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Status and Prospects for Research on Relations of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church with Polish Civilian and Military Administration, in Connection with The Situation Before and During the Polish September Campaign of 1939

Stan i perspektywy badań nad stosunkiem Polskiego Autokefalicznego Kościoła Prawosławnego do polityki władz cywilnych i wojskowych w związku z bezpośrednią genezą i przebiegiem kampanii wrześniowej 1939 r.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the paper is to present the status and prospects of research on relations of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (PAOC) with Polish civilian and military administrations, in connection with the situation just before and during the

PUBLICATION INFO			
	 WYDAWNICTWO	 UMCS UNIWERSYTET HUMANIUM I CYBERNETYKI	e-ISSN: 2449-8467 ISSN: 2082-6060
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SOURCE OF FUNDING: Project of the War Studies University entitled: <i>Polish 1939 Campaign – the Synthesis</i>			
SUBMITTED: 2023.03.21	ACCEPTED: 2024.10.11	PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2024.12.18	
WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL: https://journals.umcs.pl/rh		EDITORIAL COMMITTEE e-mail: reshistorica@umcs.pl	 
 DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS		 EUROPEAN REFERENCE INDEX FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES	

Polish September Military Campaign of 1939. Such a topic has not yet been a subject to a comprehensive scientific project, both in Poland and abroad. The main reason of such a situation is that the history of this Orthodox Church itself, in the 20th century, has not still been thoroughly and deeply examined. Some historians touched upon a number of issues and only on the margins of the general research of the Orthodox Church in the interwar period and during WWII. Therefore, most of available publications on the topic refer to foreign authors. It is mostly due to the fact that most of the Polish citizens of the Orthodox religion had also been representatives of ethnic minorities in the pre-war Poland.

Key words: Polish September Campaign 1939, religious faith, religious minorities, Orthodox Church

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie stanu badań nad stosunkiem Polskiego Autokefalicznego Kościoła Prawosławnego do polityki władz cywilnych i wojskowych w związku z bezpośrednią genezą i przebiegiem Kampanii Polskiej 1939 r. Niniejszy temat nie stanowił dotychczas przedmiotu badań zarówno w kraju, jak i zagranicą. W znacznym stopniu taki stan rzeczy wynika z faktu, że dzieje Kościoła prawosławnego w Polsce w XX w. jako takiego na ogół są słabo zbadane. Niektórzy historycy zaledwie poruszyli tę kwestię na marginesie badań nad historią polskiego prawosławia w okresie międzywojennym oraz podczas II wojny światowej. Znaczną część literatury przedmiotu stanowią opracowania autorów zagranicznych. Wynika to z faktu, że większość obywateli polskich wyznania prawosławnego stanowili przedstawiciele mniejszości narodowych.

Słowa kluczowe: kampania 1939 r., religia, mniejszości wyznaniowe, Kościół prawosławny

The history of the Orthodox Church is also an integral part of the annals of the history of the Polish State. Since ages, Orthodox Christians are present on the religious map of Poland. As an indigenous population, they have been a part of many Polish and Lithuanian principalities and the Polish Kingdom. Therefore, it is right to say that the Orthodox Church has been an important factor in shaping multicultural environment in this part of Europe. In 1918, within the re-born Polish State there had been about four million of Orthodox Christians that made 11% of the Second Polish Republic population¹.

The history of the Orthodox Church in Poland has been already a subject of comprehensive and detailed research that resulted in many honest and reliable scientific publications. However, there are still some periods in the Orthodox Church history in the 20th century that are a kind of *terra incognita*. One of the most important is the relation of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church with Polish civilian and military administrations before and after the outbreak WWII and during the

¹ M. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Między tradycją a rzeczywistością. Państwo wobec prawosławia 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1986, p. 19.

Polish September Campaign of 1939. This specific topic has not yet been a subject for a separate monograph or a study. In the literature on the subject, on the history of the Orthodox Church in Poland, it had been only partially represented, described and evaluated.

In the Polish historiography, the topic of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church has not been the main topic of interest for scientific research. Also, during the period after WWII, apart from limited number of articles, there had not been substantial and comprehensive works on the 20th century history of the Polish Orthodoxy. This topic has also been ignored in scientific efforts focused on religious situation and status of specific Churches in Poland during the Second World War².

