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Status and Prospects for Research on Strategic Communication Between Poland and the United States of America from mid-October 1938 till December 1939

Stan i perspektywy badań nad komunikacją strategiczną między Polską a Stanami Zjednoczonymi Ameryki w okresie od połowy października 1938 do grudnia 1939 r.

ABSTRACT

The article reviews the literature and sources related to the topic that so far has not been properly explored, described, and evaluated, that is, the perception of Poland in 1939 in the USA – the state that took a neutral stance with regard to the situation in Europe – and the American observations of the Polish Republic preparing itself to overcome the German attack and fight against the Nazis, and soon the Soviet aggression. Author also refers to the repercussions of the Polish Campaign in the American media, and recalls

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the activity of Julien H. Bryan, an American documentary film maker. He was the person, who depicted the struggles of Poland on film and on photographs. The text points out the necessity to conduct wide-range analysis of elements described and released in the USA, including material published by Polonia's press. Author proposes a project of a study to evaluate Polish information and propaganda efforts and their results on the American ground.

Key words: 1939, General History, Poland, Second Polish Republic, United States of America, Julien H. Bryan, society, foreign policy, strategic communication, propaganda, media, press, radio, film, Second World War, Polish Campaign

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł dokonuje przeglądu literatury i źródeł na stosunkowo słabo zbadany temat wzajemnego postrzegania się przez Polskę, gotującą się do obrony przed napaścią niemiecką, a także reagującą na napaść sowiecką, oraz neutralne w rozpoczynającym się konflikcie Stany Zjednoczone Ameryki. Odnosi się też do reperkusji medialnych kampanii 1939 r. za Atlantykiem. Przypomina działalność amerykańskiego filmowca i dokumentalisty Juliana H. Bryana – człowieka, dzięki któremu dramat Rzeczypospolitej został upamiętniony w fotografii i filmie. Opracowanie wskazuje na niezbędność dokonania szerokiej analizy obrazu opisywanych wydarzeń w przekazie informacyjnym w USA, także z uwzględnieniem prasy polonijnej. Przedstawia projekt takiego studium, mającego m.in. zwrócić uwagę na wysiłki informacyjno-propagandowe strony polskiej oraz ich skutki.

Słowa kluczowe: 1939, historia, Polska, II Rzeczpospolita, Stany Zjednoczone Ameryki, Julien H. Bryan, społeczeństwo, polityka zagraniczna, komunikacja strategiczna, propaganda, media, prasa, radio, film, II wojna światowa, kampania polska

If the iconic short by Julien Hequembourg Bryan *Siege* (Radio-Keith-Orpheum production) won an 'Oscar' in 1940, there would not have been a need to put forward a hypothesis that Poland had not been able to gain a significant success in the area of the information war which reached also the other side of the Atlantic. The fact that in the category of one-act documentary film, Bryan's movie, the most important and truthful, as opposed to all Soviet and German productions, irreversibly contaminated with contempt, lost to the story based on technical capabilities of the strobe photography¹ was a good symbol of what Poland had been able or rather not able to achieve at that time in the areas of propaganda and information in the distant North America at the beginning of WWII².

¹ See: *Siege. Oblężenie* | Julien H. Bryan – <https://ninateka.pl/movies,1/siege-oblezenie-julien-h-bryan,6409>; *Quicker'n a Wink* (1940) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-spK_Bi0aoQ and *Results* | Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences | Official Academy Awards® Database – <https://awardsdatabase.oscars.org/search/results> [access: 15.07.2024].

² With the current theoretical approach, using the 'strategic communication' category and respecting requirements of historical analysis, it is necessary to assume that a research should include forms and channels of communication and content of information and

Contrary to popular belief, it had not been the worst result. Polish problems and issues had to find place within the demanding American media environment, in time between the Munich Conference, which mostly did not have good press in the US, and the admiration-inspiring valiant fight of Finland with the Soviet Union. In addition, the attention of the public opinion had also been occupied by the war in China, which started in July 1937, after the Marco Polo Bridge incident and the large-scale Japanese military invasion.

This preliminary analysis, as we still do not have a monograph on the topic, will show the importance of the aspect of the information warfare, as it is now in case of Ukraine, facing full-scale Russian aggression. In the case of Poland, 85 years ago, the situation was somewhat different, also with regard to Polish-American relations. The global-scale conflict had just been gaining its momentum, and technical capabilities of long-distance transmission of information had been different. As a result of existing disproportions in potential and isolationist US policy towards Europe already since 1920s, in addition to the abovementioned realities, Warsaw relations with Washington had a secondary importance. Americans were more worried about the situation in the Pacific region and while Poland was considered a friendly country, it politically was still of secondary importance³. The conducted studies that should be conducted would ex-

propaganda messages directed consciously and unconsciously to particular groups of recipients with an objective to persuade people to your case and arguments – See: J.A. Gawęcka, *Komunikacja strategiczna*, in: *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, eds. O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, Kraków 2019 – <https://open.icm.edu.pl/server/api/core/bitstreams/b7edb13f-db3c-4a05-8f88-e3f7201170f2/content> [access: 15.07.2024]; M. Kowalska, S. Wigienka, *Komunikacja strategiczna w Polsce*, [no place and date of publication] – https://capd.pl/images/dokumenty/CAPD_Komunikacja_strategiczna_w_Polsce.pdf [access: 15.07.2024]. What especially should be discovered is how and to what extent the Polish situation and position was presented to elites and public opinion of the great power that was to play the decisive role in winning the WWII. Therefore, it would be necessary to reconstruct the picture of Poland and the Polish Campaign 1939, which was generated by American media at the time.

