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## Project “The Polish Campaign of 1939 – Synthesis” Against the Background of Historiography and Research on September 1939

*Projekt “Kampania polska 1939 roku – synteza” na tle historiografii  
i badań nad Wrześniem 1939 r.*

### ABSTRACT

In reference to the research project carried out at the War Studies University (Akademia Sztuki Wojennej), the article reviews the latest Polish scholarship on the 1939 campaign. It also provides orientation in the much less extensive foreign scholarship (mainly British, American, German, and French) on this topic. It also presents an outline of the basic sources necessary to study the subject matter – archives, normative acts, diaries/memoirs, etc.

**Key words:** research project, Polish campaign, September 1939, World War II, Polish historiography, foreign historiography, War Studies University, Second Polish Republic

### STRESZCZENIE

W nawiązaniu do projektu naukowego, wykonywanego w Akademii Sztuki Wojennej, artykuł dokonuje przeglądu nowszej literatury polskiej poświęconej kampanii 1939 r. Daje też orientację w znacznie skromniejszym piśmiennictwie zagranicznym (głównie brytyjskim, amerykańskim, niemieckim i francuskim) dotyczącym tego tematu. Przedstawia również zarys podstawowych zasobów źródłowych, niezbędnych do badania przedmiotowego problemu – archiwaliów, aktów normatywnych, diariuszy/pamiętników itd.

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**Słowa kluczowe:** projekt naukowy, kampania polska, Wrzesień 1939 r., druga wojna światowa historiografia polska, historiografia zagraniczna, Akademia Sztuki Wojennej, Druga Rzeczpospolita

Research on the intertwining of issues related to the 1939 campaign continues to play a major role in contemporary scholarship on the most recent history of Poland. It could hardly be otherwise when it comes to the largest – taking into account the number of mobilized troops and services – although short, regular war fought by the only fully sovereign Polish state in the last three centuries or more. These events are also interesting for researchers working on recent world history, as one of several turning points that took place on the Vistula, Narew, and Bug rivers, similarly to the events of 1918/1919, 1920, 1944, or 1980–1981. The “Pyrrhic” military victory of Nazi Germany and Adolf Hitler himself also resulted in a change in the ruling government of the Republic of Poland. At that time, during the government’s transfer abroad (from Poland via Romania to France) and at the beginning of the exile, the Piłsudski camp was removed from power. The shock of the unexpectedly quick defeat was used by the opposition, which was, in fact, also a tool of external factors, including the French Republic, a formal ally of the Republic of Poland since 1921.

The articles published in “Res Historica” are the result of the continuation of the academic initiative linked to the Polish History Museum (Muzeum Historii Polski, MPH), which in 2009 was a patron of the international, reviewing, academic conference about the events in question. The conference presented – for the first time since the fall of communism

– the significance and purposefulness of deepening and systematizing studies in this area<sup>1</sup>. However, it was necessary to wait almost 15 years for considerable public funds to be allocated to research related to this set of topics. This allowed for a broader insight into foreign sources, previously not explored at all or only fragmentarily.

The intention is to ultimately bring a new, originally constructed, and compact approach that unites military, political, social, economic, and media motifs. It was preceded by verification of the current research and indication of new directions for the analysis and fields requiring supplementation. The work which is being done will be the result of the activities of a diverse research team of over 100 scientists from Poland and abroad, naturally coming from different academic centres. These are mostly specialists with at least a dozen or so years of academic experience, and therefore they belong to the middle and younger generations of scholars.

The initiators of the project are academics from the War Studies University in Warsaw – Col. Prof. at the War Studies University Juliusz S. Tym (Director), supported in this project by Emeritus Prof. at the War Studies University Romuald Szeremietiew, and Dr Łukasz Przybyło (Deputy Director). They invited researchers known from their own earlier academic work to participate in this undertaking. When the project was launched, they were joined by other employees of the Rembertów University,

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Raport roczny Muzeum Historii Polski 2009*, [Warszawa 2010], p. 34 – <https://muzhp.pl/uploads/files/2023-05/646e0ec654f2e184782392.pdf> and the announcements on the history website of the Polish Press Agency (Polska Agencja Prasowa) [dzieje.pl](https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/konferencja-naukowa-poswiecona-70-rocznicy-wybuchu-ii-wojny-swiatowej-0) – <https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/konferencja-kampania-polska-1939-polityka-spoleczenstwo-kultura>; <https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/konferencja-naukowa-poswiecona-70-rocznicy-wybuchu-ii-wojny-swiatowej> [access: 26.11.2024]. Decision of the first director of the Museum of Polish History (Muzeum Historii Polski), Robert Kostro, made as a result of the recommendation of his then deputy, Dr Paweł Skibiński, accepted the notion suggested by the author of these words. Owing to the efforts of the Neriton Publishing, including its recently deceased founder and director, Dr Andrzej Wroński, it was possible to prepare the conference proceedings for publication – *Kampania polska 1939 r. Polityka – społeczeństwo – kultura. Polish Campaign 1939. Politics – Society – Culture*, red./eds. M.P. Deszczyński, T. Pawłowski, t./vol. 1, *Strategia. Strategy*, Warszawa/Warsaw 2013; t./vol. 2, *Polityka i społeczeństwo. Imponderabilia, pamięć, kultura. Principles, Remembrance, Culture*, Warszawa/Warsaw 2014. The collective work of around 1400 pages, which was originally planned for publications in 2010, also included the articles written by foreign researchers, published in English, Russian, and French. The publication was intended to reach libraries on every continent and become a starting point for the development of studies on the 1939 campaign in the places where their significance had not yet been noticed. Looking back over the past ten years, this objective was only partially accomplished. Cf. also n. 34.

working on the first half of the 20th century, as well as scholars from other universities (including Lublin, Cracow, Wrocław, and Warsaw *Alma Mater*), and research institutions, such as the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, or the Institute of National Remembrance.

The project is commissioned and financed by the Ministry of Education and Science (no. MEiN/2021/DPI/319)<sup>2</sup>, and it has been carried out since 2022 in the difficult conditions of war, which has affected the territory of a country which is the neighbour of the Republic of Poland and was attacked by the heir of one of Poland's aggressors from eighty-five years ago. This fact had significant organizational and research consequences: first of all, it excluded new research in archives and libraries situated in the Russian Federation, Belarus, and Ukraine, limiting even purchases of scholarship in the Russian language. In practice, this means the need to rely – fortunately only on a much smaller scale of the aspects – on the material source collected earlier.

The purpose of publishing, particularly in English, a set of articles illustrating the condition of scholarship on non-military and non-diplomatic, *sensu stricto*, matters seems to be beyond doubt in the face of the almost complete lack of such approaches. Taking into account the free access, this set of articles reveals to foreign readers a body of scholarship (along with recommendation notes) almost unknown to them about the civilian dimension of Poland's drama in 1939. It includes issues of administration, internal affairs, social relations, the impact of the media (so-called strategic communication), etc. The latter element requires explanation. "Strategic communication" is not simply synonymous with propaganda, while the mechanical transfer of the contemporary conceptual framework into the study of the beginning of World War II may lead to distorted conclusions in the field of historical research. However, looking at the Polish September as a multi-sided information war reveals the usefulness of this research path.

This article is a joint approach. Marek Sioma prepared a review of the most important Polish-language studies from the last decade, archival and printed sources in Polish and foreign languages (without specifying the time period), as well as diaries, memoirs, and normative acts. It is worth emphasizing that their presentation will allow the reader to see how scattered the documents used by researchers working on this issue are; but it should also be noted that materials on this topic can be found in foreign archives. Limiting the discussion of Polish-language studies to the last

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/aszwoj/projekt-kampania-polska-1939-roku-synteza/> [access: 26.11.2024].

period – over a decade old – is related to the fact that the analysis of the scholarship about the issue of September 1939 has already been presented. It was generally outlined a decade ago by Dr Tymoteusz Pawłowski<sup>3</sup>. The latest reviews of scholarship on military and economic matters include the recently published three volumes edited by Juliusz S. Tym and Łukasz Przybyło<sup>4</sup>. The rest of the topics were examined by Marek P. Deszczyński.

The Polish and Polish-language historiography of September 1939 is very extensive, and it is impossible to present it definitively. It will be discussed in a substantive approach, which corresponds to the panels in which the individual authors prepared their articles. They include: "Issues of the civil authorities of the Republic of Poland", "Socio-political issues", "Issues of strategic communication", and "Issues of the civil authorities of foreign countries". It is also worth mentioning that the major topic was subjected to a multi-faceted analysis, which allows us to state that there are still unexplored areas or areas that have been poorly identified in academic terms. As a result, further archival and library research seems necessary.

The discussion of the latest scholarship on the Polish campaign should begin with drawing attention to the fundamental, two-volume collective work in which several dozen authors, over a decade ago, presented topics related to politics, society, and culture<sup>5</sup>, as well as a fragmentary biography of the then Commander-in-Chief<sup>6</sup>, a pretextual work devoted to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>7</sup>, but also his full bibliography,<sup>8</sup> selection of sources<sup>9</sup>, as well as two articles about the security policy<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> T. Pawłowski, *Historiografia kampanii polskiej. Uwarunkowania i ewolucja*, in: *ibidem*, vol. 2, pp. 624–645.

<sup>4</sup> *Kampania polska 1939 roku. Studia*, vol. 1, ed. Ł. Przybyło, Warszawa 2024; vol. 2, ed. J. Tym, Warszawa 2024; vol. 3, ed. J. Tym, Warszawa 2024. The series was published by the War Studies University Press. Individual articles are available online.

<sup>5</sup> *Kampania polska 1939 r. Polityka – społeczeństwo – kultura. Polish Campaign 1939. Politics – Society – Culture...*, vol. 1 and 2.

<sup>6</sup> G. Kała, *Sen o potęgę. Plany i działalność polityczna Edwarda Śmigłego-Rydza w latach 1935–1939*, Olsztyn 2021.