Only after 1989, a new wave of interest on the history of the Polish Orthodox Church in the twentieth Century, in the interwar period, and after WWII, emerged among the Polish historians community. It should be mentioned here that so far we have just a few publications on the overall situation of the Orthodox Church in between great wars. Those had been works of Mirosława Papierzyńska-Turek³ and Antoni Mironowicz⁴, both constituting a great effort to make a synthesis of the history of the Polish Orthodoxy in the Second Polish Republic. Those works are now a permanent and important part of the historiography of this particular period. They have not exhausted the subject but contributed significantly to a better understanding of the topic.

M. Papierzyńska-Turek put into circulation, within the scholarly environment, new and sometimes completely unknown documents that brought into light policies of the Polish administration with regard to Orthodox Churches. She has also presented controversies of the time on the issue of autocephaly, ethnic problems within the PAOC and relations of Orthodox Christians with the Roman-Catholic Church.

A. Mironowicz was continuing efforts initiated by M. Papierzyńska-Turek. With new archival sources and careful analysis, he was able to verify and develop some arguments and findings of his predecessor. In his synthetic history of the Orthodox Church in Poland, especially in the part

² J. Sziling, *Kościół chrześcijański w polityce niemieckich władz okupacyjnych w generalnym Gubernatorstwie (1939–1945)*, Toruń 1988.

³ M. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Między tradycją a rzeczywistością. Państwo wobec prawosławia 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1986.

⁴ A. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny na ziemiach polskich w XIX i XX wieku*, Białystok 2005; idem, *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce*, Białystok 2006; idem, *Cerkiew prawosławna w II Rzeczypospolitej*, Białystok 2018; idem, *Problem narodowościowy w Cerkwi prawosławnej II Rzeczypospolitej*, "Przegląd Wschodni" 2014, 13, 2 (50), pp. 489–516; idem, *Problematyka narodowościowa w Kościele prawosławnym w II Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *W kręgu sacrum i pogranicza*, eds. E. Matuszczyk, M. Krzywosz, Białystok 2004, pp. 271–286.

on the interwar period, he presented wide range of issues in the area of the PAOC status, taking into account emerging conflict in Europe. Publications of M. Papierzyńska-Turek and A. Mironowicz are now a recognized entry point and a basis for any research on the Polish Orthodoxy and each and every historian should take that into account in his projects.

It should be mentioned here that in the works of both above-mentioned authors there had not been any in-depth assessment of the status of the Orthodoxy in 1939. Those researchers have just signalled this topic. However, it should also be added that A. Mironowicz had been the first among historians to undertake an effort to examine and carefully analyse legal, political and economic impact of Soviet and German aggressions on the Polish Orthodoxy in 1939⁵.

Publications of M. Papierzyńska-Turek and A. Mironowicz have paved the way to new research projects on the PAOC. In the last quarter of the century, many smaller and bigger works on the topic have emerged, mainly on the history of the Orthodox Church in the twentieth Century. The most valuable are considered those of Kazimierz Urban⁶, Andrzej Zięba⁷, Stefan Dudra⁸, Grzegorz Sosna⁹ and others¹⁰. They cover many

⁵ A. Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny na terenach Generalnego Gubernatorstwa, Białorusi i Ukrainy w latach 1939–1944*, in: *Pokazanie Cerkwi prawdziwej. Studia nad dziejami i kulturą Kościoła prawosławnego w Rzeczypospolitej*, ed. P. Chomik, Białystok 2004, pp. 172–199.

⁶ K. Urban, *Kościół prawosławny w Polsce 1945–1970 (rys historyczny)*, Kraków 1996.

⁷ A. Zięba, "Wojna popów". *Polskie prawosławie na emigracji po II wojnie światowej*, "Przeгляд Polonijny" 1997, 3.

⁸ S. Dudra, *Metropolita Dionizy (Waledyński) 1876–1960*, Warszawa 2010.

⁹ G. Sosna, A. Troc-Sosna, *Hierarchia i kler Kościoła prawosławnego w granicach II Rzeczypospolitej i Polski powojennej w XIX–XXI wieku*, Ryboły 2012.

