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Status and Prospects for Research on Administrative and Political Actions of Latvia and Estonia Towards Poland since mid-October 1938 till December 1939, Including Strategic Communication Dimension

Stan i perspektywy badań nad administracyjno-policyjnymi działaniami Łotwy i Estonii wobec Polski od połowy października 1938 do grudnia 1939 r. z uwzględnieniem aspektu komunikacji strategicznej

ABSTRACT

In general, the article deals with the status of research on the attitudes of the administration and National Police, and their activities in Latvia as well as in Estonia towards Poland, focusing on the pre-war period 1938–1939 and during first months of the Second World War, in the autumn and winter of 1939, after the German and Soviet invasion of

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Poland. Considerable attention was paid to the study of the problem of the internment of Polish soldiers, which constituted one of the most important elements in the topic. The last phase of Latvian-Polish relations, covering the period before and after the outbreak of the Second World War, has only been partly researched in Latvia and Poland, with a slightly better level in Latvia. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that we are talking about relations and contacts between the countries of the region (in the case of Latvia and Poland – even direct neighbours), which were diverse and complex. The research perspective is therefore quite broad, and further research in Latvian, Estonian Polish source repositories, newspapers, memoirs, etc., will help to improve the overall picture. This will contribute to improving the overall picture of this forgotten aspect of the common history of these two countries and understanding the place of Latvia, Estonia and Poland in Europe.

Key words: Latvia, Estonia, Second Polish Republic, Germany, Soviet Union, pre-WWII period, WWII, internment, neutrality, historiography, strategic communication

STRESZCZENIE

Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, artykuł dotyczy stanu badań nad postawami administracji i Policji Narodowej oraz ich działaniami na Łotwie i w Estonii wobec Polski, koncentrując się na okresie przedwojennym 1938–1939 oraz w pierwszych miesiącach II wojny światowej, jesienią i zimą 1939 r., po niemieckiej i sowieckiej inwazji na Polskę. Dużo uwagi poświęcono badaniu problemu internowania polskich żołnierzy, który stanowił jeden z najważniejszych elementów tematu. Ostatnia faza stosunków łotewsko-polskich, obejmująca okres przed i po wybuchu II wojny światowej, została tylko częściowo zbadana na Łotwie i w Polsce, z nieco lepszym poziomem na Łotwie. Wynika to niewątpliwie z faktu, że mówimy o relacjach i kontaktach między krajami regionu (w przypadku Łotwy i Polski – nawet bezpośrednimi sąsiadami), które były zróżnicowane i złożone. Perspektywa badawcza jest zatem dość szeroka, a dalsze badania w łotewskich, estońskich, polskich repozytoriach źródłowych, gazetach, wspomnieniach itp. pomogą poprawić ogólny obraz. Przyczyni się to do poprawy ogólnego obrazu tego zapomnianego aspektu wspólnej historii tych dwóch krajów i zrozumienia miejsca Łotwy, Estonii i Polski w Europie.

Słowa kluczowe: Łotwa, Estonia, II Rzeczpospolita Polska, Niemcy, Związek Radziecki, okres przedwojenny, II wojna światowa, internowanie, neutralność, historiografia, komunikacja strategiczna

This article touches upon issues which have been rarely or never of scientific interest for Latvian and Estonian historiographies. This is due to the fact that since 1940 till 1991 both countries in practical terms had been territories occupied by the Soviet Union. It resulted in asymmetric research with regard to most of the aspects of the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939. The lion share of publications on this topic was prepared by Polish authors, who had, even under the Communist regime, more freedom of scientific research and expression. Situation started to change after regaining independence by Latvia and Estonia but only a few researches from both countries dedicated their time and effort to examine the civilian dimension of the war between Poland and

Germany and problems related to Soviet annexation of the part of Poland. To start assessment of the status and perspectives of research on the topic, it would be necessary to prepare an outline of relations between the Second Polish Republic with Latvia and Estonia, firstly, till the last days of peace, secondly, during the wartime.

During the prewar period, the Polish-Latvian border was 105 kilometres long. Bilateral relations were relatively good, but still complex. No agreement on a formal politico-military alliance was concluded. Due to local border conflict in the Ilūkste District, some areas were perceived as disputable, especially in the 1920s¹. It had an impact on the attitude of the Latvian Government and Latvian local administration towards events and problems before the 1939 September Campaign and during the Polish armed conflict with Germany.

Latvian-Polish relations during twenty years of peace between two World Wars should be studied in two dimensions: bilateral relations, and problems of the Polish ethnic minority in Latvia. Just to note, the latter issue had great influence on the tempo and quality of relations between the countries. There had been, since the very establishment of relations, some principles that guided policies of both Nations. Diplomatic connections were established in 1919. There had also been a strong political will to strengthen and develop bilateral contacts. In the winter 1919, Poland had even provided military assistance to Latvia and helped to beat Red Army and win Latgale over from the Soviet Union. Joint operation was fully successful².

Bilateral relations, with Poland, an important political partner in the region, supporting Latvian and Estonian aspirations to independence, could be evaluated by subdividing the prewar period into several phases, defined by the military-political situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Relations have also been affected by contacts with other countries, i.e. Lithuania, Soviet Union, Germany, Entente powers and by different

¹ See more: Ē. Jekabsons, *Granica łotewsko-polska 1919–1939*, "Zeszyt Naukowy Muzeum Wojska" 2002, 15, pp. 85–91; idem, *Skład narodowościowy mieszkańców 6 gmin powiatu iłkuksztańskiego w XIX–XX w. jako główny powód sporu terytorialnego między Łotwą a Polską w okresie międzywojennym*, in: *Granice i pogranicza. Historia codzienności i doświadczeń*, eds. M. Liedke, J. Sadowska, J. Trynkowski, vol. 1, Białystok 1999, pp. 225–233.