<sup>7</sup> M. Kornat, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1938–1939. Cztery decyzje Józefa Becka*, Gdańsk 2012.

<sup>8</sup> M. Kornat, M. Wołos, *Józef Beck. Biografia*, Kraków 2020.

<sup>9</sup> *Mobilizacja marcowa 1939. Dokumenty i relacje*, eds. A. Wesołowski, K. Stepan, "Wojskowe Teki Archiwalne" 2012, 2; *Przygotowania obronne państwa 1935–1939*, part 1, *Prawo i administracja*, ed. A. Wesołowski, "Wojskowe Teki Archiwalne" 2014, 6; idem, *Przygotowania obronne państwa 1935–1939*, part 2, *Gospodarka*, "Wojskowe Teki Archiwalne" 2016.

<sup>10</sup> M.P. Deszczyński, *Zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa narodowego w dziedzinie gospodarczej oraz próby przeciwdziałania im w II Rzeczypospolitej (1921–1939) – zarys problematyki / Threats to Polish National Economic Security and Attempts to Counter them During the Second Polish Republic (1921–1939) – an Outline of Problems*, [w/in:] *Współczesne i przyszłe zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa /*

These are just examples illustrating the fact that research is still being conducted on the contextual and coherent understanding of the events of September 1939.

The analysis of the civil authorities of the Republic of Poland shows that archival sources on this issue are located in foreign and Polish archives: the Central State Archives of Lithuania in Vilnius (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybes Archyvas Vilnius)<sup>11</sup>, Central State Archives of Ukraine of the city of Lviv (Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України м. Львів)<sup>12</sup>, The Józef Piłsudski Institute in the USA<sup>13</sup>, The Józef Piłsudski Institute in London<sup>14</sup>, The Polish Institute and General Sikorski Museum in London<sup>15</sup>, The Archives of New Records in Warsaw<sup>16</sup>, The National Archives in Cracow<sup>17</sup>, The State Archives in Bydgoszcz<sup>18</sup>, The State Archives in Katowice<sup>19</sup>, The State Archives in Lublin<sup>20</sup>, The State Archives

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*Present and Future Threats to Security*, cz. 1/vol. 1, eds. R. Bielawski, J. Solarz, D. Miszewski, Warszawa 2019; T. Kośmider, *Miejsce i rola prezydenta w systemie politycznym państwa polskiego*, in: *Organy doradcze głowy państwa właściwe w sprawach bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Geneza, doświadczenia i wnioski dla tworzenia zintegrowanego systemu bezpieczeństwa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, ed. T. Kośmider, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Set of archive documents: Starostwo Grodzkie Wileńskie, Sąd Dyscyplinarny Izby Adwokackiej Okręgu Sądu Apelacyjnego w Wilnie.

<sup>12</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny we Lwowie 1919–1939; Prokuratura przy Sądzie Apelacyjnym we Lwowie 1919–1939; Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Oberlandesgerichtsbezirk Breslau 01.01 Personalakten.

<sup>13</sup> Kolekcja Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Ignacego Mościckiego.

<sup>14</sup> Teki Stefana Mayera.

<sup>15</sup> Dokumenty cywilnych urzędów rządowych 1919–1991; Maszynopisy, rękopisy i relacje (B1 Relacje z kampanii wrześniowej).

<sup>16</sup> Set of archive documents: Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego, Biuro Sejmu RP 1918–1939, ref. no. 80; Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, ref. no. 916, ref. no. 993; Prezydium Rady Ministrów, cz. I, ref. no. 81, 88, 105, cz. VI, ref. no. 2–1(7), 2–1(8), 2–1(9), 68–14/7–14, 96–19, 96–20; cz. VII, ref. no. 5, 63, 76; Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości w Warszawie [1887, 1897–1940] 1945–2001.

<sup>17</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie 1919–1950; Sąd Okręgowy w Krakowie 1939–1945; Prokuratura Sądu Okręgowego w Krakowie 1923–1939.

<sup>18</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny w Toruniu 1923–1939; Sąd Okręgowy w Bydgoszczy; Prokuratura Sądu Apelacyjnego w Toruniu 1908–1938; Okręgowa Rada Adwokacka w Toruniu 1921–1939.

<sup>19</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny w Katowicach 1922–1939; Rada Adwokacka w Katowicach 1937–1938; Prokuratura Sądu Apelacyjnego w Katowicach 1923–1939; Zbiór akt personalnych pracowników niemieckiego wymiaru sprawiedliwości 1856–1945.

<sup>20</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny w Lublinie 1939/40–1944/45. Wydział Prezydyalny; Sąd Apelacyjny w Lublinie 1918–1939. Kancelaria Prezesa 1918–1939; Prokurator Sądu Apelacyjnego w Lublinie.



in Poznań<sup>21</sup>, The State Archives in Warsaw<sup>22</sup>, Central Military Archives in Warsaw-Rembertów<sup>23</sup>, Archives of the District Council of the Legal Profession in Warsaw<sup>24</sup>, Archives of the District Court in Katowice<sup>25</sup>, and also in the National Library in Warsaw<sup>26</sup>.

The presented list should be supplemented with no less important printed sources published in recent years, specifying their three types: documentary sources, publications, diaries, and memoirs. When analyzing the first group, it is worth paying attention to the fact that they concern: international affairs<sup>27</sup>, defence<sup>28</sup>, deployment<sup>29</sup>, economy<sup>30</sup>, public security<sup>31</sup>, and military operations<sup>32</sup>. The second group consists

<sup>21</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Apelacyjny w Poznaniu 1919–1939.

<sup>22</sup> Set of archive documents: Sąd Okręgowy w Warszawie. Wydziały Cywilne 1917–1944. Akta prezydialne.

<sup>23</sup> Set of archive documents: Gabinet Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, ref. no. I.300.1.81.

<sup>24</sup> Set of archive documents: Akta osobowe Gustawa Lautera, ref. no. 716.

<sup>25</sup> Set of archive documents: Akta osobowe Bronisława Podoleckiego, ref. no. P/505

<sup>26</sup> Materiały z Biura Prasowego Prezydium Rady Ministrów, ms. 13045; Kazimierz Marian Morawski, "Pamiętniki", [vol. 2] [years 1921–1938].

<sup>27</sup> *Documents concerning German-Polish Relations and the outbreak of hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939*, London 1939; *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, vol. 4, 1939–1945, part 1, *Wojna i rozejm (wrzesień 1939 – grudzień 1942)*, ed. Ł. Adamski, Warszawa 2021; *Expose ministrów spraw zagranicznych 1919–1939*, eds. P. Ceranka, M. Pernal, Warszawa 2011; *W rumuńskiej pułapce. Internowanie Józefa Becka i Edwarda Śmigłego-Rydza w dokumentach rumuńskich służb specjalnych*, eds. M. Kornat, M. Mokrzycki-Markowski, Gdańsk 2011.

<sup>28</sup> *Przygotowania obronne państwa 1935–1939*, part 1, *Prawo i administracja*.

<sup>29</sup> *Mobilizacja marcowa 1939. Dokumenty i relacje*, eds. A. Wesołowski, K. Stepan, "Wojskowe Teki Historyczne" 2012, 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Przygotowania obronne państwa 1935–1939*, part 2, *Gospodarka; Od projektu do legendy: Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy po osiemdziesięciu latach (1937–2017)*, eds. P. Grata, G. Ostasz, B. Pasterski, Rzeszów 2018; *Polityka surowcowa polski w latach 1935–1939 (wybrane dokumenty)*, ed. M. Jabłonowski, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>31</sup> *Gen. bryg. Kordian Józef Zamorski, Komendant Główny Policji Państwowej. Sprawozdanie dla Ministra Spraw Wojskowych, 9 listopada 1939 r., Băile Herculane (Rumunia)*, in: *Przygotowania obronne państwa 1935–1939*, part 1, *Prawo i administracja*, eds. A. Wesołowski, "Wojskowe Teki Archiwalne" 2014, 6; *Wywiad Straży Granicznej 1928–1939. Wybór dokumentów*, eds. P. Kołakowski, R. Techman, Słupsk 2013.

<sup>32</sup> A. Dobroński, *Nieznane źródło do września 1939 roku na Suwalszczyźnie. Dziennik bojowy por. Piotra Łazarewicza, dowódcy kompanii Straży Granicznej "Filipów"*, "Rocznik Augustowsko-Suwalski" 2010, 10; *Okruchy pamięci. Wspomnienia i relacje byłych żołnierzy Korpusu Ochrony Pogranicza*, eds. S. Nowakowski, M. Klempert, Olsztyn 2015; *Wrzesień 1939 roku we wspomnieniach majora Józefa Łubnickiego*, ed. W.B. Mos, in: *A jednak wojna... Rok 1939 na Kreśtach Wschodnich i Zachodnich*, eds. M. Fic, J. Lusek, J. Załączny, Bytom–Warszawa–Katowice 2020.

of publications, which include: Stenographic Reports from the Sejm Sessions of the Republic of Poland (1919–1939) and sessions of the Silesian Sejm (1922–1939), and the “Journal of the Polish State Law” (“Dziennik Praw Państwa Polskiego”) from 1919 and its continuation in the form of the “Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland” (“Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej”; (1919–1939)), as well as the “Polish Gazette” (“Monitor Polski”) from the same period. It is also worth remembering the industry publications – official journals of individual ministries. In contrast, a separate group of sources consists of private journals, diaries, and memoirs.

Memoir studies, as this group can generally be referred to, are very important for learning many aspects (often of lesser importance) of events. However, they are not always appreciated because they require more thorough criticism and confrontation with sources due to the subjective message that memoirs usually contain. However, memory studies are also often invaluable, especially when the documents are completely or partially missing. In regard to the civil authorities, the last decade was primarily marked by the editions of memoirs about foreign<sup>33</sup> and domestic affairs<sup>34</sup>.