¹⁰ The most important are: *Kościół prawosławny na Białostocczyźnie w ocenie władz II Rzeczypospolitej. Wybór źródeł. Sytuacyjne sprawozdania Urzędu Wojewódzkiego w Białymstoku z lat 1928–1939*, ed. G. Sosna, Ryboły 1991; P. Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów. Sztuka rosyjska w Warszawie 1815–1915*, Warszawa 1991; J. Charkiewicz, *Męczennicy XX wieku. Martyrologia Prawosławia w Polsce w biografjach świętych*, Warszawa 2008; U. Pawluczuk, *Życie monastyczne w II Rzeczypospolitej*, Białystok 2007; P. Derdej, *Status prawny Polskiego Autokefalicznego Kościoła Prawosławnego w III Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa–Białystok 2005; D. Sawicki, *Hierarchia prawosławna w okresie międzywojennym*, "Elpis" 2006, 13–14; G.J. Pelica, *Rodziny obrządek wschodni w Rzeczypospolitej. Opracowania archiwalne i studia z dziejów diecezji chełmsko-lubelskiej*, Lublin 2015; P. Zubowski, *Cerkwie prawosławne Łodzi i regionu łódzkiego w dwudziestolecu międzywojennym (1918–1939)*, Białystok 2014; K. Sokoł, A. Sosna, *Cerkwie w centralnej Polsce 1815–1915*, Białystok 2011; S. Dudra, *Polski Autokefaliczny Kościół Prawosławny w obszarze polityki wyznaniowej oraz polityki narodowościowej Polski Ludowej i III Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2019; *Życie monastyczne w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. A. Mironowicz, U. Pawluczuk, P. Chomik, Białystok 2001; *Szkolnictwo prawosławne w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds.

different periods, from the Second Polish Republic to the Polish People's Republic and even until today.

Above-mentioned authors focused mainly on contacts between the Orthodox Christians and the State, interdenominational relations, sacral architecture and the monastic life. Many parishes have also been a subject of the research, especially those in the current Podlaskie Voivodeship. This should also be considered as a sign of increased interest in local history. In most of the cases, authors had been members of local Orthodox communities themselves or historians closely connected to them.

The research has also been facilitated by arrivals of many new scientific journals on the Orthodoxy: "Latopisy Akademii Supraskiej" (Eng. *Suprasl Academy Chronicles*), "Elpis", "Rocznik Teologiczny" (Eng. *Theological Yearbook*), "Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne" (Eng. *Belarussian Historical Notebooks*).

Considering the position of the PAOC to events of the 1939, the most important papers are those on hierarchy and clergy of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, who had been also very dynamic religious activists of the time.

One of the most interesting is the work of Stefan Dudra, who made an attempt to prepare a biography of Metropolitan Dionizy (Eng. Dionysius) Waledyński¹¹. For many years, this hierarch had been the Head of the PAOC. He led his Church in Poland through the most difficult times – during the war and occupation. S. Dudra touched, in his work, problems of decisions and activities of the Metropolitan during the dying days of the Second Polish Republic, his relations with the Polish military authorities and civilian administration and elements connected to the outbreak of WWII. However, it is necessary to note that this last episode was only superficially treated and not methodically evaluated. Nevertheless, a lot of attention was paid to efforts of the Hierarch just before and during the war. According to the author, it is necessary, assessing his activities and initiatives in the period in question, to take into account very complicated reality, in which he had to live, operate and lead his Church – through such troubled times.

Apart from the S. Dudra's monographic publication, wartime themes are also present in works on the life and activities of other hierarchs and representatives of the Orthodox clergy, who led their followers during

A. Mironowicz, U. Pawluczuk, P. Chomik, Białystok 2002; *Prawosławne oficyny wydawnicze w Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. A. Mironowicz, U. Pawluczuk, P. Chomik, Białystok 2004.

¹¹ S. Dudra, *Metropolita*.

the wartime and witnessed the horror of the World War¹². It is also necessary to mention the usefulness of the selection of document on the Orthodox Field Bishop Sawa (Sowietow), prepared by Andrzej Suchcitz and Krzysztof Filipow¹³.

The main focus of the publication comprise the activities of this hierarchy during WWII, but highlighted are also pieces of valuable information on his efforts before and just after the German invasion of Poland, when Sawa was at the position of the Ordinary of the Grodno–Nowogrodek Diocese. It is quite right to say that this work should become a signpost to search for next sources on the PAOC until 1989.