² See more: Ē. Jekabsons, *Piesardzīgā draudzība: Latvijas un Polijas attiecības 1919. un 1920. gada*, Rīga 2007, p. 244; idem, *Powstanie niepodległej Łotwy, jej położenie w regionie oraz stosunki z Polską w latach 1918–1920*, in: *Rok 1918. Odrodzona Polska w nowej Europie*, Warszawa 1999, ed. A. Ajnenkiel, pp. 166–180; idem, *Łotewsko-polska współpraca wojskowa w maju–sierpniu 1920 roku*, in: *Księga jubileuszowa Muzeum Wojska 1968–1998*, Białystok 1999, pp. 139–148; idem, *Stosunek Łotwy do Polski w okresie Bitwy Warszawskiej w 1920 roku*, in: *Rok 1920. Z perspektywy osiemdziesięciolecia*, ed. A. Ajnenkiel, Warszawa 2001, pp. 168–184.

military and political aspirations and plans of both countries. Their actions were determined by a size of the country, population and the position on the international policy arena. Some other factors had also played a role, as the attitude of a part of the Polish minority in Latvia, i.e. Latgale landed gentry that in most of the cases was unfriendly to the Latvian State and the Government³.

There had been a solid basis for bilateral cooperation such as mutual interest in developing relations. Thanks to the Polish support, Latvia was recognized on an international level (firstly *de facto*, later *de iure*) and was able to liberate and integrate its ethnic territories. Warsaw assistance helped to build mutual trust and good neighbourly relations. As noted by the Polish historian, Piotr Łossowski, both countries had no experience in shaping bilateral relations and were forced by the situation to cooperate and had to overcome suspiciousness that characterized relations within Europe of the time⁴. Such feelings had not completely disappeared in Riga till the beginning of WWII, but Polish support and assistance in just the dawn of the modern Latvian statehood had always been a proof of positive and friendly attitude of the Southern neighbour towards the Latvian independence, integrity and sovereignty.

The main obstacle for closer cooperation between Baltic States had been different national interests and various, sometimes conspicuous, conflicts. Sometimes they have surfaced and influenced political plans, decisions and activities. One of the efforts to integrate policies of three Baltic countries had been regular conferences, during which, without much success, these states tried to build the common position towards Soviet Union and international policy problems. As a result, such meetings had merely become forums for sharing information and manifesting a will and determination for further cooperation.

Lithuania was an important factor in Polish-Latvian relations. The conflict between Kaunas and Warsaw has always been a matter of concern for Riga. Since 1919, Latvia formally took a neutral stand. Due to its national interest, it was important for Riga, although very difficult, to have good and constructive relations both with Poland and Lithuania. In fact, already since 1920, Riga was expressing, despite officially declared neutrality with regard to the Vilnius problem and Polish-Lithuanian conflict, the tacit approval for Vilnius Region for Poland. Such elements could be found in an internal document of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Latvian diplomacy assessed that regaining the Vilnius Region

³ Ē. Jēkabsons, *Zaangažowanie państwowo-polityczne szlachty polskiej z Łatgalii w pierwszej ćwierci XX wieku*, "Przegląd Wschodni" 1997, 4, 3 (15), pp. 513–522.

⁴ P. Łossowski, *Łotwa – nasz sąsiad*, Warszawa 1990, p. 61.

by Lithuania would have weakened this country and had negative impact on the situation in and out Latvia. Due to Lithuanian sensitivities with regard to such issues, Riga wanted to take formally a neutral stand and not be involved in any conflict.

At the same time, in autumn 1923, the Latvian Consular Office was opened in Vilnius. It was formally an Honorary Consulate as the Consul and his subordinates had been officially employed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riga. Latvia did not want to annoy the Lithuanian public opinion by establishing the formal Consulate⁵. In March 1938, during the time of the political crisis between Poland and Lithuania that ended with the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries, Latvia tried to play the role of an intermediary between two capitals⁶.

Taking into account all elements mentioned above, it is necessary to emphasize that military relations between two countries had been of particular importance, also for the security and military situation in the whole Central and Eastern Europe regions. Already during the war for independence, contacts between both armies had been much better than the political relations⁷. The cooperation was especially close and intensive at the operational level (this assessment also refers to contacts within the Intelligence dimension). There had been many examples of manifesting friendship and brotherhood in arms by individual Polish and Latvian military units.

Assessing the 1938–1939 political, security and military situation, it should also be mentioned that in the second half of 1930s, the Polish Government planned to establish a union of states from the Baltic to Black Sea. In 1938, to present this initiative, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jozef Beck, visited Sweden, Latvia, Estonia and other countries. This ended without a meaningful political result. The Beck himself stated that countries he had visited preferred strict neutrality over other political solutions.

⁵ See more: Ē. Jēkabsons, *Problem Wilna a Łotwa: jesień 1920 roku*, in: *Łotwa–Polska. Materiały konferencji międzynarodowej*, ed. J. Sozański, Ryga 1995, pp. 68–97; idem, *Latvia's position concerning the Vilnius question in the 1920s and 1930s*, in: *Lietuvos diplomātija XX amžiuje*, Vilnius 1999, pp. 71–82; idem, *Piesardzīgā draudzība: Latvijas un Polijas attiecības 1919. un 1920. Gada*, Rīga 2007, p. 244.

⁶ See more: Ē. Jēkabsons, *Stanowisko Łotwy w konflikcie polsko-litewskim w okresie międzywojennym. Próba pośrednictwa ministra spraw zagranicznych Łotwy Vilhelmsa Munterasa w marcu 1938 roku*, "Przegląd Wschodni" 2010, 11, 1 (41), pp. 173–188.

⁷ See: Ē. Jēkabsons, *Kryzys w stosunkach łotewsko polskich w roku 1931 i jego rozwiązanie*, "Prace Bałtytyczne" 2016, 6, pp. 121–147; idem, *Konflikt łotewsko-polski w kwestii szkół polskich w powiecie Daugavpils (dyneburskim) w 1921 roku. Przebieg i skutki międzynarodowe*, "Przegląd Wschodni" 2014, 13, 2 (50), pp. 463–488.

The difficult international-relations and military situation prompted the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intensify efforts to develop relations with Baltic States – to find potential allies for a future political and military conflicts. The response from Estonia and Latvia, also Lithuania, was quite encouraging. However, such relations never progressed beyond economic dimension⁸ and events like bilateral visits on high political and military level. In Latvia, such occurrences always found positive and friendly publicity and helped to build the positive image of Poland as one of the best allies of the Latvian Republic⁹. Intensive diplomatic contacts and visit of representatives of the Polish Armed Forces continued also in 1939. They had been the most intensive within the maritime dimension¹⁰. Also

⁸ In October 1938, Governments in Riga and Warsaw signed a new agreement on conditions of employment for Polish seasonal workers in Latvia.