³ Polish subject literature: see first subchapters of the work of E. Cytowska-Siegrist (*Stany Zjednoczone i Polska 1939–1945*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 11–26) and summary of prewar Polish–US relations by M.P. Deszczyński (*Bariery zbliżenia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki u progu II wojny światowej. Zarys problemu/Barriers of Rapprochement Between the Republic of Poland and the United States of America at the Brink of World War II: An Outline of the Problem*, in: *Rola Polonii USA w kształtowaniu relacji polsko-amerykańskich w XX i XXI wieku*, ed. W. Gliński, Warszawa–Orchard Lake 2020, pp. 243–266). See also: P. Grudziński, *Przyszłość Europy w koncepcjach Franklina D. Roosevelta (1933–1945)*, Wrocław 1980, pp. 50–80; B.W. Winid, *W cieniu Kapitolu. Dyplomacja polska wobec Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1919–1939*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 212–238; idem, *Od triumfu niepodległości do katastrofy Jaltę. Stosunki polsko-amerykańskie 1917–1945*, in: *Okiem stratega i dyplomaty. Stosunki*

amine issues that are very important from the modern perspective⁴. In the period in question, although not pushed to the policy margins, Polish propaganda activities in US were not a crucial element of plans, decisions, and activities of individual institutions. Quite the contrary; their important, beneficial for the future role was not left unnoticed⁵. However,

polsko-amerykańskie po 1918 roku, ed. R. Kupiecki, Warszawa 2019, pp. 33–39; K. Michalek, *Na drodze ku potęgze. Historia Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki 1861–1945*, 2nd edition, Warszawa 1993, pp. 266–268; idem, [Głosy w dyskusji], in: *Dwudziestolecie. Oblicza nowoczesności. Konferencja Muzeum Historii Polski. Warszawa, 18–19 listopada 2008 r.*, ed. A. Przeszowska, Warszawa 2009, pp. 93–95, 103–104, idem, *Polska w polityczno-wojskowej strategii Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki (październik 1938–październik 1939 r.)*, in: *Kampania polska 1939 r. Polityka – społeczeństwo – kultura*, vol. 1, *Strategia*, eds. M.P. Deszczyński, T. Pawłowski, Warszawa 2013, pp. 311–312; B. Grzełowski, *Dyplomacja Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki wobec zagrożenia Czechosłowacji i Polski (12 marca 1938–1 września 1939)*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 155–204; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej (połowa X–XX w.)*, vol. 4, 1918–1939, ed. P. Łossowski, Warszawa 1995, passim; *Historia dyplomacji polskiej (połowa X–XX w.)*, vol. 5, 1939–1945, ed. W. Michowicz, Warszawa 1999, pp. 37, 112, 189, 641; W. Paruch, *Myśl polityczna obozu piłsudczykowski 1926–1939*, Lublin 2005, pp. 669–671; L. Pastusiak, *400 lat stosunków polsko-amerykańskich*, vol. 1, Warszawa 2010, pp. 353–365; M. Bogdanowicz, *Problem zagrożenia agresją Niemiec i Japonii w polityce USA, wrzesień 1939–listopad 1942*, in: *Czas Ameryki. American Era. Księga ku czci Profesora dr. hab. Krzysztofa Michałka*, ed. H. Parafianowicz, Białystok 2011, pp. 271–276; idem, *President F.D. Roosevelt's policy towards Poland in the light of the memoirs of his Secretary of State Cordell Hull: September 1938–June 1941*, "Echa Przeszłości" 2014, 15, pp. 129–144; H. Marczevska-Zagdanska, *Izolacjonizm amerykański – mit czy rzeczywistość?*, in: *Czas Ameryki*, pp. 221–223; M. Kornat, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1938–1939. Cztery decyzje Józefa Becka*, Gdańsk 2012, passim; M.P. Deszczyński, *Aktywność prezydenta Ignacego Mościckiego na polu nadzoru nad polityką zagraniczną i zwierzchnictwa nad siłami zbrojnymi (12 V 1935–1 IX 1939 r.)*, in: *Prezydentowi prof. Ignacemu Mościckiemu – w 150. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. B. Umińska, Ciechanów 2018, p. 109; P. Zaremba, *Demokracja na krawędzi. Ameryka Franklina Delano Roosevelta*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 445–470; *Certain threads that interest us appear in the novel's attempt to present the realities of September 1939, seen from the perspective of US representatives to Poland* – see P. Kościński, *Jesień ambasadora*, Warszawa 2022. American subject literature, see for example: C.C. Tansill, *Back Door to War. The Roosevelt Foreign Policy 1933 [should be 1933]–1941*, without place of edition 2014, 3rd edition, passim; R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, New York 1979, passim; P. Renshaw, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Harlow [2004], pp. 160–163; J.D. Doenecke, M.A. Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies, 1933–1945*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–Toronto–Oxford 2005, passim and J.E. Smith, *FDR Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, transl. M. Grzywa, Oświęcim 2017, pp. 478–498.

⁴ It started already in 2009, during the work of the author in the Institute of History at the University of Warsaw.

⁵ It is difficult to accept as a random action the fact that one out of three official interviews by the Marshal of Poland Edward Śmigły-Rydz to foreign press was given to an US newspaper, by renowned reporter and activist Mary Heaton Vorse (*Poland Will Fight for*

Polish press campaigns were focused rather on the United Kingdom and France as main foreign partners in the security policy, next on the close, friendly, or neutral European countries⁶.

