlera”. O nazbyt szerokiej koncepcji współpracy podczas II wojny światowej

Niniejszy artykuł krytycznie analizuje coraz szerszą definicję kolaboracji podczas II wojny światowej, szczególnie w pracach niemieckiego historyka Franza Wilhelma Seidlera. Publikacja Seidlera zatytułowana *Die Kollaboration: 1939–1945* przedstawia szeroką listę domniemych kolaborantów, z których niektórzy, po bliższej analizie, nie spełniają kryteriów kolaboracji według tradycyjnego rozumienia tego terminu. Autor kwestionuje podejście Seidlera, identyfikując przypadki, w których osoby tak zakwalifikowane albo nie miały niezbędnego statusu osób okupowanych, albo zostały błędnie sklasyfikowane.

W artykule omówiono różne grupy, w tym pro-nazistowskie postacie z państw neutralnych lub nieokupowanych, zagranicznych nacjonalistów, którzy szukali niemieckiego wsparcia dla spraw antykolonialnych oraz osoby, których działania wynikały raczej z konwersji ideologicznej niż kolaboracji. Dokonano również rozróżnienia między informatorami, którzy działali jako zwykłe narzędzia okupantów, a prawdziwymi kolaborantami, którzy zachowali pewien stopień swobody działania i bazę społeczną w okupowanych społeczeństwach.

Stosując perspektywy teoretyczne, w szczególności Hansa Lemberga, Wernera Röhra i Maxa Webera, artykuł podkreśla potrzebę zniuansowanej i świadomej kontekstu definicji kolaboracji. Autor artykułu argumentuje, że bezkrytyczne stosowanie tego terminu grozi – jak widać na przykładzie pracy Seidlera – zniekształceniem rzeczywistości historycznej i przeoczeniem kluczowej dynamiki społeczno-politycznej.

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