⁹ For example, Chief of the Main Staff, Brigadier General W. Stachiewicz visited Riga in June 1938. A month earlier, also Brigadier General Jan Kruszewski, the Commander of the Border Defence Corps (Pol. Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza, KOP), also paid a working visit to Latvia. In September, Major General Wladyslaw Bortnowski, the Inspector of the Army, arrived in Riga. In October, the next meeting took place with the Commanding Officer of the Polish Coastal Defence, Commander Stefan Frankowski. In July 1939, Polish press informed that the Marshal of Poland, Edward Smigly-Rydz, would also pay an official visit to Latvia. However, due to the direct threat of the German invasion, the promise remained unfulfilled – See: Archiwum Akt Nowych [hereinafter: AAN], Sztab Główny w Warszawie, ref. no. 616/311, sheet 14; “Kurier Warszawski” of 1 July 1938; “Nasze Życie” 29 May, 5 June, 4 July and 30 October 1938; “Kurzemes Vārds” 22 October 1938; “Jaunākās Ziņas” 20 May 1939.

¹⁰ On 5 August, the tugboat ORP “Smok” entered the port in Liepaja, the next day – it visited Ventspils. She stayed there for 24 hours. In both locations, the ship and its crew were received by representatives of the Latvian Navy Command. On 11 and 12 August minesweepers “Czajka” and “Rybitwa” moored in Riga, with participants of the Navigation Officers Course (both ships visited Liepaja and Ventspils before). On 12 August, Admiral Teodors Spāde, invited Polish officers for the breakfast in the Riga Garrison Officers’ Club. Both ships were also visited by the Polish Ambassador, T. Kłopotowski. According to Polish officers’ reports, the attitude of the Latvians to the Poles was very cordial and Polish crews were received in Liepaja and Ventspils in an ‘ostentatiously enthusiastic’ manner. In both ports, banquets were organized, guests welcomed with a great hospitality. Hosts even brought several dancers from Ventspils for the evening. Ships were welcomed in Ventspils by thousands of people. Latvian officers informed Polish crews that the situation during the recent visit of German Navy ships was completely different. At that case, the attitude of Ventspils inhabitants was mostly indifferent. The last Polish ship in Latvian ports was the cadet training ship “Dar Pomorza” with 178 cadets and officers, which was visiting Liepaja on 21 August. The crew was discovering the city and two days later sailed out to Gdynia. Local press informed the a ‘big number of local Poles’ bidding farewell to the ship – AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie, ref. no. 6202, sheet 6; “Rīts” 7

intelligence agencies of both countries established and maintained a close relationship, with periodical and thematic conferences¹¹.

There still had been a certain distrust of the Latvian authorities towards Warsaw and Polish policies. This phenomenon had not faded away, despite efforts on both sides. This was due to several reasons, such as different foreign policy objectives and desire of some sections of Polish elite to dominate the region. This had taken even a form of political arrogance (especially towards Lithuania). Another factor had been the negative attitude and activities of the Polish landed gentry in Latgale towards Latvian establishment and authorities. Common political and military interests, and – first of all – the Soviet threat to both countries, dominated the agenda of bilateral relations. Latvian political leaders were aware that the strong Poland is the best ally in their efforts to consolidate the independence and in the case of a direct military threat. Generally speaking, Warsaw-Riga relations could have been assessed as good, although not devoid of asymmetric prudence.

As for Polish-Estonian relations during the interwar period, they are generally assessed as the best in the region. One of the reasons was that both countries had no common border, which eliminated territorial problems. In addition, Estonia did not have a substantial Polish ethnic minority. Estonia had also much smaller number of people than Poland and it resulted in less intensive contacts between Tallin and Warsaw than between Riga and Warsaw. Here, it would be also reflected by a structure of the text, and much bigger sections on Latvia. Also, family connections of the Latvian Supreme Commander during the autocratic rule of Konstantin Päts, General Johan Laidoner, who was married to a Polish woman, played a role.

Even during periods of growing tensions in Europe, the status of the relation between Tallin and Warsaw had not changed. This was reflected in the Estonian press as Poland was mostly presented as a strong country, always friendly to the small Estonia. As for Latvia, in 1938–1939, there had been many high-level visits of the Polish and military leadership, including the official visit of General Laidoner in Warsaw (17–27 April). This specific visit was very widely and positively covered by the press.

There had also been some differences in the last months of peace, related to the attitude in Baltic capitals to Germany. Authorities in Tallin

and 14 August 1939, "Latvijas Kareivis" 5 August 1939; "Kurzemes Vārds" 8 August 1939; "Nasze Życie" 13 August 1939.

¹¹ Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs [hereinafter: LVVA], fond 5601, ref. no. 3434, sheet 5; ref. no. 1134, sheet 6; AAN, Sztab Główny w Warszawie, ref. no. 616/234, sheet 140; ref. no. 616/261, sheet 409.

continued to convince Polish partners that it was necessary to avoid any problems in Warsaw-Berlin relations that could lead to war. This aspect of bilateral relations was not a public knowledge and such topics had been always discussed behind-the-scenes by diplomats. In the eyes of the average citizen, relations with Poland were close, friendly and almost perfect¹².

Already in 1919–1920, Baltic States, Poland and Finland wanted to build a defence alliance against the Soviet Union and Germany. All ended in failure and efforts stopped in the third decade of the twentieth century. Also, other initiatives, aimed at building an alliance without Lithuania or without Poland, were not successful. The Latvian-Estonian Military Convention signed in the autumn 1923 had a formal character and the 1934 Agreement, so-called Baltic Entente, included provisions related only to diplomatic cooperation. It did not bring any substantial results and even gave the Soviet Union an additional pretext for invasion and occupation of three Baltic countries. None of the Baltic States succeeded in securing their independence by guarantees from the Western powers. Due to such a situation, in the beginning of September 1939, only a forlorn hope remained that potential aggressors, Soviet Union and Germany, would respect declarations of neutrality of Baltic states. The difficult position of all the capitals was confirmed by actions of the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vilhelms Munters (21 September 1939) – see below.