Bogusław Winid and Wojciech Skóra tried to explore and evaluate Polish information policies in the US territory. It was the responsibility of the Polish Embassy personnel in Washington, led at that time by Jerzy Potocki together with a growing network of consulates, established not only in regions with significant Polish communities but also in areas important for Polish exports⁷. Such activities, not always successful⁸, were coordinated and supported by the Press Bureau (*Wydział Prasowy*) of the Political-Economic Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The number of American offices in Poland was much smaller; in addition, their officials were, in fact, not influential. This state of affairs had been a direct result of the diplomatic hierarchy established by the Department of State and President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself⁹.

Danzig, *Alone if Need Be, Says Marshal. No Repetition of Czecho-Slovakia, Smigly-Rydz Warns in Interview*, "The Evening Star" (Washington D.C.), 17 July 1939, p. B-4; Polish text in: "Polska Zbrojna" 1939, no. 199, p. 1). See: M. Jabłonowski, P. Stawecki, *Następca Komendanta. Edward Śmigły-Rydz. Materiały do biografii*, Pułtusk 1998, pp. 161–162 (Note about inaccuracy in this work: "The News Chronicle" was a British daily newspaper).

⁶ On conditions for and conduct of propaganda activities – P. Łossowski, *Polska w Europie i świecie 1918–1939. Studia z dziejów polityki zagranicznej i położenia międzynarodowego II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 225–264.

⁷ B.W. Winid, *W cieniu*, pp. 203, 217; W. Skóra, *Służba konsularna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej. Organizacja, kadry i działalność*, Toruń 2006, *passim*. See also: M.P. Deszczyński, *Przyczynek do genezy stosunków polsko-filipińskich w czasach najnowszych – tło powołania i funkcjonowanie Konsulatu Honorowego RP w Manili (1936–1940)*, in: *Czas Ameryki*, pp. 262–269; idem, [Gospodarka i społeczeństwo], in: *Dwudziestolecie*, pp. 136–138. The important role was played by the Consulate General in New York.

⁸ For instance, at the end of 1937, the Consul General in Pittsburgh, Dr. Karol Ripa, wrote semi-humorously to his head office in order to prevent the foreign distribution of Polish films depicting the Republic of Poland "as a country of bearded Jewish vendors, old beggars-like ragged men from Częstochowa, and falling apart thatched cottages, because it is harmful to business trade and the position of Polonia" (W. Skóra, *op. cit.*, p. 667).

⁹ Unfortunately, an American millionaire, US Ambassador to Poland, Anthony J. Drexel-Biddle Jr., friend of Józef Beck, the chief of Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had no direct contact and access to F.D. Roosevelt during his time at the office in Warsaw. US Ambassador to France, William C. Bullitt (earlier Ambassador in Moscow), was in such capacity. That is why Polish Ambassador to Paris, Juliusz Łukasiewicz, wanted to establish friendly and close relations with this US politician. Similar activities were conducted by other Polish diplomats such as count J. Potocki, an aristocrat from the Łancut line, who presumably had too limited impact capabilities in America. Also military attachés, Lt. col. Andrzej Chramiec and Maj. William H. Colbern, had not been influential personalities – See:

Reports from Polish officials, embassies, and consulates complemented press and media reports, such as information provided and distributed by the Polish Telegraphic Agency (*Polska Agencja Telegraficzna*, PAT), Warsaw branch of Associated Press, and correspondents sent to cover important events and special occasions. One of the most active links had been the Polish-American Trade Chamber (*Polsko-Amerykańska Izba Handlowa*) in Warsaw, led by the former head of Polish diplomacy August Zaleski, next the American-Polish Chamber of Commerce & Industry in the United States in New York (APCCIU), the Kościuszko Foundation, and Polish universities cooperating with American higher education institutions¹⁰. At the end of 1930s, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs started to support preparation, printing, and circulation of different brochures in English on modern Poland and its economic development prospects. Most likely they were to be distributed within the United Kingdom, but their slightly modified versions could also have been used in the United States. They could have been complemented with new technical tools, especially in the first phase of the campaign – telegraphs, fax (!), radiotelegraph, and the transatlantic radio station in Boernerowo near Warsaw, and (only theoretically) thousands of private shortwave radio stations (HF).

This potential was reinforced by Polish emigration in USA. Its numbers at the end of the fourth decade of the 20th century reached 3 million with 1/3 of new US citizens of the Polish origins born in Poland. Polonia lived mainly in New York, Chicago and Detroit and other mid-size American towns, primarily in Northeastern states. Polish emigration generally built lower social classes (industrial workers, small enterprises), but also was able to organize active and effective printing and publishing institutions, supported by the Catholic Church. The World Union of Poles Abroad (*Światowy Związek Polaków z Zagranicy*, “Światpol”), which was to support the ties of Polish emigrants with ‘Old Country’

W. Jędrzejewicz, *Przedmowa*, in: J. Łukasiewicz, *Dyplomata w Paryżu 1936–1939*, eds. W. Jędrzejewicz, H. Bułhak, Warszawa 1995, p. 22; B. Grzełoński, *Dyplomacja*, pp. 154–204; idem, *Dyplomaci USA 1919–1939*, Pułtusk 2004, pp. 36–45, 110–113; idem, *Nieobrany sojusznicy. Ambasadorzy Roosevelta w ZSRR*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 47–88; idem, *Przedmowa*, in: W.H. Colbern, *Polska. Styczeń–sierpień 1939. Analizy i prognozy*, ed. B. Grzełoński, Warszawa 1986, pp. 15–18; J. Smoliński, *Polsko-amerykańskie stosunki wojskowe 1776–1945*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 308–316, 319–322; R. Majzner, *Attachaty wojskowe Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1919–1945. Strukturalno-organizacyjne aspekty funkcjonowania*, 2nd edition, Częstochowa 2014, p. 450.