Some mentions about the attitude of the Polish Orthodox clergy in 1939 are included in the book of the émigré historian and publicist Zbigniew Sebastian Siemaszko¹⁴. He claims that generally speaking the Orthodox clergy remain faithful to the Polish State and refused to collaborate with the enemy. However, it is necessary to say that such a statement has not been supported by a credible evidence and available archival documents.

To assess the attitude of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church clergy and Orthodox Christians during the 1939 events, it is necessary to take into account the policy of the Polish authorities with regard to religious minorities on the eve of WWII. There had been strong assimilation efforts, sometimes in very radical and dramatic forms. This thread was considered by already mentioned authors: Mirosława Papierzyńska-Turek, Antoni Mironowicz¹⁵,

¹² K. Urban, *Ksiądz Atanazy Semeniuk 1904–1996 (życie długie, trudne i ciekawe...)*, Warszawa 2007; J. Grzybowski, *Arcybiskup generał brygady Sawa (Sowietow) 1898–1951: duszpasterz, żołnierz, obywatel*, Warszawa 2021; idem, *W kraju i na obczyźnie. Kapelani wojskowi wyznania prawosławnego w armii II Rzeczypospolitej i Polskich Siłach Zbrojnych na Zachodzie*, Warszawa 2021.

¹³ *Arcybiskup generał brygady Sawa (Jerzy Sowietow)*, eds. K. Filipow, A. Suchcitz, Białystok–Warszawa 1997.

¹⁴ Z.S. Siemaszko, *Początki sowietyzacji*, London 2000

¹⁵ M. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Między tradycją a rzeczywistością. Państwo wobec prawosławia 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1986; idem, *Uwarunkowania i skutki polityczne masowego burzenia cerkwi prawosławnych u schyłku II Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Akcja burzenia cerkwi prawosławnych na Chełmszczyźnie i Południowym Podlasiu w 1938 roku. Uwarunkowania, przebieg, konsekwencje*, Chełm 2009; A. Mironowicz, *Rewindykacja i niszczenie prawosławnych obiektów sakralnych na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, "Elpis" 2006, 13–14, pp. 13–34; idem, *Rewindykacja prawosławnych obiektów sakralnych w II Rzeczypospolitej*, "Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne" 2004, 21, pp. 83–103.

Grzegorz Kuprianowicz¹⁶, Włodzimierz Mich¹⁷, Grzegorz Pelica¹⁸ and others¹⁹.

Due to the fact that the most of Orthodox Christians in the interwar Poland had not been of the Polish nationality – they were mostly Belarussians and Ukrainians, the history of the PAOC attracted the interest of researchers investigating issues of ethnic minorities of the Second Polish Republic.

Some of the scientists had touched in their projects the issues of the clergy and Orthodox Christians in 1939²⁰. First and foremost, it is necessary to mention here Eugeniusz Mironowicz²¹. In his works, he concentrated his attention on policies of the Polish authorities towards the Orthodoxy on the eve of the Second World War. He pointed out at ethnic relations and influence of such policies and attitudes on the Belarussian Orthodox population, before and after the German and Soviet invasions of Poland. The complexity of ethnic–religious relations in the Eastern Borderlands of Poland of 1920s have also been comprehensively presented in the monographic publication of Maciej Mróz²².

¹⁶ G. Kuprianowicz, 1938. *Akcja burzenia świątyń prawosławnych na Chełmszczyźnie i Południowym Podlasiu*, Chełm 2008.

¹⁷ W. Mich, *Prasa konserwatywna wobec akcji burzenia cerkwi prawosławnych na Chełmszczyźnie i Południowym Podlasiu w 1938 r.*, in: *Akcja burzenia cerkwi prawosławnych na Chełmszczyźnie i Południowym Podlasiu w 1938 roku. Uwarunkowania, przebieg, konsekwencje*, Chełm 2009, pp. 191–214.

¹⁸ G.J. Pelica, *Kościół prawosławny w województwie lubelskim (1918–1939)*, Lublin 2009.

¹⁹ E. Mironowicz, *Stowarzyszenie Polaków Prawosławnych*, “Białostockczyzna” 1989, 4; M. Kalina, *Polonizacja Cerkwi prawosławnej w województwie białostockim (1918–1939)*, “Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne” 1995, 2. It is also necessary to mention the publication: *O niepodległości ekumenicznie. Wyznawcy różnych Kościołów dla Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*, eds. S. Bober, S.J. Żurek, Lublin 2018. It was almost entirely dedicated to issues of the position of representatives of different churches and religious organizations with regard to the Second Polish Republic and Polish independence.