The reaction of the Estonian Government was similar. The formal neutrality was declared and it was strictly exercised by the authorities, which tried to present balanced attitude to all warring parties. There had been unofficial sympathies and expressions of support to Poland. This was clearly seen during the internment of the Polish Navy submarine ORP “Orzeł” in Tallin.

She escaped on 18 September 1939, i.e. the day after the Soviet invasion of Poland and it has become a next pretext for the Soviet Union to openly terrorize Baltic States. This resulted in signing “The Cooperation Agreement” by Soviet Union and Estonia at the end of September, and with Latvia and Lithuania in October. This started the process of actual occupation of all three Baltic States. The case of ORP “Orzeł” had also the direct impact on the policy and situation of Latvia. It should be mentioned here that Estonia did not follow the path of Minister Munters and did not unilaterally break Government relations with the Polish Embassy

¹² See more: R. Pullat, *Od Wersalu do Westerplatte. Stosunki estońsko-polskie w okresie międzywojennym*, transl. A. Puu, Kraków 2003, pp. 133–148.

in Tallin. Tallin Embassy personnel left Latvia for Sweden in the first half of October¹³.

Changing attitude of the Latvian Government towards Poland was exemplified by actions related to the internment of Polish Navy. First seven officers and sailors were interned by Latvia on 14 September 1939, when the "Albatros" cutter, having left Kepa Oksywska, was cut off by Germans from other Polish forces and entered the port of Liepaja¹⁴.

Since 16 September 1939, Latvians tried to convince internees to sign a document with the following content: 'I, the undersigned,... [name of officer or sailor, – Ē.J.]... I give the word of honour that I would not arbitrarily leave the assigned place. Herewith, I append my signature'. The attitude of Latvian authorities changed after the ORP "Orzeł" incident and escape of the submarine from Tallin. On 19 September 1939, the Latvian Chief of Staff, Mārtiņš Hartmanis, ordered to 'create necessary conditions that would prevent any escape of Polish and German internees'¹⁵. Two days before this date, hundreds of Polish soldiers crossed the border to seek refuge from the Soviet aggression¹⁶. They were allocated in various camps and in different parts of the Country. The regulations and regime in such camps were comparably mild. Therefore, it should have not been a surprise that immediately it prompted many soldiers to attempt an escape¹⁷.

¹³ See more: *ibidem*, pp. 187–190.

¹⁴ J. Pertek, *Mała flota wielka duchem*, Poznań 1989, pp. 95–99.

¹⁵ Ē. Jēkabsons, *Internowanie żołnierzy polskich na Łotwie 1939–1940*, in: *Internowanie żołnierzy polskich w latach II wojny światowej*, eds. T. Dubicki, T. Panecki, Tarnowskie Góry 2004, p. 113.

¹⁶ M. Zawilło, *Na kresach wschodnich*, "Tygodnik Demokratyczny" 6 August 1989, p. 15.

¹⁷ One situation was very characteristic for that time, taking into account recollections of internees and Commanders of the Internment Camps. On 4 October 1939, in Lilaste, eight Polish pilots, who were considered 'a difficult element', tried to escape. Five managed to flee the Country, two were arrested by local policeman. They tried to explain that before crossing the border with Latvia, their commanders tried to convince them that they would not be guarded so strictly in internment camps, i.e. they would be allowed to escape and leave Latvia. Lance Corporal J. Mioduszewski even wrote the letter to the Commandant of the Internment Camp: 'Sir, I want to report that due the creation of the new Polish Army in France and as we are all respecting our oath and remaining true to the duty of the Polish soldier, we had to escape to give to our Country what is necessary and needed. That is our only responsibility, we organized everything on our own, with no support, assistance and knowledge of our superiors, colleagues, and Latvian soldiers. All Latvian Government issues, uniforms and other elements, we leave in the Camp. We are all sorry for all problems and inconveniences that could arise because of our escape and we also want to express our great gratitude for all you, Sir, had done for Polish soldiers. Long live for Latvia! Long live for allied Latvian Army! Long live for free Poland!'. Fugitives wanted

The attitude of Latvian authorities to the problem of 1,562 interned Polish soldiers is important for the history of both nations and states. It should be noted that the internment process was conducted according to provisions of the international law. The status of Latvia changed in mid-September and in October due to entrenchment of Riga's political dependence on Russia and Soviet military presence in the Country. Despite such a situation, the attitude of the Latvian Government towards internees was proper and respectful. Internment conditions had been relatively good and influenced by sympathy of Latvians for Poland and Polish soldiers, also because of the common history and tradition of cooperation.

The decision of the Latvian Government dated 21 September 1939 on unilaterally breaking up diplomatic relations with Poland¹⁸ should be considered as politically unreasonable, premature or simply incorrect. In fact, it also compromised the principles of declared neutrality. On the other hand, although on 20 September Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Estonia and Lithuania communicated to the Latvian diplomats an oral approval of the step planned by Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were not so eager to declare a similar measure. They broke off relations with Poland only in October 1939, but in a much milder, less extreme form.

On 25 September 1939, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karl Selter, informed the Latvian Ambassador, Vilis Šūmanis, that he was not able to present a suitable declaration to Polish Ambassador and it would be done by his Deputy. However, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs did not execute such a task as well.

As for the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Juozas Urbšys, on 30 September 1939, he informed the Latvian Ambassador that he was not going to follow the Latvian example as 'the Lithuanian society and Diplomatic Corps would have not taken kindly that sort of behaviour'. Scandinavian countries had not taken such an option into account at all and Polish embassies operated as before.

The Latvian Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs already on 25 September 1939 had to present explanations to the ambassadors of United Kingdom and France, who had expressed dissatisfaction of their governments with Riga's decisions. This prompted Latvia to make every

to go to Riga, find an English or French ship and sail to France, or travel through Russia and Romania – Ē. Jēkabsons, *Internowanie*, p. 120.

¹⁸ See: M. Kornat, *Dyplomacja państw bałtyckich w obliczu układu Ribbentrop–Mołotow w świetle nowych dokumentów*, "Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2000, 35, pp. 197–200; Ē. Jēkabsons, *Stosunki polsko-łotewskie: tragiczny koniec jesienią 1939 roku*, in: *Sen o potęgę. Bezpieczeństwo, suwerenność, mocarstwowość. Rzeczpospolita Polska 1918–1939*, eds. E. Maj et al., Lublin 2014, pp. 537–555.

effort to convince their partners abroad to their decision. On 22 September 1939, the Latvian Ambassador to Sweden, Voldemārs Salnais, was instructed to present the following statement: 'Latvian decision means exclusively that we state that a diplomatic agent of Poland is no longer supported by authorities [at the moment – Ē.J.] empowered to give him guidelines or ordinances. By no means are we willing to decide legally over the position of the Polish state and Government. If Poland itself would not use this statement for unfriendly actions, we are not going to publish it'¹⁹.