¹⁰ See also: Z. Landau, J. Tomaszewski, *Gospodarka Polski międzywojennej 1918–1939*, vol. 4, *Lata interwencjonizmu państwowego 1936–1939*, Warszawa 1989, *passim*; M.P. Deszczyński, *Uniwersytet Warszawski i Uniwersytet Józefa Piłsudskiego w Warszawie w systemie polskiego szkolnictwa wyższego 1918–1939*, in: *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 1915–1945*, ed. P.M. Majewski, Warszawa 2016, pp. 376, 420.

had very active American branch¹¹. But also, in the American-specific case support to 'Sanacja' was not the main trend. In this environment, the political sympathies of emigrants had been strong for national and peasant parties, more generally – for Christian democracy groupings. They were also sympathetic to activists in Poland, who considered a possibility to prepare and stage an internal 'countercoup' in order to abolish the regime, which had ruled the state since 1926.

However, despite such circumstances, the potential of Polish emigration could have still been used by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in possible propaganda actions supporting and promoting Poland. Such a mobilization had already been organized a quarter of century before, when *Polonia* actively and effectively supported Polish efforts to regain independence and secure the borders of a rebirthed state¹². American Poles, apart for participation in actions supporting pro-Polish activities, organized different ceremonies, celebrations of national holidays and fests (for example "General Pulaski Memorial Day" commemorated on every 11 October, since 1929). There were also different political tools used to organize support for the Polish case, including elements typical for the American political life, such as writing personal letters to members of the US Congress and Senators, and also to different state and federal institutions. However, *mutatis mutandis*, just before WWII the situation was different in comparison to the times of Great War. Most of *Polonia* had already been effectively assimilated to the US society during the interwar period. In addition, US immigration restrictions that came into force since mid-1920s decreased the influx of new Polish immigrants to America.

Another thing is worth mentioning here – high-level visits aimed at the development of bilateral relations, tightening working and official relations, and taking Polish-American relations to a higher level. In the summer 1939, Polish Minister of Industry and Trade, Antoni Roman (considered to be a person close to the head of Ministry of the Foreign Affairs) visited New York. From the American side James Farley, the US Postmaster General and chair of the Democratic National Committee, visited Warsaw and was received in audience by President Ignacy

¹¹ See: E. Kołodziej, *Dzieje Polonii w zarysie 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 206–234, 321–324; *Polska diaspora*, ed. A. Walaszek, Kraków 2001, pp. 86–95 (chapters by Mieczysław B. Biskupski and Stanislaus A. Blejwas).

¹² In the 1930s some actions were taken to consolidate and integrate local *Polonia* – B.W. Winid, *W cieniu*, pp. 216–217. One of the most effective results could have been noticed after actions of war veteran organizations. Their leaders wanted to rise above divisions and differences, both at home at in emigration – T. Lachowicz, *Weterani polscy w Ameryce do 1939 roku*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 85–401, 417–421.

Mościcki¹³. It had not been a small thing, as at that time summit meetings were organized rarely and even chiefs of great powers' diplomacies were not crossing the ocean often. It was to change in the close future¹⁴.

The preliminary and fragmentary research of the Polish and American press has already been carried out, focusing on selected thematic scopes and areas of influence. Such research was conducted by Andrzej Paczkowski, Marcin Krzanicki and Thomas W. Zeiler¹⁵. The second scientist presented two important conclusions: Polish authorities had been paying

¹³ M.P. Deszczyński, *Bariery*, p. 266; idem, *Aktywność*, p. 105. It should be mentioned here that the merit of US President had been his effective pressure on Romanian authorities to release the former Polish President from the internment and secure his life during last years by departure of Mościcki couple to Switzerland. See: W. Pobóg-Malinowski, *Najnowsza historia polityczna Polski*, vol. 3, 1939–1945, Opole 1990, pp. 75, 101–102; B. Nawrocki, *Ostatnie lata życia prof. dr. Ignacego Mościckiego (1.09.1939–2.10.1946)*, in: *Pan Prezydent. Rzecz o Ignacym Mościckim*, ed. M. Piotrowski, Ciechanów[–Pruszków] 1996, pp. 82, 89. This had been a very specific element of Polish–US 'strategic communication' exercised at the top level of governance. Even Sikorski Government was not able to oppose such decisions. This corresponded with the fact that followers and supporters of *Sanacja* and Piłsudski found their refuge in the USA and were able to build strong structures of own political orientation there. See: J. Piotrowski, *Piłsudczycy bez lidera (po 1 września 1939 roku)*, Toruń 2003, pp. 254–257.

