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This special issue of "Przegląd Zachodni" in the English language (**Germany and Europe – History and the Present**) is an invitation extended to foreign readers who wish to acquaint themselves with a selection of essays published in the journal of the institute for Western Affairs in Poznań. "Western Review", an interdisciplinary journal whose catchphrase for decades has been Poland-Germany-Europe, publishes papers by authors representing a variety of research institutions.

The studies presented in this anthology, initially published in Polish in four issues of the journal for the year 2015, are linked by the theme of the history of the last century, its memory, the persistence of the consequences of its crucial events and the lessons that can be learned from it. For the often ignored teacher of life – *historia magistra vitae* – continues to be the foundation for understanding the dynamic processes underway in contemporary states, the problems and dilemmas of the Polish-German neighbourhood and the dialogue that to this day defines the European transformations. From attempts undertaken by the European powers to deal with the consequences of the First World War and the forms of international cooperation in those times, through initiatives relevant to state borders and ownership rights after the next great war, up to the issues of restitution and (re)construction of cultural resources and transformations of identity adequate to the degree of advancement of contemporary integration processes – in all of the undertaken topics one notices the undeniable influence of the past.

The articles collected in this volume lead us through the conundrums of the 20th century as well as the currently valid dilemmas pertaining to political systems, politics and international relations. Today's Europe expects and demands a bold new outlook on each of these spheres, their goals and methods of realization; it also needs to define the basic concepts in its vocabulary of dialogue, controversy and regrettably also conflict. Insofar as history remains the key to the understanding of contemporary attitudes, awareness, culture and memory, it must be complemented by a careful observation of the ongoing changes.

Inviting you to read the present issue we already announce the next one, which will appear in print this year and will contain the English language versions of selected articles from the issues of "Western Review" published in 2016.

Germany and Europe – History and the Present

Zbigniew Mazur *Max Weber and Germany's Defeat of 1918*, Dariusz Jeziorny *The First World War from a British Perspective. A Profit and Loss Account*, Andrzej M. Brzeziński *The Organization and Forms of International Intellectual Cooperation within The League of Nations (1922-1939)*, Katarzyna Jedynakiewicz-Mróż *Between Gretchen and Valkyrie. The Model of Womanhood in the Concepts and Practice of the League of German Girls 1933-1945*, Krzysztof Siwek *American Plans for the Internationalisation of Silesia and the German-Polish Border in 1945-1949*, Rafał Żytyniec *Poland's Role in the Antifascist Policy of Memory of the German Democratic Republic (1949-1972)*, Agnieszka Kisztełińska-Węgrzyńska *From the History of Polish-Austrian Diplomacy in the 70s. Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's Visits to Poland*, Elżbieta Kocowska-Siekierka *Protection of Castles, Palaces and Other Great Houses and Their Landscaped Grounds in the Czech Lands in 1918-2015. Nationalisation and Restitution*, Łukasz Bugalski *Gdańsk's Cultural Heritage. The City Centre District and Municipal Historical Policy*, Beata Kornatowska *The 1963 Berlin Philharmonie – A Breakthrough Architectural Vision*, Izabela Wróbel *The Actions of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Years 1998-2014 for the Restitution of Cultural Property Stolen from the Victims of National Socialism*, Jan Wiktor Tkaczyński *Constitutional Means for the Protection of the Political Order in Germany*, Andrzej Denka *On the Role of the „Intellectual Fire-raisers” in the Transformation of German Historical and Political Identity from the mid-1980s to the Turn of the Century*, Pierre-Frédéric Weber *Emotions from the Perspective of a Constructivist Theory of International Relations (Opinions on Germany in Europe after 2010)*, Michał Tomczyk *The Impact of Europeanization on the Decision-making Process in Switzerland's Foreign Policy*, Piotr Skubiszewski *About my Brother*