Of course, all this sounded very awkwardly. Munters himself was aware of the situation and tried to explain the whole situation in October 1939. He talked to Franciszek Charwat, Polish ex-Ambassador in Kaunas, who travelled from Lithuania through Riga to Sweden. He stated, during the meeting, that the Latvian Government did not demand closure of the Polish Embassy to Latvia but only 'refused' to co-operate with the ambassador Tadeusz Kłopotowski²⁰. These assurances were neither honest nor faithful.

The truth was that Daugavpils buildings of the Embassy and Consulate were taken over by the British Embassy, who organized the Office of Polish Interests led by Michał Szembek, the relative of the Undersecretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan Szembek. As for the post of Deputy, the local citizen of the Polish ethnicity, Bolesław Gołubiec was assigned to support Szembek. The Office was opened till occupation of Latvia by Soviets.

At the end of September and in the beginning of October, Baltic States were forced to sign agreements with the Soviet Union. Their provisions allowed Soviets to deploy Red Army garrisons on their territories. As a result, Soviet forces were in equal or similar numbers to national, Baltic armed forces. From that moment of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were almost completely dependent on the Soviet Union. In June 1940, Russia overthrew the governments of the Baltic Republics and annexed their territories.

As for the media coverage, it is possible to say that in the run-up to the war, Poland's image was very positive, especially in comparison to the earlier years of the interwar period. Partially, it was a result of the internal situation in Latvia, which since May 1934 became an autocratic country with all its properties, strict preventive press, and publications censorship, and of course with a press and publications auto censorship. The similar situation developed in Estonia.

¹⁹ LVVA, fond 293, inventory 2, ref. no. 23, sheets 1–7 and next.

²⁰ LVVA, fond 3235, inventory 1/22, ref. no. 691, sheet 352 and next.

It resulted in the situation that it had been difficult to express views unfavourable to politically friendly countries. In Riga, Poland was considered one of such partners, despite caution exercised with regard to all political contacts and decisions. In Latvia, there had even been many publications printed on the occasions of name-days of Józef Piłsudski or Marshal of Poland Edward Śmigły-Rydz or articles praising their wisdom and courage²¹.

In the beginning of 1939, the Ministry of War, evaluating the previous year and undoubtedly communicating the Government's view, presented contacts of Latvia with its traditional allies, France and Poland, as a great political success of the Ministry (including the visit of the Polish Chief of the Main Staff, General Waclaw Stachiewicz).

As for the diplomatic dimension – a similar assessment referred to the summer visit of Minister Beck to Latvia, which was summarized with the following statement: 'The activity of Baltic States [Poland had also been included in this list – Ē.J.] and visits of foreign leaders prove that we are doing what is required and necessary to save the independence, integrity and sovereignty of our countries'²².

The outbreak of the Polish-German war, invasion of Poland, a country generally in good terms with Latvia, raised widespread anxiety. On 2 September 1939, Latvian press informed that inhabitants of Jelgava found out about the conflict only by radio. During the day 'rumours rapidly spread throughout the town' and raised many concerns about the security of the country. Newspapers were immediately sold out. The similar situation was seen in many places around Latvia.

On 1 September 1939, the Latvian President and the Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis issued the declaration confirming neutrality of Latvia. On 3 September 1939, Ulmanis reiterated that 'in these troubled times, the Government is sending all citizens an urgent appeal for unanimous and dutiful support to the Latvian policy of neutrality. It is with calmness and all seriousness, without emotional reactions and free from panic, that the whole Nation will continue their work to overcome the difficulties and limitations that a war between foreign countries may also bring to our land. Let the sense of responsibility and the sense of duty be the guides for every citizen, as it is announced that the Government expects an active and reasoned support of all of you. We will work together and

²¹ For example, on 18 and 19 March 1938 extensive articles were published titled: *The Celebration of the Polish Nation* about two Polish statesmen. Authors emphasized their uniqueness, courage and pointed out at their special place in the history of Poland – See: P. Jelgavietis, *Poļu tautas svētki, "Brīvā Zeme"* 18 March 1938.

²² *Garīgā un saimnieciskā spēka augšanas gads, "Latvijas Kareivis"* 1 January 1939.

pray together for peace for the nations which today entered into war, we will sacrifice all our efforts for the sake of power and honour of our Country. God bless Latvia!²³.

Although in some press publications there had been some expressions of support, sympathy and respect for Poland, especially during the first week of war, official institutions and newspapers continued to exercise principles of strict neutrality. For example, on 1 September 1939, Ambassador Kłopotowski was interviewed by several journals but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prohibited the publication. Media also received a recommendation to consult texts of all next interviews given by representatives of warring parties with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs²⁴.

On 4 September 1939, Ksawery Glinka, the Press Attaché of the Polish Embassy and correspondent of the Polish Telegraphic Agency in Riga, paid a visit to the Director of the Latvian National Telegraphic Agency "Leta". He proposed that as he organized the Press Office at the Polish Embassy, he would be able to provide Latvian press and Latvian journalists with the breaking news on the course of the war.

The Director responded in all kindness that 'taking into account the neutrality position, I will approve official releases only'. K. Glinka supposedly declared his understanding of the clue²⁵.

In evaluation of the image of Poland and the role of the Polish factor in Latvian information space one element was particularly important and apparent. It was the conclusion that the war and annexation of Poland seriously influenced information activities in the Country. One of the best examples is the case of the Ministry of War and Latvian Armed Forces monthly journal "Militārais Apskats". Until the autumn of 1939, almost each issue included articles of Polish and Latvian officers on Polish military art and lessons learned. There had also been reviews and information on the most important Polish publications on security and defence.