¹⁴ There would be some surprises for a researcher. The one could be the case of the summer 1939 visit of sons of the US Ambassador to UK, Joseph P. Kennedy Senior – Joseph Patrick 'Joe' Jr., who died during the combat flight in 1944 and future torpedo boat commander, US Senator, and US President – John Fitzgerald 'Jack' Kennedy. Both most likely had good memories from their trip, assisting sometimes the US Ambassador to Poland Drexel-Biddle. It is very likely that they also participated in the sublimed ceremony of handing over banners of American states, dependent territories and the city of Chicago with letters from 55 US Governors, to mark and celebrate the occasion of 20 years of Polish independence. This ceremony took place in Warsaw in the afternoon of 23 [sic] August 1939 and ended with a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. See: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, zespół fotografii Koncernu Ilustrowanego Kuriera Codziennego, sygn. 1–D–1558, 1–A–1514; The American Presidency Project, University of California (Santa Barbara, USA), John F. Kennedy. 35th President of the United States: 1961–1963, *Speech of Senator J.F. Kennedy Polish-American Congress, Chicago, IL* – <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/speech-senator-john-f-kennedy-polish-american-congress-chicago-il> [access: 15.07.2024]; K. Jasiński, *Sztandary wszystkich stanów amerykańskich dla Polski, "Flaga. Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Weksylologicznego"* 2018, 18 (42), pp. 3–22.

¹⁵ A. Paczkowski, *Prasa polska w latach 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1980, pp. 389–397; M. Krzanicki, *Cztery twarze Time'a. Polskie cover story tygodnika TIME w latach 1923–39, "Zeszyty Prasoznawcze"* 2007, 1–2, pp. 108–109, 119–122; idem, *Przypadek tygodnika Life (29 sierpnia 1938), "Zeszyty Prasoznawcze"* 2008, 3–4, pp. 117–129; T.W. Zeiler, *Poland in the American Mass Media, October 1938–October 1939*, in: *Kampania*, vol. 2, pp. 465–476. See also: B.W. Winid, *W cieniu*, passim.

attention to articles printed in US on the situation in Poland as well as on Polish Army. They even could resort to withdrawing the debit, i.e. the right to circulate some issues of foreign newspapers and magazines. Polish politicians had their media five minutes of fame, when their photos were published on cover pages of popular magazines (Ignacy Paderewski, Józef Beck, Edward Śmigły-Rydz). This unquestionably shows that Polish issues were evoking a certain interest of American authors, editors, and readers. Some information on other prints and materials, which also played a propaganda role (posters, post stamps) has also been collected and analyzed¹⁶.

Also works on photography and film should also be mentioned in the paper, such as studies of Stanisław Ozimek, Maciej J. Kwiatkowski, Mieczysław B. Biskupski, Jerzy Piwowarski, and Marek P. Deszczyński¹⁷. Most space in publications on such topics was dedicated to the history and effects of the independent voluntary journalistic mission of J. Bryan. Still, there is not much data and information on how the Polish Campaign 1939 was covered by newsreels shown in American the cinemas. What should be mentioned and noted here is also that the theme of Warsaw destroyed that time by Germans was present in the only one comedy on occupied by the *Reich* Europe made in the USA during WWII. The action of this movie took place in Poland (*To Be or Not to Be*, by Ernst Lubitsch, 1942). For a long time, it this was the sole American film concerning the Polish drama.

So far, apparently there had not been deeper studies on problems discussed in the article, with regard to American radio broadcasting. It is safe to assume that Polish issues had been present in the news, but we still do not know what their role, place and impact was. We do not know the context they were presented in, we do not know comments

¹⁶ See: *Katalog specjalizowany znaków pocztowych ziem polskich 1981*, eds. W. Kawecka, A. Myśliński, vol. 1, Warszawa 1981, passim (I want to draw an attention to poz. V-A-7-305, pp. 113–114, the post stamp commemorating 150th anniversary of the American Constitution, put into issue since 17 March 1938 with a circulation of pcs 10.4 mln) and *Nie tylko plakat. Polska grafika reklamowa Dwudziestolecia. Not only the poster. Promotional graphic design in Poland between the wars*, ed. T. Lachowski, [no place of publication] 2003, passim. For clients in USA, mainly touristic advertisements or information on shipping lanes were distributed.

¹⁷ S. Ozimek, *Film polski w wojennej potrzebie*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 47, 53–56; M.J. Kwiatkowski, *Wrzesień 1939 w warszawskiej rozgłośni Polskiego Radia*, Warszawa 1984, passim; M.B. Biskupski, *Hollywood's War with Poland 1939–1945*, [Lexington] 2010 (*Nieznana wojna. Hollywood przeciwko Polsce 1939–1945*, transl. K. Nowacki, Warszawa 2011), passim; J. Piwowarski, *Kampania polska w fotografii*, in: *Kampania*, vol. 2, p. 694; M.P. Deszczyński, *Kampania polska w filmie dokumentalnym i fabularnym*, in: *Kampania*, vol. 2, pp. 707, 712.

and remarks, or feedback from the listeners. What would be interesting to learn is how breaking news from Poland were finding their way to radio and fledgling TV stations¹⁸, for example, fiery radio addresses of Stefan Starzynski, President of the city of Warsaw¹⁹.