²⁰ P. Stawecki, *Następcy komendanta. Wojsko a polityka wewnętrzna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1935–1939*, Warszawa 1969; A. Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rządów polskich w latach 1921–1939*, Wrocław 1979; K. Gomółka, *Białorusini w II Rzeczypospolitej*, Gdańsk 1992; W. Śleszyński, *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne w polityce państwa polskiego na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 2007; M. Szumiło, *Ukraińska Reprezentacja Parlamentarna w Sejmie i Senacie RP (1928–1939)*, Warszawa 2007; M. Ryba, *Kościół i państwo na Kresach Południowo-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej*, Lublin 2021.

²¹ E. Mironowicz, *Białorusini i Ukraińcy w polityce obozu piłsudczykowski*, Białystok 2007; idem, *Polityczne uwarunkowania funkcjonowania Kościoła prawosławnego w Polsce w latach 1920–1939*, “Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne” 2005, 24.

²² M. Mróz, *Katolicyzm na pograniczu. Kościół katolicki wobec kwestii ukraińskiej i białoruskiej w Polsce w latach 1918–1925*, Toruń 2003.

The distinctive feature of the Polish historiography on PAOC on the eve of WWII is that almost all the researches present clear, unambiguous and critical assessment of the Polish authorities' policies towards the Polish Orthodox Church between World Wars. They are also in the agreement that Polish decisions and actions significantly influenced the attitudes and behaviours of the Orthodox clergy and Orthodox Christians in September 1939.

Such a position, represented by a number of researchers, has defined, to a great extent, the space for historical discussions on the situation of the Polish Orthodoxy on the eve and at the beginning of the World War II. The next conclusion that could be drawn from the careful analysis of the subject literature, written mainly in Polish, is that that Orthodox societies (including hierarchy and clergy) in Poland had not been a strong and integrated monolith – as far as their position towards the Polish State and its institutions is concerned. It could be a good explanation for mixed feelings of this part of the Polish population in September 1939. To sum up, it is possible to state that existing achievements and works on the Polish Orthodoxy in Poland on the eve and at the beginning of WWII is relatively small, highly insufficient and the topic is quite far from being exhausted.

The most examined issue, with regard to the September Campaign of 1939, is the problem of participation of Polish citizens of the Orthodox creed and also different ethnicities in military operations in Poland in September and October 1939. The subject literature on the Polish Armed Forces in WWII covers this topic quite extensively. The most important publication on the issue is the monograph titled *Mniejszości narodowe i wyznaniowe w siłach zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Eng. *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Armed Forces of the Second Polish Republic*), edited by Waldemar Rezmer and Zbigniew Karpus²³. However, it is necessary to state here that authors and editors of this noteworthy and pioneering publication focused their attention and effort on ethnic problems, and not on religious issues. This does not change the fact that it brought a lot of data, information and facts to the knowledge of stories on soldiers of the Orthodox confession, drafted mainly from Belarussian and Ukrainian ethnic minorities.

Apart of the work mentioned above, some information on the denominational policy in the Polish Armed Forces on the eve of WWII

²³ *Mniejszości narodowe i wyznaniowe w Siłach Zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939. Zbiór studiów*, eds. Z. Rezmer, Z. Karpus, Toruń 2001.

is included in publications of Tadeusz Kowalski²⁴ and Piotr Stawecki²⁵. The specific topics related to the Orthodox military chaplains in the interwar period and during the initial days of the war were presented in a quite detailed and interesting way by Tadeusz Böhm²⁶, Waldemar Rezmer²⁷, Wiesław Wróblewski²⁸ and by rev. Mikołaj Hajduczenia²⁹. In additions, works of Janusz Odziemkowski³⁰ and Zofia Waszkiewicz should also attract our attention as they deal, in almost their entirety, just and only with the problems of military chaplaincy.

In the first case, we deal with a kind of a compendium of knowledge on military chaplaincy of all creeds in the Polish Armed Forces in the period of 1918–1945. The second work is a comprehensive study of a pastoral ministries (including the Orthodox Church) in the Polish military.

The elements that are particularly valuable are work on history of chaplains – victims of the Katyn massacre that also affected the files and ranks of the Orthodox clergy³¹. Detailed analysis of these two publications gives some impression on attitudes of Orthodox Christians (both clergy and laity), who were drafted to the Polish Army in 1939.