Socio-political issues are the second group of topics analyzed by another research team. In this case, similarly to the topic of civil authorities, the majority of texts was also based on Polish and foreign archives. The Archives of New Records, the collection of which includes a number of important sets of archival documents, remains the main archive for research in the field of politics and society<sup>35</sup>. The authors conducted their research also in: the Central Military Archives in Warsaw (Centralne

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<sup>33</sup> J. Beck, *Wspomnienia o polskiej polityce zagranicznej 1926–1939*, prep. A.M. Cienciała, M. Kornat, Międzyzdroje–Kraków–Warszawa 2015; M. Łubieński, *Refleksje i reminiscencje*, introduction, prep. and annotations M. Kornat, Warszawa 2012; A. Hory, “Martwa placówka”. *Wspomnienia i korespondencja posła Królestwa Węgier w Warszawie 1935–1939*, Warszawa 2017.

<sup>34</sup> W.T. Drymmer, *W służbie Polsce. Wspomnienia żołnierza i państwowca z lat 1914–1947*, Warszawa–Kraków 2014; H. Józewski, *Zamiast pamiętnika*, eds. J. Giedroyc, P. Mitzner, Paryż–Kraków 2017; E.R. Sword, *The diary and despatches of a Military attaché in Warsaw 1938–1939*, eds. E. Turnbull, A. Suchcitz, London 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Set of archive documents: Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego w Warszawie; Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie, ref. no. 6185, 10472, 11494, 11495, 11496; Komenda Główna Policji Państwowej w Warszawie, 1938–1939, ref. no. 350; Partie i Organizacje Polityczne: Wolność Równość Niepodległość; Polska Partia Robotnicza; Narodowe Siły Zbrojne; Delegatura Rządu na Kraj, Biuro Prezydialne; Komenda Główna Armii Krajowej, Biuro Informacji i Propagandy; Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne.



Archiwum Wojskowe w Warszawie)<sup>36</sup>, the Central State Archives of Lithuania in Vilnius (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas)<sup>37</sup>, the Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius (Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka)<sup>38</sup>, the State Archives in Katowice (Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach)<sup>39</sup>, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin (Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w Berlinie/Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes)<sup>40</sup>, the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław (Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu)<sup>41</sup>, the National Digital Archives (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe)<sup>42</sup>, and the Archdiocesan Archives in Gniezno (Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Gnieźnie)<sup>43</sup>. The analyses of the discussed topics were supplemented with information included in printed (documented) sources, private journals, diaries, and memoirs. The authors used documented sources concerning: church<sup>44</sup>, security<sup>45</sup>, diplomacy

<sup>36</sup> Set of archive documents: Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza; Związek Walki Wyzwoleńczej.

<sup>37</sup> Set of archive documents: Vilniaus vaivadijos valdyba (Wileński Urząd Wojewódzki), fond 51, inventory 2a, ref. no 1; inventory 7, ref. no. 1; Vilniaus-Trakų apskrities seniūnija (Starostwo Powiatowe Wileńsko-Trockie), Švenčionių apskrities seniūnija (Starostwo Powiatowe Święciańskie), Pasienio policijos Trakų baras (Ochrona granic).

<sup>38</sup> Set of archive documents: Lietuvių švietimo draugija "Rytas"; Vilniaus Krašto ir kitos Lietuvių Draugijos (w tym: Laikinasis Vilniaus Lietuvių Komitetas, Vilniaus Labdarybės Draugija).

<sup>39</sup> Set of archive documents: Niemiecki Związek Narodowy na Śląsku Polskim t.z. w Katowicach, 1922–1941.

<sup>40</sup> Set of archive documents: Konsulatzweigstelle Bromberg, 1920–1939; Generalkonsulat Kattowitz, 1922–1939; Konsulat Krakau 1922–1940; Konsulat Lemberg, 1926–1939; Konsulat Lodz, 1919–1939; Generalkonsulat Posen, 1920–1939; Generalkonsulat Thorn, 1919–1939; Botschaft Warschau, 1920–1940; Geistliche Angelegenheiten, 1845–1945; Deutschland im Ausland, 1920–1942.

<sup>41</sup> Papiery Kazimierza Sosnkowskiego; Papiery Klaudiusza Hrabyka.

<sup>42</sup> Zespół fotografii Koncernu Ilustrowanego Kuriera Codziennego, ref. no. 1-D-1558 i 1-A-1514.

<sup>43</sup> Acta Hlondiana, Archiwum Prymasa Polski.

<sup>44</sup> *Altpreußische Kirchengebiete auf neupolnischem Territorium. Die Diskussion um "Staatsgrenzen und Kirchengrenzen" nach dem Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg*, herausg. von G. Besier, Göttingen 1983; R. Kammel, *Kriegsschicksale der deutschen evangelischen Gemeinden in Posen und Westpreußen. Ein Gedenkbuch an die Septembertage 1939*, Berlin 1940.

<sup>45</sup> *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne województwa stanisławowskiego w 1938 roku w sprawozdaniach wojewody, wybór źródeł*, introduction and prep. W. Włodarkiewicz, R. Roguski, P. Pulik, Siedlce 2017; *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne województwa stanisławowskiego w 1939 roku w sprawozdaniach wojewody, wybór źródeł*, introduction and prep. W. Włodarkiewicz, R. Roguski, P. Pulik, Siedlce 2016.

and international affairs<sup>46</sup>, military operations<sup>47</sup>, or Belarus (including the mutual relations with Poland)<sup>48</sup>. On the other hand, the memoirs refer

<sup>46</sup> *Poland and the Coming of the Second World War. The Diplomatic Papers of A.J. Drexel Biddle Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937–1939*, eds. P.V. Cannistraro, E.D. Wynot Jr., T.P. Kowaleff, Columbus [1976]; *Українська суспільно-політична думка в 20 столітті*, vols 1–3, prep. Т. Гунчак, Р. Сольчаник, Нью-Йорк 1983; *Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945, Serie D (1937–1945)*. Bd. VII, *Die letzten Wochen vor Kriegsausbruch. 9. August bis 3. September 1939*, Baden-Baden 1956; *Akten zur deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945, Serie D, (1937–1945)*, Bd. V, *Polen, Südosteuropa, Lateinamerika, Klein- und Mittelstaaten. Juni 1937–März 1939*, Baden-Baden 1953; *Deutsche und Polen zwischen den Kriegen. Minderheitenstatus und "Volkstumskampf" im Grenzgebiet. Amtliche Berichterstattung aus beiden Ländern 1920–1939*, eds. R. Jaworski, M. Wojciechowski, prep. M. Niendorf, P. Hauser, Halbbd. 1–2, München et al. 1997; M. Heaton Vorse, *Poland Will Fight for Danzig, Alone if Need Be, Says Marshal. No Repetition of Czecho-Slovakia, Smigly-Rydz Warns in Interview, "The Evening Star"* (Washington D.C.), 17 August 1939.

<sup>47</sup> SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part 1, *Dowództwo*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2013; SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part 2, *Służby. Obrona Brześćcia. Dywizja "Kobryń" (dowództwo)*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2014; SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part 3, *Dywizja "Kobryń"*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2014; SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part 4, *Dywizja "Brzoza"*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2015; SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part 5/1, *Podlaska Brygada Kawalerii*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2015; SGO "Polesie" w dokumentach i wspomnieniach, part. 5/2, *Suwalska Brygada Kawalerii. Dywizja "Zaza"*, ed. A. Wesołowski, Warszawa 2015; *Mobilizacja marcową 1939. Dokumenty i relacje*, eds. A. Wesołowski, K. Stepan, "Wojskowe Teki Archiwalne" 2012, 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Беларуская нацыя – узьднанне. Верасень 1939 г. – чэрвень 1941 г. Зборнік дакументаў і матэрыялаў*, ed. У.Ф. Ладзьсеў, Мінск 2004; *Беларусь у палітыцы заходніх і суседніх дзяржаў (1914–1991 гг.): зборнік дакументаў і матэрыялаў*, vol. 1, Мінск 2012; *Беларусь у палітыцы заходніх і суседніх дзяржаў (1914–1991 гг.): зборнік дакументаў і матэрыялаў*, vol. 3, Мінск 2014; "За першымі Саветамі". *Польска-беларускае памежжа 1939–1941 гг. у бусных успамінах жыхароў Беларусі*, ed. А. Смаленчук, Мінск 2019; *Борьба трудящихся Западной Белоруссии, за социальное и национальное освобождение и воссоединение с БССР*, vol. 2, eds. А.Н. Мадзинко, В.Н. Жугалов, Н.С. Орехво, Мінск 1972; "За польскім часам...". *Западная Беларусь в воспоминаниях современников*, eds. Е.С. Розенблат et al., Брест 2015; "Вызвалення" і зняволення. *Польска-беларускае памежжа 1939–1941 гг. у дакументах беларускіх архіваў*, ed. А. Смаленчук, Мінск 2021; А.Л. Заерко, *История белорусского приграничья. Кровавая граница. Книга первая 1918–1939*, Мінск 2002; *История Беларуси в документах и материалах*, eds. И.Н. Кузнецов, В.Г. Мазец, Мінск 2000; *НКВД в Западной Беларуси. Сентябрь – декабрь 1939. Документы и материалы*, eds. Д.Ф. Воропаев et al., Мінск–Москва 2019; *Осведомительной сетью выявлены. 2-я танковая бригада в Западной Беларуси по спецсообщениям особого отдела НКВД. Сборник документов и материалов*, Мінск 2019; *Польша-Беларусь (1921–1953). Сборник документов и материалов*, ed. А. Коваленія, Мінск 2012; А. Станкевіч, *З Богам да Беларусі. Збор твораў*, eds. А. Пашкевіч, А. Вашкевіч, Вільня 2008; М. Танк, *Лісткі календаря. Дзённік*

to Ukraine<sup>49</sup>, Germany (including the mutual relations with Poland)<sup>50</sup>, international affairs<sup>51</sup>, and journalism<sup>52</sup>.