After German invasion of Poland, the situation had completely changed and topics related to Poland and Polish Armed Forces disappeared. They were replaced by articles on Germany, Soviet Union, German Armed Forces and Red Army. In the January 1940 issue of this journal the article *Kara gājiens Polijā* (Pol. *Pochód wojenny w Polsce*; Eng. *The Campaign in Poland*) was published. The author, who based his conclusion on German press reports, prepared the review of the Campaign, evaluated operation of *Wehrmacht* and other German arms and services.

²³ Valsts Prezidenta deklarācija, "Valdības Vēstnesis" 2 September 1939.

²⁴ LVVA, fond 2574, inventory 6, ref. no. 539, sheet 6 and next.

²⁵ LVVA, fond 2574, inventory 6, ref. no. 560, sheet 7 and next.

The same issue also contained a short text on operations of *Luftwaffe* in the Polish September 1939 Military Campaign, based on German summary of the armed conflict in Poland published in Swiss *Der Bund* (Eng. The Union), a Swiss German-language newspaper published in Bern²⁶. In the February issue, Colonel Ernests Kreišmanis printed an extensive article on the *German March in Poland*. It was structured chronologically and was relatively objective and based on sources that were available at the time. The author analyzed the Campaign and presented some conclusions. One of the most important was on quality, education and training of officers. Kreišmanis stated that Polish Armed Forces officers up to the level of the battalion commander performed their duties to a high standard, which cannot be said about the top military leadership²⁷. Just to note – it was actually the element similar to statement of Hitler used in the speech in Gdansk, delivered on 19 September 1939.

Also, during the next months some more texts were published on the conflict in Poland. The March issue included the article of Captain R. Osis, who presented the Campaign. It was based on texts from French military periodicals²⁸.

Just before the annexation of Latvia by Soviet Union, the last issue of “*Militārais Apskats*” was printed with the article of the Warsaw Higher War College’s graduate, Captain Heinrihs Brunners. He analyzed the Campaign and made an effort to answer the question on future military operations. One of the main conclusions was on failure of the Polish Armed Forces to stop *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* attacks and the German general offensive on several, consecutive lines of defence²⁹.

Estonian media tried desperately to emphasize its impartiality and neutrality. Authoritarian character of the Government in this country allowed to exercise such an approach with good results. However, still the pro-Polish attitude was clearly noticeable and this trend was visible up until annexation of Estonia in summer 1940³⁰.

As for Polish research on Latvia, it should be noted that quite surprisingly, in comparison to other European countries, no comprehensive monograph on this country was published. The 2014 print of Ireneusz

²⁶ T.B., *Kara gājiens Polijā*, “*Militārais Apskats*” 1940, 1, pp. 10–16; *Vācu aviācijas cīņas Polijā*, *ibidem*, pp. 84–87.

²⁷ E.K., *Vācu kara gājiens Polijā*, “*Militārais Apskats*” 1940, 2, pp. 163–181.

²⁸ R. Osis, *Vācu karagājiens Polijā franču apgaisojumā*, “*Militārais Apskats*” 1940, 3, pp. 309–322.

²⁹ H. Brunners, *Minējumi par nākošā kara operācijām*, “*Militārais Apskats*” 1940, 6, pp. 826–840.

³⁰ R. Pullat, *op. cit.*, pp. 148, 190 and next.

Kolendo, due to low scientific quality, cannot be considered a serious and useful effort³¹. Several researchers examined Polish-Latvian relations between two World Wars, some tried to explore other historical periods. However, the subject literature and sources were selective and sparse in numbers, as many authors had no Latvian language competence. Andrzej Skrzypek presented the bilateral relations till the breakout of WWII³². Another good example of publications on the topic are 1938–1939 source editions, prepared by the Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw³³.

Much more had been written about Polish citizens interned in Romania, Hungary and Lithuania, mainly due to the relatively big number of internees in these states. As for Latvia, a number of omissions, mistakes and inaccuracies are present in the literature.

The press and scientific publications often provide figures out of line, not representing the correct statistics as the competent estimates say about 4,000–6,000 people interned in Latvia at that time³⁴.

As for the issue of the internment of Polish soldiers and citizens in Latvia, it should be emphasized that only few Polish scientists approached the problem in a serious and systematic way. For example, Jerzy Pertek carefully and precisely described the situation of Polish sailors, accentuating the friendly attitude of Latvian Navy to internees since their first day in the country³⁵. In the 1990s, Maciej Szczurowski launched a series of archival research in Riga and published several articles on the topic³⁶. Albin Głowacki presented, using fonds and files available in Russian archives, the problem of taking over internees from Latvia by Soviet National Commissariat of Internal Relations (NKVD)³⁷. Wanda Krystyna Roman

³¹ I. Kolendo, *Łotwa. Zarys dziejów narodu i państwa. Od czasów najdawniejszych do początku XXI wieku*, Łódź 2014.

³² A. Skrzypek, *Stosunki polsko-łotewskie 1918–1939*, Gdańsk 1997.

³³ *Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne. 1938*, eds. M. Kornat et al., Warszawa 2007; *Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne. 1939. Styczeń–sierpień*, eds. S. Żerko, P. Długołęcki, Warszawa 2005; *Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne. 1939. Wrzesień–grudzień*, eds. W. Rojek et al., Warszawa 2007.

³⁴ See: C. Chlebowski, *Cztery z tysiąca*, Warszawa 1981, p. 215; A. Kastory, *Złowrogie sąsiedztwo. Rosyjska polityka wobec europejskich państw ościennych w latach 1939–1940*, Kraków 1998, p. 100.

³⁵ J. Pertek, *Mała*, pp. 95–99.

³⁶ M. Szczurowski, *Przyczynek do internowania żołnierzy polskich na Łotwie (1939–1940)*, "Łambinowicki Rocznik Muzealny" 1998, 21, pp. 31–47.

³⁷ A. Głowacki, *Przejęcie przez NKWD polskich internowanych na Łotwie*, "Dzieje Najnowsze" 1992, 24, 4, pp. 45–50.

published articles on international law aspects of internment in Latvia³⁸. To sum the whole thing up, the problem of Polish soldiers in Latvia was covered in a satisfactory and comprehensive way. In Latvia, such topics were covered by Ēriks Jēkabsons, who also touched on topics of the bilateral relations before and just after the outbreak of the Polish-German military conflict³⁹. He extensively used the resources available in the Latvian State Historical Archive.