We have, fortunately, a publication on Polish participation in the New York very prestigious and global event *The World of Tomorrow 1939–1940*²⁰, which was, at that time, an equivalent of modern EXPOs. It was organized in Flushing Meadows, in Corona Park, Queens. Understandably, this exposition became an attraction drawing dozens of thousands of people. The Polish pavilion was officially opened by minister A. Roman. The architecture and decorations on the building as well as artifacts had been described in quite a detail. Among them, there were exhibits documenting economic and military potential of the Second Polish Republic. However, there is not too much information on how the Polish exhibition was received and assessed. The mood had certainly changed since the second week of the armed conflict²¹. One of relicts, which was left in the US after the exhibition, was an equestrian monument of the

¹⁸ It could be assumed that a certain part of prewar TV programs (by NBC and CBS) broadcasted at the end of 1930s in the area of New York City were dedicated to news and political comments. Therefore, German invasion in Poland should have been also reflected on American TV. At that time, the number of sold by the RCA TV sets was assessed at 3,000 and number of viewers at 5,000 to 8,000 – *Television in the United States*, in: *Wikipedia* – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_in_the_United_States [access: 15.07.2024]. Example of scientific approach to the topic: G.R. Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*, New York–Chichester, 2nd edition, West Sussex [2009], pp. 9–16.

¹⁹ M.J. Kwiatkowski, *op. cit.*, passim (on pp. 193–195: translation of the radio appeal of J.H. Bryan for President Roosevelt, emitted by HF radio station 15 September 1939). See also: *Journalism 1929–1940*, in: *Encyclopedia.com* – <https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/news-and-education-magazines/journalism-1929-1940> [access: 15.07.2024]; E. Emery, *The Press and America. An Interpretative History of Journalism*, 2nd edition, Englewood Cliffs (New Jersey) [1963], pp. 651–669 and G. Horten, *Radio Goes to War. The Cultural Politics of Propaganda during World War II*, Berkeley 2002, pp. 13–40. The latter author states: ‘Most Americans followed the war through radio: the invasion in Poland, which marked the beginning of war in Europe, the ‘phony war’ of 1939–40, the blitzkrieg in the West in the spring of 1940, the fall of France, the Battle of Britain, and so on. Radio news and commentaries became a steady, daily diet’ (*ibidem*, p. 32; one should note different and rarely used name for the Polish Campaign).

²⁰ K. Nowakowska, *Pawilon polski na nowojorskiej wystawie światowej (1939–1940). The Polish Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair (1939–1940)*, Warszawa 2013, *passim*. It should be noted that author’s remarks, who is and art historian by education, on the Polish political history are debatable. See: J. Osica et al., 1939. *Ostatni rok pokoju, pierwszy rok wojny*, Poznań 2009, pp. 296–297.

²¹ M.P. Deszczyński, *Bariery*, p. 251.

King Władysław Jagiełło. In 1945, it was moved from the exhibition area to the Central Park in Manhattan. Stanisław Kazimierz Ostrowski sculpted the King in so-called Grunwald pose, referring to the famous victorious battle with the Teutonic Order in 1410. All that had a clear meaning and importance a few weeks before the German aggression in Poland.

To finalize the review of the subject literature, it is also necessary to refer to some published sources that are indirectly related with the topic. Some source editions will be certainly useful, such as materials of the former US Ambassador to Warsaw, Anthony J. Drexel-Biddle Jr., memoirs of the US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and notes of Columbia Broadcasting System correspondent in Berlin William L. Shirer. They could be complemented by the diary of the Polish Undersecretary of State, Jan Szembek, and both volumes of *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne* for 1939, and of course relevant volumes of *Foreign Relation of the United States* book series²².

From the heuristic and methodological point view, is firstly necessary to clarify set of press sources to prepare an optimal research sample²³. For the future study, we should focus our attention on newspapers and journals printed in the biggest US cities at the end of 1930s. This would however mean a certain overrepresentation of North Eastern, and Great Lakes region states metropolises, i.e. New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Cleveland, St. Louis, Boston, Pittsburgh, Washington, New Orleans, Kansas City, and Dallas. We should not forget about so-called 'yellow press'/'revolver press', using of quaint and sensationalized news, next the single newspapers from Midwest, Great Plains and Florida, also conservative and pro-Republican, in order to attempt of counterbalance

²² A.J. Drexel-Biddle, *Poland and the Coming of the Second World War. The Diplomatic Papers of ...*, Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937–1939, eds. P.V. Cannistraro, E.D. Wynot Jr., T.P. Kovaleff, Columbus [1976], passim; C. Hull, *The Memoirs of...*, vol. 1, New York 1948, pp. 592–687; W.L. Shirer, *Berlin diary: a journal of a foreign correspondent 1934–1941*, New York 1941 (Translation: *Dziennik berliński. Zapiski korespondenta zagranicznego 1934–1941*, transl. J. Szkudliński, Warszawa 2007), passim; [J. Szembek], *Diariusz i teki ... (1935–1945)*, vol. 4, *Diariusz i dokumentacja za rok 1938. Diariusz i dokumentacja za rok 1939*, ed. J. Zarański, London 1972, passim; idem, *Diariusz. Wrzesień–grudzień 1939*, ed. B. Grzełowski, Warszawa 1989, passim; *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne. 1938*, eds. M. Kornat et al., Warszawa 2007, passim; *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne. 1939. Styczeń–sierpień*, eds. S. Żerko, P. Długolecki, Warszawa 2005, passim; *Foreign Relation of the United States. Diplomatic Papers*, eds. G.B. Noble, E.R. Perkins, 1939, vol. 1, *General*, eds. M.F. Axton et al., Washington, D.C. 1956, passim; *Foreign Relation of the United States. Diplomatic Papers*, eds. G.B. Noble, E.R. Perkins, 1939, vol. 2, *General, The British Commonwealth and Europe*, eds. M.F. Axton et al., Washington, D.C. 1956, passim.