At present, we are increasingly more aware of the importance of strategic communication, which – should we simplify its meaning – can be compared to propaganda. However, the concepts are not synonymous, and this is not the place to explain the terminological and practical complexities; suffice it to say that this crucial aspect in relation to September 1939 was addressed by another team of researchers. In their studies on the perception of events in Poland from the perspective of foreign countries, the authors used a whole range of archival sources, which I emphasize as proof that it was not only the press or radio that constituted the basis for researching this area of studies. Analyzing the archival materials they used, it should be stated that they conducted academic research in both Polish and foreign archives. Once again, the resources from the following institutions proved crucial: the Archives of New Records<sup>53</sup>, but also the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia (Archiv ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Praha)<sup>54</sup>, the National Archives

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1941–1944, prep. A.C. Ліс, У.М. Казбярук, Мінск 2008; *У новай айчыне. Штодзённае жыццё беларусаў Беласточчыны ў міжваенны перыяд*, ed. В. Луба, Беласток 2001; А. Ільін, "Українське грамадства усё больш цікавіцца беларускім рухам...". *Беларуска-українськія адносіны другой паловы 1930-к г. у святле ліставання Восіпа Назарука і ксяндза Уладыслава Талочкі*, "Arche" 2014, 7–8.

<sup>49</sup> Т. Бульба-Боровець, *Армія без держави: слава і трагедія українського повстанського руху*, Вінніпег 1981; Б. Казанівський, *Шляхом Легенд. Спомини*, Лондон 1975; І. Кедрін, *Життя – події – люди. Спомини і коментарі*, Нью-Йорк 1976; В. Макар, *Бойові друзі спомини*, vol. 1, *Збірка спогадів з дії ОУН (1929–1945)*, Торонто 1980; idem, *Бойові друзі спомини*, vol. 2, *Збірка спогадів з дії ОУН (1929–1945)*, Торонто 1993.

<sup>50</sup> Н. Breitingер, *Als Deutschenseelsorger in Posen und Warthegau. 1934–1945*, 3rd edition, Mainz 1991; *Erinnerungen des Posener Domherren Albert Steuer*, ed. M. Krzoska, München 2010; О. Heike, *Leben im deutsch-polnischen Spannungsfeld. Erinnerungen und Einsichten eines deutschen Journalisten aus Lodz*, 2nd edition, Essen 1989; К. Lück, *Marsch der Deutsche in Polen. Deutsche Volksgenossen im ehemaligen Polen Berichten über Erlebnisse in den Septembertagen 1939*, Berlin 1940; idem, *Volksdeutsche Soldaten unter Polens Fahnen. Tatsachenberichte von der anderen Front aus dem Feldzug der 18 Tage*, Berlin 1940. W.L. Shirer, *Berlin diary: a journal of a foreign correspondent 1934–1941*, New York 1941.

<sup>51</sup> *Poland and the Coming of the Second World War. The Diplomatic Papers of A.J. Drexel-Biddle, Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937–1939*, eds. P.V. Cannistraro, E.D. Wynot Jr., T.P. Kovaleff, Columbus [1976]; *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 1, New York 1948.

<sup>52</sup> L. Ciołkoszowa, *Publicystyka polska na emigracji 1940–1960*, Warszawa 2013.

<sup>53</sup> Sets of archive documents: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, ref. no. 560, 6202, 16223; Sztab Główny w Warszawie, ref. no. 234, 261, 311.

<sup>54</sup> Set of archive documents: ZÚ Polsko.

of the Slovak Republic (Archiwum Narodowe Słowacji)<sup>55</sup>, the State Archives in Bytča (Štátny archív Bytča) – the Dolný Kubín Branch (pracovisko Archív Dolný Kubín)<sup>56</sup>, the Central Military Archives in Bratislava – the Military Historical Archives (Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe w Bratysławie – Wojskowe Archiwum Historyczne/Vojenský ústrední archiv – Vojenský historický archiv)<sup>57</sup>, State Historical Archive of Latvia National Archive of Latvia (Państwowe Historyczne Archiwum Łotwy Narodowego Archiwum Łotwy/Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs)<sup>58</sup>, and National Digital Archives in Warsaw (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe w Warszawie)<sup>59</sup>. Documentary sources concern international politics, primarily in relation to the bilateral relations of a given country with Poland. They were used to analyze the politics of British<sup>60</sup>, German<sup>61</sup>, Czech<sup>62</sup>, and Slovakian (Czechoslovakian)<sup>63</sup>, Lithuanian diplo-

<sup>55</sup> Set of archive documents: Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí.

<sup>56</sup> Set of archive documents: Okresný úrad v Trstenej.

<sup>57</sup> Set of archive documents: 37, ref. no. 37–201.

<sup>58</sup> Kolekcja Akt osobistych Sztabu Armii (fond 5601, inventory 1, ref. no. 1134, 3434); Poselstwo w Waszyngtonie (fond 293, inventory 2, ref. no. 23); Policja Polityczna (fond 3235, inventory 1/22, ref. no. 691); Departament Polityczny Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (fond 2574, inventory 6, ref. no. 539).

<sup>59</sup> Zespół fotografii Koncernu Ilustrowanego Kuriera Codziennego, ref. no. 1-D-1558 i 1-A-1514.

<sup>60</sup> *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1939–1939*, series 3, vol. 1, 1938, eds. E.L. Woodward, R. Butler, London 1949; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1939–1939*, series 3, vol. 2, 1938, eds. E.L. Woodward, R. Butler, London 1949; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1939–1939*, series 3, vol. 3, 1938–1939, eds. E.L. Woodward, R. Butler, London 1950; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1939–1939*, series 3, vol. 4, 1939, eds. E.L. Woodward, R. Butler, London 1950.

<sup>61</sup> *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1939–1945*, Serie D (1937–1945), Band 4, *Die Nachwirkungen von München, Oktober 1938 – März 1939*, Baden-Baden 1951; *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1939–1945*, Serie D (1937 – 1945), Band 6, *Die letzten Monate vor Kriegsausbruch*, Baden-Baden 1956.

<sup>62</sup> *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943*, 1st and 2nd edition, eds. L. Otáhalová, M. Červinková, Praha 1966; G.F. Kennan, *Z Prahy po Mnichovu. Diplomatické zprávy 1938–1940*, Praha 2021; *Od rozpadu Česko-Slovenska do uznání československé prozatímní vlády 1939–1940*, eds. J. Němeček et al., Praha 2002.

<sup>63</sup> *Slovensko a slovenská otázka v poľských a maďarských diplomatických dokumentoch v rokoch 1938–1939*, prep. D. Segeš, M. Hertel, V. Bystrický, Bratislava 2012; *Slovensko-nemecké vzťahy 1938–1941 v dokumentoch 1, Od Mníchova k vojne proti ZSSR / Slowakisch-deutsche Beziehungen 1938–1941 in Dokumenten 1, Von München bis zum Krieg gegen die UdSSR*, prep. E. Nižňanský, Prešov 2009; *Slovensko-nemecké vzťahy 1941–1945 v dokumentoch 2. Od vojny proti ZSSR po zánik Slovenskej republiky v roku 1945 / Slowakisch-deutsche Beziehungen 1941–1945 in Dokumenten 2. Vom Krieg gegen die UdSSR bis zum Untergang der Slowakischen Republik*

macy<sup>64</sup> and Soviet<sup>65</sup> international affairs, and Lithuanian military<sup>66</sup>. In addition, sources on the political history of the USSR and the Comintern proved useful in the research<sup>67</sup>. The memoirs concerned the following issues: internal politics and diplomacy of Romania<sup>68</sup>, the British<sup>69</sup>, American<sup>70</sup>, and Russian (Soviet)<sup>71</sup> perspective on Poland in the context of the

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*im Jahr 1945*, prep. E. Nižňanský, Prešov 2011; *"Tretia ríša" a vznik Slovenského štátu. Dokumenty 1. / Das "Dritte Reich" und die Entstehung des Slowakischen Staates. Dokumente 1*, prep. M. Schvarc, M. Holák, D. Schriffel, Bratislava 2008; *"Tretia ríša" a vznik Slovenského štátu. Dokumenty 2. / Das "Dritte Reich" und die Entstehung des Slowakischen Staates. Dokumente 2*, prep. M. Schvarc, M. Holák, D. Schriffel, Bratislava 2010.

<sup>64</sup> *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos diplomatiniai santykiai 1938–1940 metais*, eds. A. Kasparavičius, P. Libera. Vilnius 2013.

<sup>65</sup> *Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 1939–1943, London 1961; *Dokumenty do historii stosunków polsko-sowieckich 1918–1945*, vol. 4, 1939–1945, part 1, *Wojna i rozjem (wrzesień 1939 – grudzień 1942)*, ed. vol. Ł. Adamski, Warszawa 2021; *Документы внешней политики СССР*, vol. 21, 1938 г., Москва 1977; *Документы внешней политики СССР*, vol. 22, parts 1–2, 1939 г., Москва 1992; *Документы внешней политики СССР*, vol. 23, parts 1–3, 1940–22 VI 1941, Москва 1998.

<sup>66</sup> V. Jokubauskas, T. Tamkvaitis, *Du karo istorijos šaltiniai iš Lietuvos tarpukariu*, in: *In The Unending War? The Baltic States after 1918 = Nesibaigiantis karas? Baltijos šalys po 1918 metų*, "Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis" 2018, 36; V. Jokubauskas, S. Zuberniūtė, *Vokietijos pavojus ir karo dviem frontais katastrofa (Lietuvos kariuomenės 1936–1937 m. operacijų planai nr. 1 "V" ir nr. 2 "V+L")*, in: *Creating Modern Nation-States in the Eastern Baltic = Šiuolaikinių tautinių valstybių kūrimas rytiniame Baltijos jūros regione*, "Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis" 2019, 38.