The author of this article has also published a number of articles on the history of the Polish Orthodox Church in 1918–1949. Most of the publications are on the Orthodox military chaplaincy in the Polish military establishment, including the critically important element of their life and service during the Polish September Campaign of 1939. Basing on the in-depth analysis of available sources, it was possible to save from

²⁴ T. Kowalski, *Mniejszości narodowe w Siłach Zbrojnych Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*, Toruń 1997.

²⁵ P. Stawecki, *Następcy komendanta. Wojsko a polityka wewnętrzna Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1935–1939*, Warszawa 1969

²⁶ T. Böhm, *Organizacja wojskowej służby duszpasterskiej wyznań niekatolickich w II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, "Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny" 1993, 4.

²⁷ W. Rezmer, *Służba duszpasterska Wojska Polskiego w 1939 r.*, "Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny" 1993, 1.

²⁸ W. Wróblewski, *Duszpasterstwo mniejszości religijnych w Wojsku Polskim w latach 1918–1939*, in: *Białoruś, Czechosłowacja, Litwa, Polska, Ukraina. Mniejszości w świetle spisów statystycznych XIX–XX w.*, ed. J. Skarbka, Lublin 1996.

²⁹ M. Hajduczenia, *Prawosławne duszpasterstwo wojskowe w II Rzeczypospolitej (na przykładzie DOK VIII Toruń)*, in: *Historia duszpasterstwa wojskowego na ziemiach polskich*, eds. J. Ziółek, et al., Lublin 2004.

³⁰ J. Odziemkowski, *Armia i społeczeństwo II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1996; idem, *Służba duszpasterska Wojska Polskiego 1914–1945*, Warszawa 1998; J. Odziemkowski, B. Spychała, *Duszpasterstwo wojskowe w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1987.

³¹ *Kapelani Wojska Polskiego pomordowani na Wschodzie 1940–1941*, ed. B. Tarkowska, Warszawa–Mińsk Mazowiecki 2013.

oblivion the memory and names of priests and chaplains directly involved in the Campaign, who later have fallen into Soviet or German captivity.

As my research shows, using the extensive analysis of archival sources, it was possible to make an assessment of the attitude of Belarussian ethnic minority with regard to partial and then general mobilization of the Polish Armed Forces (spring-summer 1939). That allowed generating the summary on the stance of the Orthodox clergy when Europe was already on the brink of the armed conflict³². Some aspects of the status of the Polish Orthodoxy on the eve and during the Polish September Campaign of 1939 had also been examined by foreign researchers. This includes works of the postwar emigrants, activists of the anti-Communist movements, Belarussian Ivan Kasiak³³ and Ukrainian Iwan Wlasowski³⁴. However, in those both cases we deal with Belarussian- and Ukrainian-centric points of view on the situation and activities of the Orthodox Church in the pre-WWII Poland.

This also refers to opinions of authors on the attitudes of clergy and Orthodox Christians of the PAOC during WWII as they all should be seen through the prism of Belarussian and Ukrainian national interests. Therefore, any case of cooperation with Polish authorities was perceived at that time as a collaboration and betrayal of national interests.

Despite such biased and extreme opinions, above-mentioned works include many interesting and valuable information on interdenominational relations in the Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic, general mood of the clergy on the eve of the German invasion of Poland and attitudes of Belarussian and Ukrainian minorities to Polish policies towards the Orthodox Church. In the similar way, although from the different perspective, the history of the Polish Orthodoxy was presented by another emigrant Aleksander Switicz³⁵. It should also be mentioned that all three historians had been active participants of both public and ecclesiastical life. Therefore, in their works they use not only scientific argumentation but also refer to their own experiences and important moments.

³² J. Grzybowski, *W służbie Rzeczypospolitej. Duszpasterstwo wojskowe wyznania prawosławnego w Wojsku Polskim w latach 1919–1949*, Warszawa 2016; idem, *Białorusini w polskich regularnych formacjach wojskowych w latach 1918–1945*, Warszawa 2007; idem, *Pogoń między Orłem Białym, Swastyką i Czerwoną Gwiazdą. Białoruski ruch niepodległościowy w latach 1939–1956*, Warszawa 2011.