As for the Latvian historiography, the first author who wrote several works on the internment of Polish soldiers was émigré historian Edgars Andersons. He did not have, of course, any access to national archives, but he very skilfully used available memoirs and other documents as well as materials from archives in some Western European countries. Despite all such difficulties and problems even today his works presents certain scientific value and can constitute a useful source of future research⁴⁰.

The issue of Polish internees was also present in works of Aivars Stranga, along with other tragic events for Latvia in 1939–1940⁴¹. Ojārs Niedra and Zinta Ābola made an effort to describe such stories but they used only one file of the Latvian Security Police⁴². Edvīns Brūvelis, Latvian aviation researcher, had shown the history of Polish aircraft that landed on his country territory⁴³. Issues of the dissolution of diplomatic relations and the internment of Polish soldiers were evaluated by Jānis

³⁸ W.K. Roman, *Internowanie polskich żołnierzy na Łotwie w okresie wrzesień 1939–czerwiec 1940 w świetle ówczesnego prawa międzynarodowego*, in: *Przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość Polaków na Wschodzie*, eds. M. Szczerbiński, T. Wolsza, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2001, pp. 91–110; *Katyń. Dokumenty zbrodni*, vol. 3, *Losy ocalałych*, Warszawa 2001; W. Roman, *Problematyka jeniectwa i internowań Polaków w okresie Drugiej Wojny Światowej na Froncie Wschodnim w historiografii*, “*Studia Podlaskie*” 2007/2008, 17, p. 233.

³⁹ See: Ē. Jēkabsons, *Uchodźcy wojskowi i cywilni z Polski na Łotwie 1939–1940*, “*Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*” 1995, 30, pp. 129–148 (it also includes data and information on Polish workers in Latvia at the beginning of war); idem, *Materiały o internowanych polskich żołnierzach na Łotwie 1939–1940 w Państwowym Archiwum Historycznym Łotwy*, “*Białostoczczyzna*” 1999, 2, pp. 77–82; idem, *Internowanie*, pp. 109–128; idem, *Stosunki polsko-łotewskie: tragiczny*, pp. 537–555.

⁴⁰ E. Andersons, *Latvijas vēsture. Ārpolitika 1920–1940*, 2nd edition, Stockholm 1984, pp. 155–176.

⁴¹ A. Stranga, *Latvija: neatkarības pēdējais cēliens. 1939. gada 23. augusts–1940. gada 17. jūnijs*, Rīga 2022, pp. 43–105.

⁴² Z. Ābola, O. Niedra, *Internēto Polijas karavīru liktenis Latvijā 1939–1940. gadā*, “*Latvijas Vēsture*” 1999, 3, pp. 23–25.

⁴³ E. Brūvelis, *Latvijas aviācijas vēsture*. Rīga 2003, p. 161. The author’s statement on the Latvian request directed to the Polish Government-on-exile on granting the possibility to use about 20 Polish aircraft for training should be verified as there had been no diplomatic relations between two countries after 21 September 1939.

Tomaševskis, who used the Latvian subject literature⁴⁴. Inesis Feldmanis analyzed the position of Latvia on the international policy arena before the war and just after the breakout of the conflict. He had also touched on the issue of Polish-Latvian relations. What should be mentioned here is his approach to analysis and his scandalous conclusion, contradictory to facts about Poland 'provoking Hitler', which implicates the Polish responsibility for starting the war⁴⁵.

The number of publications on Polish-Estonian relations before WWII is much smaller than on contacts between Riga and Warsaw. This research area is represented by Estonian historians. i.e. Raimo Pullat and Magnus Imjarv⁴⁶, and Polish scientists P. Łossowski, Jan Lewandowski⁴⁷, and Jerzy Grzybowski⁴⁸. The issue of ORP "Orzeł" internment was analyzed by J. Pertek and by other Polish Navy researchers⁴⁹.

One of the most important works on diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts of Poland and Estonia in 1938–1939 and the most important aspects of the ORP "Orzeł" internment is the publication of R. Pullat. He comprehensively examined relations between two countries until 1 September 1939, course of events related to the internment of the Polish submarine and its crew and attitude of Estonian authorities towards interned Polish soldiers. This includes the stories of Commander Henryk Kłoczkowski and paramedic Marian Barwiński, who stayed in Tallin after the ORP "Orzeł"'s escape to UK. Both sailors had been treated in the Estonian Armed Forces Hospital, then they were placed in the military prison. They soon had a company, as the third officer, Polish pilot, was also placed into custody. He was released in November; after signing the statement he would not take any political action in Estonia and try to leave the Estonian territory⁵⁰.

⁴⁴ J. Tomasevskis, *The Severance of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and Latvia and the Problem of the Polish Soldiers Detained in Latvia*, in: *Polska–Łotwa. Poland–Latvia. Sto lat współpracy dyplomatycznej i wojskowej*, ed. Z. Wawer, Warszawa 2021, pp. 207–224.

⁴⁵ I. Feldmanis et al., *Latvijas ārpolitika un diplomātija 20. gadsimtā*, 1. sēj. Rīga 2016, pp. 420–528.

⁴⁶ R. Pullat, *op. cit., passim*; M. Imjarv, *Silent Submission. Formation of Foreign Policy of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Period from mid-1920-s to annexation in 1940*, "Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis", "Studia Baltica Sockolminensia" 2004, 24, pp. 256–360.

⁴⁷ P. Łossowski, *Tragedia państw bałtyckich 1939–1941*, Warszawa 1991; J. Lewandowski, *Historia Estonii*, Wrocław 2002.

⁴⁸ J. Grzybowski, *Emigracja zarobkowa z Polski na Łotwę i do Estonii w latach 1928–1939*, Warszawa 2021.

⁴⁹ See: J. Pertek, *Wielkie dni małej floty*, Poznań 1987, 10th edition; idem, *Dzieje ORP Orzeł*, Gdynia 1966; M. Borowiak, *Plamy na banderze*, Warszawa 2008.

⁵⁰ R. Pullat, *op. cit.*, pp. 185–189.

What should be underlined here, is the lack of works and analyses on 'administrative-policing' actions and media reactions (including press and radio), both in Latvia and Estonia, related to the origin and course of events during the Polish September 1939 Military Campaign, with regards to political, diplomatic and military problems. As this dimension had not been fully described and evaluated, it opens new scientific perspectives for comprehensive research, studies and next publications.