<sup>67</sup> *История Коммунистического Интернационала 1919–1943. Документальные очерки*, ed. А.О. Чубарин, Москва 2002; *Коминтерн и идея мировой революции. Документы*, ed. Е.С. Дубкин, Москва 1998; *Политбюро ЦК РКП(б)–ВКП(б) и Коминтерн 1919–1943. Документы*, eds. Г.М. Адибеков, К.М. Андерсон, К.К. Шириня, Москва 2004; *Secret Cables of the Comintern, 1933–1943*, eds. F.I. Firsov, K. Harvey, J.E. Haynes, New Haven 2014.

<sup>68</sup> A. Călinescu, *Însemnări politice 1916–1939*, București 1990; C. Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. 5, (1 iulie–31 decembrie 1938), București 2002; N. Iorga, *Jurnalul ultimilor ani 1938–1940: Inedit*, București 2019; R. Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică*, vol. 2, (1938–1940), București 1993.

<sup>69</sup> A. Cadogan, *The Diaries of sir Alexander Cadogan*, London 1971; N. Chamberlain, *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters. The Downing Street Years 1934–1940*, vol. 4, ed. R. Self, London 2005; E.W. Ironside, *Time Unguarded. The Ironside Diaries 1937–1940*, London 1962.

<sup>70</sup> *Poland and the Coming of the Second World War. The Diplomatic Papers of A.J. Drexel-Biddle, Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937–1939*, eds. P.V. Cannistraro, E.D. Wynot Jr., T.P. Kovaleff, Columbus [1976]; *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 1, New York 1948; W.L., *Shirer Berlin diary: a journal of a foreign correspondent 1934–1941*, New York 1941.

<sup>71</sup> G. Gorodetsky, *Dzienniki Majskiego: ambasador Stalina odstania kulisy dyplomacji*, Warszawa 2020; *Khrushchev remembers*, London 1971; Г. Димитров, *Дневник. 9 март 1933–6 февруари 1949*, София 1997.



pre-war and war period, as well as military issues from a Czechoslovak perspective<sup>72</sup>.

The topic least represented turned out to be September 1939 from the standpoint of foreign civilian authorities. In my opinion, this shows not only the direction of future research but also its scale. For it is difficult to assess it comprehensively and draw unequivocal conclusions in this area if the scholarly analysis covered only the German<sup>73</sup> and Romanian civil authorities<sup>74</sup>. I have no doubts that both countries played a key role in the relations with Poland, but it is necessary for the future to approach also the remaining neighbouring countries from this perspective.

The image is complemented by texts addressing Swiss, French, Ukrainian, and German topics from the perspective of these nations' historiographies.

In contrast to Polish works, the available foreign publications, particularly those written by foreign authors frequently unfamiliar with the three main languages of the sources, have – out of necessity – an indirect and compilatory nature; or they are characterized by the one-sidedness of the analyzed and cited documentation (German, French, British, less frequently – Soviet, not to mention the Romanian, Hungarian, and Lithuanian). This means that they provide only an incomplete, superficial, and often openly distorted picture of the drama taking place in Poland over several months, from autumn 1938 to the beginning of winter 1939.

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<sup>72</sup> V. Henzl, *Krakov. První československá vojenská skupina za hranicemi*, "Historie a vojenství" 1964, 13, 6; *Obrana národa v dokumentech 1939–1942*, ed. S. Kokoška, Praha 2017; *Legion Čechů a Slováků v Polsku r. 1939*, ed. D. Nývltová, "Historie a vojenství" 1966, 15, 1; L. Svoboda, *Deník z doby válečné. Červen 1939 – leden 1943*, Praha 2008; L. Svoboda, *Cestami života*, 1st edition, Praha 1971; 2nd edition, Praha 1992; *Zpráva škpt. Jana Krčka o československém legionu v Polsku*, ed. J. Němeček, "Historie a vojenství" 1993, 42, 2; R. Kopecký, *Československý odboj v Polsku v r. 1939*, Rotterdam 1958.

<sup>73</sup> It is worth paying attention to the following: *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945. Aus dem Archiv des deutschen Auswärtigen Amtes*, vols 1–75, Baden-Baden, Frankfurt am Main, Göttingen 1950–1995.

<sup>74</sup> In terms of international relations, the following are important: F. Anghel, N. Mares, D. Preda, *România-Polonia. Relații diplomatice*, vol. 1, 1918–1939, București 2003; "Jeden národ o dwóch sztandarach". *Przymierze polsko-rumuńskie (1918) 1921–1926. Dokumenty i materiały / "Un singur popor cu două drapele". Alința polono-română (1918) 1921–1926. Documente și materiale*, eds. K. Nowak, H. Walczak, Warszawa 2022; "Najbezpieczniejsza gwarancja pokoju i cywilizacji w Europie Wschodniej": *przymierze polsko-rumuńskie 1926–1932, dokumenty i materiały / Garanția cea mai sigură a păcii și a civilizației în răsăritul Europei: alianța polono-română 1926–1932: documente și materiale*, eds. K. Nowak, H. Walczak, Warszawa 2022; *Polscy uchodźcy w Rumunii 1939–1947. Dokumenty z narodowych archiwów Rumunii*, vol. 1, parts 1–2, eds. F. Anghel et al., Warszawa–Bukareszt 2013.



Considering this variety from a professional thematic, which has been accumulating for almost a century, foreign readers have access to numerous references on diplomacy issues<sup>75</sup>. Such approaches are significantly fewer on the issue of military politics and the war itself, which is considered solely as a military – yet still decisive – aspect. It is possible to come across publications referring to the population, touching on issues such as war crimes (mainly German) or the activities of special services, but there are essentially no compilations of scholarship on other issues. This is not particularly surprising since studies referring specifically to broadly understood internal affairs are much less known also to the Polish recipients. Therefore, their discussions presented to the readers will be useful for all people interested in the topic but have a passive understanding of English.

In the following concise review of general writings, however, scholarly works – or works with ambitions to become scholarly – were considered and provided with appropriate apparatus. As a rule, numerous and most often disinforming journalistic publications, as well as factual registries, were omitted. These are primarily narrative works of a monographic nature but without biographies<sup>76</sup>. Fragments of syntheses in which we often encounter significant errors and overly far-reaching simplifications were cited rather exceptionally<sup>77</sup>. Works in foreign lan-

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<sup>75</sup> Such a review one can begin with the famous, although already very outdated, work by Alan J.P. Taylor *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1961). From among the Polish sources, the author cited the French edition of *The Last Report (Ostatni raport)* of the Head of Polish Diplomacy, Józef Beck, and the shortened English edition of the Diary (*Diariusz*) of his deputy, Undersecretary of State Jan Szembek. In the case of Soviet materials, in the bibliography section entitled "Private papers and memoirs", he wrote the significant word – "Nothing".

<sup>76</sup> In this case, we are quite overwhelmed by dozens of accounts of the careers of leaders and commanders from the armed forces of the German Reich, with a much smaller number of biographies relating to Soviet dramatis personae and an almost complete lack of works on Polish civil dignitaries and generals.

<sup>77</sup> The initial examples of such works are publications by e.g. Pierre Belperron and Georges Anderse (*La Deuxième Guerre Mondiale. Précis des Opérations à l'Occident*, Paris 1945), or the american report *The World at War 1939–1944. A Brief History of World War II. Materials for the Use of Army Orientation Program. A brief history of the origins, military operations, and related events of World War II. Prepared from Public Sources by Military Intelligence Division War Department*, Washington 1945, 2nd edition (the Polish version of the reprint is available). Mistakes were made in a famous essay by General John F. Fuller (*The Second World War, 1939–1945. A Strategic and Tactical History*, London 1948; Polish translation is available) or the popular monograph by Jacques Mordal (or rather Hervé P.G. Cras), a medical professional and officer at the French navy *La guerre a commencé en Pologne*, Paris 1968. Cf. also the academic works, starting at least with Norman Davies (*God's Playground. A History of Poland*, Oxford 1981, vol. 2, 1795 to the present; the Polish translation is available), an author

guages written by Polish authors active in the country, as well as commanders and staff officers from the World War II period, or people generationally similar to them, were also omitted<sup>78</sup>. The boundary conditions, that characterize authors who can be considered competent and which allow them to develop research on the analyzed issue effectively, were accepted in the form of usually regular studies in the field of history and practical knowledge of military (or security) issues and/or the logistics of war from personal experience<sup>79</sup>. As we shall see, there are, in fact, only a few such professionally prepared researchers, which is why an exception was made for a pioneer.

The criteria outlined above resulted in a collection of works primarily in English, published mainly in Great Britain and the United States of America, supplemented by books written in German, Italian, French, Czech, and Russian only as an exception<sup>80</sup>. They were presented in chronological order on the basis of the first printing as the decisive factor, and omitting descriptions of any translations. The author's political

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who knows Polish language and Poland's reality, where we often have at our disposal a short informational amalgam, usually not free from common judgements which are difficult to uphold these days. Similar, perhaps unavoidable, inaccuracies can be found, e.g. in works by Donald C. Watt work (*How War Came. The immediate origins of the Second World War, 1938–1939*, New York 1989), Martin Gilbert (*Second World War*, London [1989]; there is a Polish translation), Gerhard L. Weinberg (*A World at Arms. A Global History of World War II*, Cambridge 1994; there is a German and partially Polish translation), but also in Antony Beevor's, *The Second World War*, London 2012 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>78</sup> E.g. pioneer books by the generals: Mieczysław Norwid-Neugebauer (*The Defence of Poland (September 1939)*, London 1942; there is first edition in Polish), who was sent at the time of a mission to Great Britain, or Nicolaus v. Vormann (*Der Feldzug 1939 in Polen. Die Operationen des Heeres*, Weisenburg 1958), at that time as a liaison officer – in the rank of lieutenant colonel – A. Hitler's headquarters, as well as French staff officers: Jeana-F.-A. Goutard (*1940, la guerre des occasions perdues*, Paris 1956; Polish translation is available), or André Beaufre (*Le drame de 1940*, Paris 1965). They formed one of the first waves of writing, and their message is necessarily conditioned – at least in part – by the authors' own experiences, which sometimes results in blurring the line between analysis and memoirs. Among its latest representatives is Rudolf (Rolf) Elble, an officer in the Wehrmacht and Bundeswehr, and after completing his doctorate in political science, philosophy, and modern history, a professional researcher of military history, author of a monograph *Die Schlacht an der Bzura im September 1939 aus deutscher und polnischer Sicht* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1975).