²³ On the US media and press sector – see: E. Emery, *op. cit.*, pp. 386–650, 670–711.

the predominance of press taking the liberal approach and supporting the Democratic Party. The ownership structure will be also important, for example due to the specific approach to political and economic problems represented by newspapers and journals from the William R. Hearst Group. As for business content, articles of "The Wall Street Journal" may be examined and evaluated. We should also explore issues of "The Stars and Stripes" published by the US Department of War. As for periodicals, we should take into account both journalistic and literary titles as well as illustrated magazines: "Atlantic Monthly", "Life", "The New Republic", "The New Yorker", "Time" etc. As for press published by American *Polonia*, we wish to consider "Dziennik Związkowy" from Chicago and "Nowy Świat" from New York. The analysis should be complemented by exploration of "Dziennik Polski" (Detroit), "Gwiazda Poranna" (Stevens Point, Wisconsin), weekly "Ameryka-Echo" (Toledo, Ohio), "Weteran" printed for Great War veterans (New York), and "Survey of Poland" – an official APCCIOUS publication.

When preparing the catalogue of research questions, it is necessary to identify patterns and trends in media environment. As previous results show, American media wrote about Poland as a kind of a bit exotic, far-away land. They presented Polish leaders, described its defense potential and armed forces, but also many words had been written about poverty and underdevelopment in the country. As for topics touched just before the outbreak of WWII, those had been the issue of Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the scandal with alleged German air attack on Jasna Góra monastery and the real drama of Warsaw under siege.

What should be fundamental is determination if actually the German information and coverage dominated over Polish or allied media, including the impact of Bryan's mission. It is still not clear how American media covered the Soviet aggression on Poland and this is the very first, urgent task to complete. We should determine as well if any special information, brochures and folders were prepared and distributed in the US to popularize Poland and the Polish cause, as it had been done in the United Kingdom²⁴. Another thing is ascertainment, when propaganda actions restarted, with the momentum given by the Polish Government-in-exile²⁵. As for visual media, it would be useful to collect and collate press photographs on the Polish Campaign *sensu largo* and juxtaposition of footage from newsreels. We should also find if more movies and

²⁴ See: *Did You Know That?*, Warszawa 1939.

²⁵ *Terminus ante quem* is the arrival to New York on 12 January 1940, on a special mission, of General Józef Haller, who was sent to US by the Polish Government-in exile – E. Cytowska-Siegrist, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–28.

documentaries on events in Poland, like *Siege*, had been prepared and distributed in US. Also, the reception of the famous Bryan's movie and other picture materials made by him have to be examined²⁶. It should be complemented by an analysis of radio broadcasts from at least two (for example NBC, ABC, CBS, or MBC) big radio networks in the period in question, i.e. August–September 1939. Also, the results of public opinion surveys conducted before and during the Polish Campaign would be of use to generate a wider perspective on the world war starting in the summer 1939 in Europe.

One of the best places to start research is New York. There are some very good public libraries in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Also, some emigration organizations are located in the city: the Archive of Polish Army Veterans' Association in America (*Archiwum Stowarzyszenia Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce*), Józef Piłsudski Institute of America (*Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Ameryce*) and Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences of America (*Polski Instytut Naukowy w Ameryce*). Not so far away from NYC, in Hyde Park, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is located to commemorate the presidency of this statesman. Research in New York could be complemented in Chicago, with its libraries and available Polonia archival materials. The subsequent step would be San Francisco with the University of California Berkeley and Palo Alto – with Hoover Institution Archives. For press research, due to availability, the Boston would be the best place, respective other city with suitable big library which is a member of the Association of Research Libraries. What is important, a press survey is possible to start from the collections available online.

To get the most credible answers for problem of perception of the Polish cause by the Roosevelt administration, we should also go to National Archives and Record Administration in College Park (Maryland), close to Washington, in order to study the files of the US Embassy in Warsaw, the Department of State etc.²⁷ Bryan's historical legacy, including photos, reels and documents, is currently stored in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, also located in the US capital²⁸. In London, possible

²⁶ See: J. [H.] Bryan, M. Hindus, *Siege*, New York 1940, *passim* and Julien Bryan, in: "Film-Polski.pl Internetowa baza filmu polskiego" – <https://filmpolski.pl/fp/index.php?osoba=115598> [access: 15.07.2024].

²⁷ This would allow a verification of plans to win over the US Administration (Department of State, US President entourage and US military leadership), contrasting with hopes of Potocki and Drexel-Biddle. More on similar efforts with regard to Paris – M. Pasztor, *Polska w oczach francuskich kół rządowych w latach 1924–1939*, Warszawa 1999, *passim*.

²⁸ *Julien Bryan Film Collection*, in: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1000016> [access: 15.07.2024].

supplemental research would be carried out in the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum. Archives located in Poland (all in Warsaw): Archive of Modern Records (AAN), National Film Archive (FINA), National Digital Archive (NAC), the Archive of the Polish Radio, should also be visited.

As for a construction of a study, it should be focused on problems and structured chronologically within subsections. It will allow to build an outline of abovementioned issues, which is necessary to complete the project of comprehensive synthesis of Polish Campaign, compatible with modern research standards, although the analyzed question – as we know – had in 1939 only secondary importance²⁹.