As for research perspectives, it should be noted that in the case of Latvia and also to a bigger extent Estonia, it is difficult to separate administrative and policing decisions from the general attitude of the top echelon of national civilian and military authorities. That approach is also valid for the diplomatic dimension of future studies. All elements should be explored holistically, due to the factor of scale and less complicated security and military environment, especially if compared with German, Soviet Union, Romania, Hungary and even Latvia. This is especially the case for Estonia.

As for Latvia, it is possible to examine the Polish-Latvian border security system, which was practically the same as for Lithuania and Estonia. There is, however, no integrated study on administrative and policing issues on the top level of the state administration before 1 September 1939. The same situation exists with regard to Ministry of Interior structures in the border areas. One of the important issues is the attitude of Latvian authorities towards the Polish ethnic minority, its initiatives, and actions. An integrated research approach should also be assumed with regard to the problem of the evacuation of property and people from the Polish territory. It would also be possible to look into situation in both countries on the border areas with the Soviet Union and extend the scope of analyses. This could possibly allow to identify weak signals on the war preparations in this country.

As for the information domain, we should note that it was the authoritarian character of the ruling regimes in Latvia and Estonia that did not allow free circulation of ideas, information and works (not only with regard to the situation in Poland). We have the possibility to examine the sentiments of official documents published on occasions of Polish official holidays, official visits of Polish politicians to Latvia and Estonia as well as Latvian and Estonian top officials to Poland. It could be complemented by analyses of the Soviet and German press, and, in the case of Latvia – publications in Polish. In such a way, it would be possible to look for information on the upcoming military conflict and later – on events during the military Campaign in Poland. Hopefully, it would also allow to find accents and sentiments in analyses of particular processes, specific events, and decisions of individual decision-makers.

As for executive part of the project, we should mention that in mid-1990s, by agreement between the Latvian State Historical Archive (LVVA) and the Polish Military Archival Commission (Pol. Wojskowa Komisja Archiwalna, WKA), the exchange of files took place, in which copies of archival materials of interest to both sides were exchanged by the Parties. WKA got copies of many files and fonds, including documents on internment of Polish soldiers and sailors. Those were mainly materials from the Fond No. 6455 "The Commandant of Internment Camps for Polish and German Soldiers, 1939–1940". After the dissolution of WKA, documents were transferred to the Central Military Archive in Warsaw Rembertow. There had been some difficulties with the proper scientific exploitation of documents for research as most of papers had been prepared in Latvian,

As for further research on Latvia, it would be possible to continue exploration of Latvian State Archives to find details of the attitude of civilian and military authorities towards the interned Polish citizens. In addition to fonds and files already mentioned in annotations to this article, it would be necessary to examine:

1. files of the Border Guard Brigade, subordinated to the Ministry of Interior and responsible for the Polish section of Latvian borders;

2. files and fonds of the Ministry of Interior; this should include files with documents generated by the local police, responsible for law and order in the Latvian countryside, responsible for areas, in which internment camp were located etc. It is to note that since summer 1940, the time of Soviet occupation of Latvia, the Latvian Police was also responsible for search and arrests of people with the status of internee, mainly employed as agricultural labourer; they had been individually or in groups transferred to the Ulbroka Camp in the vicinity of Riga before handing over to NKVD Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD, Russian: Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, romanized: Narodny komissariat vnútrennih del); most of such people had been deported to the Soviet Union interior; there is a number of archival materials on such topics;

3. files of Aizsargi (equivalent to the Polish Rifle Association), national paramilitary organization, supporting the National Police; Aizsargi (literally: "Defenders", "Guards") was a paramilitary organization (latv: Aizsargu organizācija, "Guards Organization", a kind of National Guard, during the period of unrest and civil warfare following the Russian October Revolution, which enabled the independence of Latvia from Russia. In 1921 it was reorganized to follow the example of the Finnish Suojeluskunta; it was also responsible for providing the border security in 1938–1939, took part in searches for runaways from internment camps, also in their transport to assigned camps;

4. files of Latvian local authorities, communes, town and districts;
5. files of Latvian regional courts involved in legal proceedings on issues related to Polish soldiers, accused of committing a criminal offence;
6. fonds and files of Latvian Labour Centre offices; the Centre was subordinated to economic ministries and organized employment of internees in agriculture and forestry;
7. fonds and files of the Latvian Security Police, with information on assistance provided to internees by the local Polish communities and Polish organizations;
8. files and fonds of Polish organizations in Latvia from the period 1939–1940, mainly of the “Union of Poles”, which actively supported interned Polish soldiers and sailors.

As for archival research on the first period of Soviet occupation of Latvia (summer-autumn 1940), it would be useful to explore NKVD criminal files on arrested and senior Polish officers sentenced for “espionage”, local Polish activists and Latvian Armed Forces officers, who were involved in bilateral cooperation initiatives with Poland. They are available in the National Archives of Latvia (Latvijas Nacionālā arhīva Latvijas Valsts arhīvs, LNA LVA).

Other useful materials are stored and available in the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London. They include testimonies and recollections of Polish internees in Latvia, also about Latvian authorities’ attitude towards Polish citizens.

In the case of Estonia, research perspectives in main areas are much more limited, mainly due to the situation that they are not so many scientists who have good command of both working languages, Estonian and Polish. More opportunities exist in the information dimension as there is a number of different publications, including huge number of newspaper and journal issues. The main location for research should then be Estonian libraries, the Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw (mainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs fond), National Archive in Tallin, and the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London (with testimonies of ORP “Orzeł” sailors). Some information could also be found in source editions of diplomatic documents.

SUMMARY

To sum up, the last weeks and months of Polish-Latvian and Polish-Estonian relations, just before the outbreak of WWII and just after the start of the conflict have been described, examined, and analyzed. Due

to the problem of insufficient command of working languages, only the situation in Latvia had been elaborated on and presented at a relatively good level. We have to remember also that scientists have to work with big volumes of data and information and they have to deal with widely differing countries. This makes the research perspective in the project very wide and diverse, however with a good possibility for access to Polish, Estonian and Latvian archival materials, press and journals, also memoirs. Hopefully, the project results will complement the historic picture of above-mentioned countries on the outbreak of the greatest historical tragedy, initiated by the Polish September Military Campaign 1939.

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