<sup>79</sup> It is worth noting that nowadays, the careful observers of the war in Ukraine have a chance to receive a demonstrative lesson, reviving the dilemmas facing the parties of the conflict from 85 years ago.

<sup>80</sup> No professional academic works in Spanish, Japanese or Chinese have been identified so far.

association, the features of the publication, and finally, the proposed assessment of its usefulness are briefly defined.

The creator of the oldest of the presented works turned out to be Robert M. Kennedy, a US Army infantry major who, in 1956, published a classic and reliable academic work of about 150 pages, previously untranslated into other languages. Although striving for objectivity in the narrative, the author relied on a one-sided – only German – source, which is why the book has a fragmentary character<sup>81</sup>.

About a decade later, Jon Kimche, a British journalist and trade unionist, took up the difficult writing task. In this almost 200-page-long work, which was important at the time and translated into other languages, he raised the strategic significance of the 1939 campaign and the missed opportunity for the Allied forces to support Poland militarily, which was fighting alone<sup>82</sup>.

At the same time, David Irving, the English and controversial history enthusiast, developed his research. Concerning the aspect that we are interested in, his study resulted in the introductory chapters of a book published in the 1970s devoted to Adolf Hitler's war strategy. This author used important but rarely cited German sources in his analysis<sup>83</sup>.

Shortly after, another Englishman, Nicholas Bethell, a Cambridge University graduate, journalist and translator, and a Conservative Party politician, published his work. The bitter book, which was about 450 pages long, is – objectively speaking – one of the best works written abroad. As one of the few authors, Bethell also cited some Polish sources and studies, and also noticed issues that went beyond classical diplomatic and military history, e.g. the strategic communication<sup>84</sup>.

When writing about publications from the late 1970s, it is impossible to ignore the relevant volume of the official German synthesis of World War II history, in which Horst Rohde and Berndt Stegemann describe – on almost one hundred pages and using exclusively German-language sources

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<sup>81</sup> R.M. Kennedy, *The German Campaign in Poland (1939)*, [no place of publication] [1956], reprint: Eastbourne 2009.

<sup>82</sup> J. Kimche, *The unfought battle*, London 1968 (German, French, Russian, and Polish translations are available).

<sup>83</sup> D. Irving, *Hitler's war*, [vols 1–2], London 1977 (there is German and Polish translation).

<sup>84</sup> N. Bethell, *The War Hitler Won. September 1939*, London 1972 (there is French and Polish translation). In the first sentences, the author stated: "The Hitler sword bisects the Chamberlain umbrella. This drawing, a Nazi propaganda poster in 1939, sums the book up more neatly than any Preface".

– the military strategy and operations of the main offensive side, along with its outlines of diplomatic, administrative, and occupational activities<sup>85</sup>.

A popular book by Jan Piekalkiewicz was also published in the West German market – probably not without connections with the interest in Poland during the so-called “Solidarity” carnival. On about 300 pages, the reader received a sensibly and thoroughly developed *pictorial* with photographs from the period, which is very important for these events – compiled and provided with captions by an émigré historian, author of numerous bestselling works concerning wars and campaigns of the first half of the 20th century. Taking into account the role that the image played (and still plays) in the events of 1939, it is even nowadays a work of big documentary value<sup>86</sup>.

Some useful elements pertaining to the 1939 campaign are included in the classic analysis by an American researcher, a student of Yale University, where he graduated in history, a former officer of the US Air Force, Williamson Murray. He obtained a doctorate from his *alma mater*, the book version of which was published in 1984, while the author was already working at Ohio State University. On almost 500 pages, the author presents a comparative approach, focusing on analyzing the potential of the parties at the beginning of the conflict, using data from English and German studies and sources. Although research in recent decades has brought some clarifications and corrections to his conclusions, Murray’s work remains a point of reference for researchers today<sup>87</sup>.

A year later, another popular work was published in the USA, which for almost 20 years remained the first compact printed aid for more astute readers of the Anglo-Saxon circle. It is a book of about 200 pages by American historian of Polish origin, Steven J. Zaloga and Victor Madej, specialist on World War II<sup>88</sup>. Although it is not free from minor inaccuracies, the knowledge of the language of the sources and studies of the main side of the conflict gave the authors an advantage that was difficult to overcome. Zaloga, this time together with illustrator Gerrard

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<sup>85</sup> *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 2, eds. K.A. Maier et al., *Die Errichtung der Hegemonie auf dem europäischen Kontinent*, Stuttgart 1979, pp. 79–166.

<sup>86</sup> J. Piekalkiewicz, *Polenfeldzug. Hitler und Stalin zerschlagen die Polnische Republik*, Bergisch Gladbach 1982 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>87</sup> W. Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938–1939. Path to Ruin*, Princeton 1984.

<sup>88</sup> S.[J.] Zaloga, V. Madej, *The Polish Campaign 1939*, New York [1985]. Opening the bibliography the authors wrote: “The September Campaign of 1939 has been generally ignored in English. Much of what has been written in general accounts has repeated hoary myths and distortions and is more reminiscent of German wartime propaganda than serious scholarship”.

Howard, published at the beginning of this century a newer and even more condensed work of less than a hundred pages, which outlined the 1939 campaign. Since it is a volume of the renowned "Osprey" series for the enthusiasts of uniforms and weapons, it can be safely assumed that it is the most famous publication in the world on the analyzed topic to date, even though it presents only its military aspect<sup>89</sup>.

Towards the end of the Cold War, a somewhat forgotten book by Alex Buchner, about 250 pages long, was published in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a work representative of its time by a German author of an older generation, a specialist in the history of land forces, who refers almost exclusively to German sources. It concerns only military operations, which the author tries to treat from the perspective of ordinary soldiers fulfilling their duty<sup>90</sup>.

It seems that for the next decade and a half, if we skip the Osprey's issue by Zaloga and Howard, no monograph on the Polish campaign was published abroad. This was probably associated with the understandable shift of interest in authors, publishers, and readers towards the history of the bipolar period. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century, i.e. half a generation later, that we can note further editions of books about the events of 1939.

One of the first works was a Czech compilation, a considerable volume of about 400 pages, written by Karel Richter, an author of many popular science books on military history, active since the late 1950s. It basically shares the Polish point of view on the campaign and is characterized by sympathy and a noticeable admiration for the defending side. Importantly, it was already the title that drew the reader's attention to the fact of a two-sided attack, with almost equal participation of the USSR<sup>91</sup>.

Another noteworthy publication was the American perspective. Alexander B. Rossino, who earned a doctorate in history from Syracuse University in New York, focused on analyzing sources (especially visual ones) of German provenance. In a book of about 350 pages, he poignantly

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<sup>89</sup> S.J. Zaloga, G. Howard, *Poland 1939. The birth of Blitzkrieg*, Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford – New York 2002 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>90</sup> A. Buchner, *Der Polenfeldzug 1939*, Leoni am Starnberger See 1989. In the second last paragraph of the compact work (p. 204), the author even went so far as to claim that: "Wohl selten hatte ein Volk, hatte ein Heer tapferer in zunehmend aussichtsloser werdende Lage gekämpft wie das polnische. [...]".

<sup>91</sup> K. Richter, *Válka začala v Polsku. Utajovaná fakta o německo-sovětské agresi*, Praha 2004.

discussed the anti-humanitarian and terrorist dimension of the war waged by the German Reich against Polish and Jewish people<sup>92</sup>.

At around the same time, a three-part and large (totalling about 950 pages) monograph on the operation of the *Luftwaffe* was published in Poland by Marius Emmerling, a resident of the Federal Republic of Germany and an emigrant from Upper Silesia, a graduate of physical education studies. Although it is difficult not to refer to this book as slightly controversial, an impression reinforced by the mannered prefaces provided to the subsequent volumes by the publisher, it nevertheless indicates the emergence of a new standard in research on September 1939, suggesting the necessity to compile sources made by the fighting parties. Thanks to this approach, although not without reservations in individual cases of kills, the book offered verification of data on German losses, which in turn allowed for the achievements of Polish air defence to be made more realistic, until then studied – like many other issues – only asymmetrically<sup>93</sup>.

In 2003, the first edition of what turned out to be a bestselling work by Gerd Schultze-Rhonhof was published in the Federal Republic of Germany. On its more than 550 pages, the author – a general of the Bundeswehr armour forces reserve – outlined the international background of the attack on Poland in a bit of ahistorical manner, placing the considerable responsibility for the outbreak of World War II in Europe on Poland. This is, in fact, an example of work referred to as revisionist, selectively (and often amateurishly) treating the sources and usually limiting the work to using materials in one language (in this case mainly in German) while omitting archival resources, which, regardless of the author's intentions, usually leads to disinformation, often eagerly accepted by readers<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> A.B. Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland. Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity*, Kansas [2005] (Polish translation is available).

<sup>93</sup> M. Emmerling, *Luftwaffe nad Polską 1939*, part 1, *Jagdflieger*, transl. M.J. Morawski, Gdynia 2002; part 2, *Kampfflieger*, Gdynia 2005; part 3, *Stukaflieger*, Gdynia 2006.