* * *

The summary part of the article should start with returning to the issue of Bryan's movie *Siege* and a failed attempt to win Oscar in spring 1940. The problem to solve is what was the role, if any, of the 'Polish-American strategic communication'? Was it a failure? Initial analysis shows that it had not been necessarily the case. That period of time was also the third year of Second Sino-Japanese War, battles for Shanghai and Nanjing and the case of massacre of Chinese POW's and civilians in the capital of the Middle Kingdom. We should remember that even such shocking events were not able to find place on the first pages of supra-regional US newspapers and journals, despite them streaming current information on this bloody conflict³⁰. Construing a general picture, we should however take into account the comparative background before making an assessment.

Respecting all the proportions and dimensions³¹, we could say that events in Poland were present in the American media and press³². However, they had not been fully covered due to very high tempo of events during the Polish-German conflict and probably rather small intensity of Polish propaganda preparations and actions in the USA. Information warfare capabilities had not been fully exploited, except building the

²⁹ This issue requires a separate, wider research with the starting date should early as 1933.

³⁰ See: S. Lu, *The Nanjing Atrocities Reported in the U.S. Newspapers, 1937–38*, "Readex Report. A biannual publication offering insights into the use of digital historical collections" 2012, 7, 2 – <https://www.readex.com/readex-report/issues/volume-7-issue-2/nanjing-atrocities-reported-us-newspapers-1937-38> [access: 14.09.2022].

³¹ See the analysis of the Polish reception of knowledge about the initial phase of the conflict in China – M.P. Deszczyński, *Reakcje dyplomacji polskiej na wybuch wojny w Chinach (lipiec–grudzień 1937 r.)*, "Res Historica" 2023, 56, pp. 655–689.

³² See: E. Cytowska-Siegrist, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–20, 28–31, 47–48.

picture of re-enacting the battle between David and Goliath. These patterns were used later, with some positive effects, by the Polish Government-in-exile, and Prime Minister General Władysław Sikorski himself.

The American public opinion was at that time more pro-Democratic than pro-Republican, as proved by elections results to both chambers of Congress. It was very concerned about the situation in Europe. Lasting over three months, the Soviet-Finnish ('winter') war probably evoked bigger interest; next then the point of attention was the battle of Norway. Presumably, the Polish problems had been almost absent during German conquest of Benelux and France, at least till the annexation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia by the USSR, and the decisive phase of the Battle of Britain – the clash which stopped the run of Adolf Hitler's victories in Europe, also thanks to the effort of Polish fighter pilots, bravely supporting the Royal Air Force.

From today's perspective it seems, consequences of rather limited Polish propaganda actions in the USA at the start of war, resulted negatively in following years. The theme of lone heroic fight of Poland against aggressors has been proven too weakly embedded in the consciousness of Americans at that time. M.B. Biskupski convincingly assessed that it was also the result of pro-Soviet attitude, common in Hollywood during global conflict. Such position of American media and popular culture was also an exemplification of official, unconditional support of Roosevelt's administration towards the USSR, which was present since the 1941 till the end of WWII. After Tehran Conference decisions, US public opinion followed the distorted already assessments and opinions on the Campaign of 1939 and Polish military defeat. Those events were probably perceived as the inevitable end of the considered anachronistic Second Polish Republic³³.

Then, an important question arises if American great power had been correctly defined as a secondary (after Western European allies) target for diplomatic, information and propaganda actions? Could Poland's authorities achieve more? In all these areas, we shall remember that the main objective of Polish information policy had been fight for the souls of the British public opinion. The question that had to be answered is what motives and premises had been for taking such decisions by Warsaw. Now, it seems that the objective that had been possible at the time was to achieve an improvement of the image of Poland, which was not quite

³³ Some marks of similar reflection could be noticed in, partially autobiographical, novel by Herman Wouk *Winds of War* (*Wichry wojny*, vol. 1, anonymous translation, Warszawa 1993, pp. 35–287). Analysis of elements on Polish Campaign 1939 – M.P. Deszczyński, *Kampania*, pp. 722–726.

good in the US by then. It was i.a. due to sometimes negative perception of Poles as an ethnic group³⁴, Poland's attitude, and actions during the crisis in Czechoslovakia and difficult Polish-Jewish relations.

Most likely, there had not been any chances to convince the Roosevelt administration to take a more pro-Polish position in the crisis situation that led to the armed conflict and aggression by two big Polish enemies. The only option that could have been exploited, would have been to launch efforts to receive a substantial loan to support defense and infrastructural projects. However, for this kind of operation to be effective, it should have been finalized at least six months before starting the military campaign³⁵. Such matters require additional, wider research for the period from July 1937 till the half of 1940, at least. Some comparative analyses should also be started or deepened, for example, to study the effectiveness of strategic communication towards the USA run by Czecho-Slovak post-Munich exile, which was headed by former president Edvard Benes³⁶.

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³⁴ See the study by Danusha V. Goska, *Bieganski: The Brute Polak Stereotype in Polish-Jewish Relations and American Popular Culture*, Boston 2010 (Translation: Biegański. Stereotyp Polaka bydlaka w stosunkach polsko-żydowskich i amerykańskiej kulturze popularnej, transl. K. Szuster, Kraków 2015, *passim*).

³⁵ M.P. Deszczyński, *Bariery*, pp. 253–254; idem, *Import sprzętu wojskowego przez Polskę w latach 1921–1939 (wprowadzenie do zagadnienia)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 2012, 119, 3, pp. 514, 524, 526.

³⁶ See H. Marczevska-Zagdańska, *Czechosłowacja w polityce zagranicznej Stanów Zjednoczonych 1933–1938*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 258–267.

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