<sup>94</sup> G. Schulze-Rhonhof, *1939 – Der Krieg, der viele Väter hatte. Der lange Anlauf zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, München 2003 (English translation is available). So far, it has been reprinted eleven times, most recently in 2019. In the latest edition, the publication has 736 pages. The sequence in which the author lists "Beitrag zum Kriegsausbruch" of individual countries at the end of his discussion is significant: England, France, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Germany (from the 6th edition in 2007, pp. 540–560). The Polish materials mentioned in the nearly 200-item "list of sources" mixing researchers with witnesses of the events include the books: by J. Beck, O. Halecki, S. Mackiewicz, R. Mirowicz, J. Piekalkiewicz, K. Rudnicki, and the so-called *Polnisches Weissbuch*, excerpts from the diplomatic documentation of the Republic of Poland taken over and published by the Germans during the war, and a study of the war plan with Germany by Gen. T. Kutrzeba and Lt. Col. Dipl. S. Mossor,



Another German historian who addressed the 1939 campaign was Jochen Böhler. His first book, about 300 pages long, is accompanied by publications of documentary nature<sup>95</sup>, focusing on reconstructing the genocidal part of the war imposed by the Third Reich on Poland. These publications are deeply source-based, also using the principle of comparing materials made by both sides.

Of the works created in the first decade of the 21st century, three British approaches should also be mentioned. The first study was created by a renowned English expert in the history of Nazi Germany, associated with the universities of Cambridge, King's College London, and finally, Exeter, Richard Overy. In about 200 pages of his work, he provided a valuable outline of the non-obvious diplomatic beginnings of the war and the conditions accompanying the launch of the Polish alliances with Great Britain and France<sup>96</sup>. This book could by no means be equalled by the extensive publication of around 400 pages written by Richard Hargreaves. This journalist from England specializing in German topics processed, in a fundamentally insufficient way in terms of criticism (which is a significant flaw in the case of propaganda materials), almost exclusively sources produced by the German side. For this reason, the publication is unreliable<sup>97</sup>. The work of David G. Williamson, a historian of the older generation associated with the well-known educational institutions, Highgate School and St. Paul's School, proved to be better.

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published by P. Stawecki and M. Jabłonowski as well as the first volume of *Polskie Sity Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Światowej*. The Soviet materials are limited to the translation of the collective work mentioned in annotation 115 and what is included in the Polish "white book". Another author of the trend contesting the theses of the majority of literature is Stefan Scheil, a graduate of historical, sociological, and philosophical studies, holder of a doctorate awarded by the University of Karlsruhe, author of e.g. a short study that does not withstand scholarly criticism *Polen 1939 – Kriegskalkül, Vorbereitung, Vollzug*, Schnellroda 2013 (there is an English translation) and a controversial monograph *Polens Zwischenkrieg. Der Weg der Zweiten Republik von Versailles nach Gleiwitz*, Selent 2022. He took into account only two collections of files from Polish archives.

<sup>95</sup> J. Böhler, *Auftakt zum Vernichtungskrieg: die Wehrmacht in Polen 1939*, Frankfurt am Main 2006 (Polish translation is available) and: "Groesste Haerte...". *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht in Polen September/Okttober 1939. Ausstellungskatalog*, ed. J. Böhler, Warschau 2005; *Einsatzgruppen in Polen. Darstellung und Dokumentation*, eds. K.-M. Mallmann, J. Böhler, J. Matthäus, Darmstadt [2008].

<sup>96</sup> R. Overy, *1939. Countdown to War*, London 2010 (jest przekład polski). Cf. also other works by this researcher about international issues of the interwar period and the economic policies of Germany.

<sup>97</sup> R. Hargreaves, *Blitzkrieg unleashed. The German Invasion of Poland 1939*, Barnsley 2008 (Polish translation is available).

In preparing a book of about 300 pages, the author – in accordance with the emerging trend of research on “oral history” – made extensive use of accounts and interviews, but he also took care of balancing the basis and, consequently, the perspective presented in the sources<sup>98</sup>. One can add to this the works by Evan McGilvray, a graduate of the University of London, who received his doctorate at the University of Leeds. This author referred to the subject of September 1939 several times, using newer Polish studies<sup>99</sup>.

In October 2009, the conference mentioned in the introduction and organized by MHP, took place in Warsaw. On this occasion, a duplicated collection of abstracts of the participants’ presentations was prepared, which, until the final publication, informed the approach of the individual researchers<sup>100</sup>. In March 2014, the first volume this collective monograph was published, and less than a year later, volume 2 was issued. It contains a total of 26 articles by foreign authors, including: Robert Citino, Rolf-Dieter Müller, Andriy Rukkas, Annie Lacroix-Riz, Frédéric Dessberg, Anita J. Prazmowska, Frank McDonough, Daniel Hrenciuc, Endre-László Varga, Algimantas Kasparavičius, Jiří Friedl, Marco Patricelli, W. Murray, Lars Jockheck, Stephan Lehnstaedt, J. Böhler, Ihor Ilyushin, Isabelle Davion, John Ruggiero, Thomas W. Zeiler, Csaba G. Kiss, and a few Russian scholars<sup>101</sup>.

This collection shows how useful the topic of the 1939 campaign is from a research perspective and how demanding it is from a technical perspective. An important finding of the conference was the adoption of the claim – formulated by M.P. Deszczyński and acknowledged by R.-D. Müller – about the fundamental significance that the decision of the Polish authorities to resist Nazi Germany had for the history of World

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<sup>98</sup> D. G. Williamson, *Poland betrayed: the Nazi-Soviet invasions 1939*, Barnsley 2009 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. e.g. E. McGilvray, *A Military Government in Exile. The Polish Government-in-Exile, a Study of Discontent*, Solihull 2010 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>100</sup> *Polish Campaign 1939. Book of abstracts*, eds. M.P. Deszczyński et al., Warszawa/Warsaw 2009.

<sup>101</sup> *Kampania polska 1939 r. Polityka – społeczeństwo – kultura. Polish Campaign 1939. Politics – Society – Culture*, t./vols 1–2, passim. Table of content – <https://neriton.pl/produkt/kampania-polska-1939-polityka-spoleczenstwo-kultura-t-1-strategia/>; <https://neriton.pl/produkt/kampania-polska-1939-polityka-spoleczenstwo-kultura-t-2-polityka-spoleczenstwo-imponderabilia-pamiec-kultura/> and <https://muzhp.pl/wiedza-on-line/kampania-polska-1939-polityka-spoleczenstwo-kultura-t-1-strategia/>; <https://muzhp.pl/wiedza-on-line/kampania-polska-1939-polityka-spoleczenstwo-kultura-t-2> [access: 26.11.2024].

War II – even at the cost of Poland’s own short-term defeat – which was made in January and upheld in March and August of 1939<sup>102</sup>.

Before the collective work mentioned above could be published, two of the conference participants published their own books. The experienced German historian R.-D. Müller, who had been associated for a long time with the Military Historical Research Office (*Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt*, MGFA) subordinate to the Bundeswehr, announced an important study, which also drew on some newer Polish literature. This nearly 400-page work developed the issue of A. Hitler’s hopes for using the Polish Republic as an element co-implementing his plans, as well as the strategic consequences of this fact<sup>103</sup>. In turn, the widely read Italian author, M. Patricelli, had already published a year before the conference a compilation – debatable but pioneering on its own at the local market – of the history of the entire drama, consisting of almost 400 pages. Three years later, his second and extended publication about September was released<sup>104</sup>.

When writing about works written in Italy, one should also remember the solid book by Dr Sandra Cavallucci, a historian associated with the Università degli Studi di Firenze. Longer than Patricelli’s work and being a study of a source, the book also uses Polish materials and publications, and it is the best publication on the 1939 campaign published in this country so far, although the author’s attention is focused on non-military aspects<sup>105</sup>.

Among the achievements of the last 15 years, three English-language works deserve to be mentioned. Chronologically, the first is a book of over 400 pages by Robert Forczyk, an American reserve officer of the Army and a historian of Polish origin, who holds a doctorate in international relations and national security from the University of Maryland, and who has written a series of monographs on campaigns and wars fought in the 20th century. It is useful to foreign readers as a new “first contact” publication and is also valuable for its introduction, which links the year of the dramatic events with the analysis of the earlier history of Poland<sup>106</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Kampania polska 1939 r. Polityka – społeczeństwo – kultura. Polish Campaign 1939. Politics – Society – Culture*, t./vol. 1, pp. 14, 20, 74–75.

<sup>103</sup> R.-D. Müller, *Der Feind steht im Osten. Hitlers geheime Pläne für einen Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion im Jahr 1939*, Berlin 2011 (Polish and English translation is available).

<sup>104</sup> M. Patricelli, *Le lance di cartone. Come la Polonia portò l’Europa alla guerra*, Torino 2008; idem, *Morire per Danzica: la Polonia tra Hitler e Stalin*, [Bresso 2011] (Polish translation is available).

<sup>105</sup> S. Cavallucci, *Polonia 1939 sfida al Terzo Reich. Illusioni, inganni e complicità? alla vigilia della Seconda guerra Mondiale*, Soveria Mannelli 2010.

<sup>106</sup> R. Forczyk, *Case White. The Invasion of Poland 1939*, Oxford 2019 (Polish and Italian translation is available).

Shortly afterwards, the first publication after N. Bethell's book was published in Great Britain; it met – without any major reservations – the standards set out at the beginning of this article. Roger Moorhouse, a historian and political scientist with degrees from the University of Oxford, wrote a monograph of around 450 pages based mainly on British and German sources, but also referring to materials (archival files and museum resources) and Polish scholarship. The author went on a research trip to the area of the fighting in 1939, he consulted researchers discussing the contemporary history of Poland, although – as can be concluded from the critical apparatus – he based his work on the book by Zaloga and Matej when addressing the framework of the reconstruction of events and processes taking place in the Polish Army. Despite this, the work is currently considered groundbreaking in the West – also thanks to the author's non-Polish origin, which increases its potential credibility – although it is not without gaps, simplifications and, fortunately, minor errors. Certain reservations are raised by his selection of Polish output on the subject, where the author failed to use a number of newer and important works, including the already mentioned post-conference collective publication<sup>107</sup>. Due to the significance of this work, it is worth citing the final sentences in the book, which goes to the heart of the matter: "As the opening campaign of the Second World War – which cost some 250,000 lives, and contained all the wicked hallmarks of the latter conflict – it surely warrants our attention and understanding, rather than being passed over in a couple of paragraphs, or still mired in the mythologies and propaganda battles of the vilest totalitarians of the twentieth century. Most of all, it is a story from which the voices of its primary victims – the Poles themselves – have been excluded for far too long. One hopes that this book might begin the process of restoring them to their own narrative"<sup>108</sup>.

The latest item is the largest volume (approximately 500 pages) to date, written by an American historian, Ian O. Johnson, a scholar with a doctorate from the Ohio State University, currently associated with the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. It tries to combine the political and military motifs of both aggressions, to which the Republic of Poland fell victim in 1939. One can hope that due to its professional preparation in the field of historiography, as well as the references to Polish sources,

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<sup>107</sup> R. Moorhouse, *First to Fight: The Polish War 1939*, London 2019 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 270.

this monograph will support the work of R. Moorhouse in spreading basic knowledge about the 1939 campaign in the Western Hemisphere<sup>109</sup>.

The surprising fact is the lack of a publication in French which would be interested to us. Although the subject matter concerns the main ally of the Republic of Poland, such a monographic work has clearly not been written. If we ignore the photo albums<sup>110</sup>, the outline of the French-Polish political relations in 1939–1940 written by Yves Beauvois<sup>111</sup>, then in terms of monographs, there are only sections/chapters of works devoted to the armed forces and military policy of the Third Republic. One of the most important among them is the classic book by François Bédarid<sup>112</sup>, addressing the strategy of the “phoney war” period. One can also mention here, e.g. the works by Pierre Le Goyet or the already mentioned I. Davion<sup>113</sup>, which addressed the alliance relations with Poland.

Scholarship in the Russian language requires separate treatment, which, due to the lack of autonomy in researching the past characteristics of the Soviet era, should perhaps be called *en bloc*, a semi-historiographical achievement. Applying here the criterion of eliminating works of a political-propaganda nature fundamentally invalidates the vast majority of this literature. The works of Daniil Proektor, written in the 1960s, are relatively the least biased<sup>114</sup>, in which – despite the obvious gaps related to the dates of 23 August and 17 and 28 September, as well as the distortions resulting from this – there is even admiration for the heroism of the soldiers from the Polish Army. There are also collective publications available, such as the one written during the Nikita Khrushchev times, *Istoriya Velikoiy Otechestvennoi voyny Sovetskogo Soyuz 1941–1945*<sup>115</sup>, clearly

<sup>109</sup> I.O. Johnson, *The Faustian Bargain. The Soviet-German Partnership and the Origins of the Second World War*, New York [2021] (Polish translation is available).

<sup>110</sup> Probably the best, including nearly 900 photographs, was combined by François De Lannoy (*La campagne de Pologne: Septembre-octobre 1939*, Bayeux 1999).

<sup>111</sup> Y. Beauvois, *Les relations franco-polonaises pendant la “drôle de guerre”*, Paris 1989 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>112</sup> F. Bédarida, *La stratégie secrète de la “Drôle de Guerre”. Le conseil suprême interallié, septembre 1939-avril 1940*, Paris 1979.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. e.g. P. Le Goyet, *France-Pologne 1919–1939. De l’amitié romantique a la méfiance réciproque*, Paris 1991; I. Davion, *Mon voisin, cet ennemi. La politique de sécurité française face aux relations polono-tchécoslovaques entre 1919 et 1939*, Bruxelles [2009].

<sup>114</sup> See: Д.М. Проэктор, *Война в Европе. 1939–1941 гг.*, Москва 1963; *idem*, *Агрессия и катастрофа. Высшее военное руководство фашистской Германии во второй мировой войне 1939–1945*, Москва 1968 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>115</sup> *История Великой Отечественной войны Советского Союза 1941–1945*, vol. 1, *Подготовка и развязывание войны империалистическими державами*, eds. Г.А Деборин et al., Москва 1961 (there is a German, Czech, and Polish translation). Cf. also: *Великая*



better in terms of general message than the more extensive, data-rich, but also more generously soaked with the communist ideology sauce *Istoriya Vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939–1945*<sup>116</sup>, written already in the Leonid Brezhnev period. There are also minor works from the end of the 1980s, from the following decade, and the beginning of the current century, published even in academic journals. Newer approaches<sup>117</sup> usually mark a return to the previous conservative discourse, noticeably anti-Polish, manifested by rationalising of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pacts and Soviet aggression, with constant attempts to justify it and to link the cooperation between Moscow and Berlin in 1939 with the mystified and, in fact, incomparable case of the occupation of Zaolzie by Poland a year earlier<sup>118</sup>. However, there are still works which present more honest approach<sup>119</sup>, although, unfortunately, they often lack a critical apparatus. Before the beginning of the second decade of this century, researchers from Russia also took part in substantive discussions at international conferences, which resulted in important publications, of interest primarily to specialists<sup>120</sup>. Also works written and published in exile (e.g. the famous *Icebreaker* by Viktor Suvorov, which contains valuable references)<sup>121</sup> respect the standards closer to the academic discussions taking place in the Western world.

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*Отечественная война Советского Союза. 1941–1945. Краткая история*, eds. Н.И. Анисимов et al., Москва 1965 (Polish translations are available).

<sup>116</sup> *История второй мировой войны 1939–1945*, vol. 2, *Накануне войны*, eds. Г.А. Деборин et al., Москва 1974; *История второй мировой войны 1939–1945*, vol. 3, *Начало войны. Подготовка агрессии 33333против СССР*, eds. Г.А. Деборин et al., Москва 1974 (there is a German, Czech, and Polish translation).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. e.g. a work by a PhD holder in history, Mikhail Mel'tukhov: М.И. Мельтюхов, *Советско-Польские войны Военно-политическое противостояние 1918–1939 гг.*, Москва 2001.

<sup>118</sup> Let us just note here the disproportion in the area. The lands reclaimed in 1938 by the Republic of Poland constituted less than 1% of the area of the First Czechoslovak Republic, which had given up the option of armed defence; the areas occupied by the USSR constituted about half of the territory of the Polish state according to the pre-war conditions. However, at the time of the attack, they constituted the overwhelming majority of the territories of the Republic of Poland, still free from the Germans. A panoramic view on this topic: M.P. Deszczyński, *Ostatni egzamin. Wojsko Polskie wobec kryzysu czechosłowackiego 1938–1939*, Warszawa 2003.

<sup>119</sup> See np. В. Бешанов, *Красный блицкриг*, Москва 2006 (Polish translation is available).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. e.g. *Международный кризис 1939 года в трактовках российских и польских историков*, eds. М.М. Наринский, С. Дембски, Москва 2009 (Polish edition is available); *Белые пятна – черные пятна. Сложные вопросы в российско-польских отношениях*, eds. А.В. Торкунов, А.Д. Ротфельд, Москва 2010 (there is a Polish edition and an English translation).

<sup>121</sup> The entire first edition: V. Suvorov [or rather Vladimir Rezun], *Le Brise-glace*, Paris 1989 or *Der Eisbrecher: Hitler in Stalins Kalkül*, Stuttgart 1989 (there is a Russian edition and translations in English, Polish, Bulgarian, Czech, and Turkish).



In conclusion, it should be noted that critical literature in foreign languages on the subject discussed here has been growing slowly for almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a century, at an increasing pace since the 1980s (on average 3–4 books per decade), although there is a gap covering the next decade, reaching a rather insignificant number of over thirty items in relation to the main languages used in the humanities<sup>122</sup>.

Therefore, we are facing here real poverty compared to the vastness of material. The quantitative and qualitative disproportions in Polish and foreign scholarship do not result only from the fact that foreign researchers, authors, publishers and readers do not appreciate the importance of the events related to that September. It seems that another important reason is that it is very difficult to address them competently, impartially, and responsibly. Additionally, the works which were mentioned touch on non-military and non-diplomatic aspects only with exceptions. Thus, while a solid sourcebook on 1939 would avoid superficiality and formulaic judgments, this would be a task that today – for various reasons – exceeds the capabilities of a single researcher, even one with unlimited finances. Such a study would optimally require ten years of uninterrupted work with sources in several languages, usually unknown to people from outside the Central Europe<sup>123</sup>.

Therefore, the modest number of works on the subject should not be surprising, apart from the censorship or ideological restrictions that made the writing of such studies unlikely until around 1989, while in the following decades, foreign scientists rarely undertook such tasks. Those who tried to do so, uncritically trusting unreliable sources, often became subsequent victims of the propaganda war initiated against the Republic of Poland by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia (under the name of the USSR) for entire quarters before 1 September 1939 or of disinformation caused by – most often poorly justified – accusations against the Polish *ancien regime*, made from October of that year by General Władysław Sikorski's team.

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<sup>122</sup> The list of recommended works for a person who is only getting acquainted with the issues related to the 1939 campaign is, therefore, quite short and could look like this: one of the works by S. Zaloga, then J. Piekalkiewicz, R. Forczyk, R. Moorhouse, N. Bethell, I.O. Johnson, plus others from those abovementioned, depending on the reader's linguistic skills.

<sup>123</sup> Essential, considering their importance: Polish, German, Russian, French, and English; and also helpful: Romanian, Hungarian, Slovakian, Czech, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Yiddish, and the languages of the then more geographically distant neutrals, such as Italian, Turkish, and Swedish. For meaningful comparisons, Finnish is also needed, and possibly Serbian/Croatian and Greek.

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