³³ I. Касяк, *З гісторыі Праваслаўнай Царквы беларускага народу*, Нью Ёрк 1956.

³⁴ I. Власовський, *Нарис історії Української православної церкви: В 4 т., book 5*, Київ 1998.

³⁵ А. Свитич, *Православная Церковь в Польше и ей автокефалия*, Буэнос Айрес 1959.

To add more writers to the list, it is necessary to recall publications on the Orthodoxy in Poland in 1939 written by Władysław Cypin³⁶, Michał Szkarowski³⁷ and Andrij Smyrnov³⁸. In first two cases, we talk about Russian historians. As for the latter – this is an important representation of the contemporary Ukrainian historiography.

All should be included to any research on relations of PAOC towards Polish civilian and military authorities on the eve of and during the Polish September Campaign of 1939. They include many valuable information that bring many important things into light, especially with regard to attitudes of hierarchy, clergy and Orthodox Christians towards wartime events.

For example, M. Szkarowski examined the policies of the Third Reich with relation to the Orthodoxy, including the period just after the German invasion of Poland. A. Smyrnov has made an effort to prepare a comprehensive view on the situation of the Orthodox Church in the territories of the Second Polish Republic during the German occupation.

His work also included assessments of opinions and actions of the clergy and Orthodox Christians in the autumn 1939 and scale of the influence of representatives of Ukrainian nationalistic organizations on the policy of the Orthodox hierarchy. For the purpose of the research on the status and activities of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1939, one of the most important publications is the monograph of the Belarussian scientist, Walerij Czerepica, dedicated to the Orthodox Church in Grodno³⁹. Main themes of the book are the policy of the authorities of the Second Polish Republic towards the Orthodox Church on the eve of WWII and the situation and position of the Orthodox clergy in Grodno in September 1939. This researcher had access to sources that are rare and hard to get – from the archives of the Soviet security services.

Next foreign author should also be mentioned here and his works on the Orthodox Church in Russia under the German occupation (1941–1944) – i.e. Iwan Pietrow. He touches upon and analyses not only the main topic but also elements that are, at a glance, far beyond thematic and chronological framework of the monograph. He namely worked also on the situation of the Orthodox clergy in the ‘Western Belarus’ and

³⁶ В. Цыпин, *История Русской Православной Церкви 1917–1997*, Москва 1997.

³⁷ М. Шкаровский, *Крест и свастика. Нацистская Германия и Православная Церковь*, Москва 2007.

³⁸ А. Смирнов, *Між хрестом, свастикою і червоною зіркою: українське православ'я в роки Другої світової війни*, Одеса 2021.

³⁹ В. Черепица, *Очерки Православной Церкви на Гродненщине (с древнейших времен до наших дней)*, vol. 2, Гродно 2005.

'Western Ukraine' after the Soviet annexation of those areas by the Red Army⁴⁰. It is worth to note that unlike many Soviet and Russian scholars, he approached problems of policies of the Soviet occupier towards the Orthodox Church in a very balanced and rational way. He also emphasized that the attitude of the clergy had not been uniform and unequivocal.

The main scientific value of the all abovementioned works is that they have been supported by new, solid and credible sources. They also introduced to the scientific circulation previously unknown or unavailable Soviet, German and Ukrainian documents. However, it is also necessary to mention that all the authors examined the situation and activities of the Polish Orthodox clergy, with regard to defense preparation of Poland, still in a quite general way and main topics have been only superficially treated.

Analysing the research status of the attitude of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church to events of September 1939, it is necessary to include and analyse available memoirs, diaries and recollections, both of clergy representatives and lay persons that eye witnessed the war events of 1939⁴¹. In most of the cases, their authors were directly involved in the activities of the PAOC at the time.

Particularly noteworthy are personal memoirs of rev. Michał Bozerianov, Vilnius priest, on these difficult times and the town where he was caught by the outbreak of World War II, published in 1945 in Africa. They have to be considered as a valuable, although quite one-sided and biased source of information on sentiments within the Orthodox societies in the North-Eastern Polish Borderlands on the eve of WWII and during first weeks of the war. The comparison of different memoirs, diaries and publications proves how diverse opinions and recollections could be, even with regard to the same situations and events. This also shows different and specific experiences, during the pre-war and wartime periods, these people had been through. This certainly influenced their perception of the wartime reality.

It is time now to finally summarize the status of research on the position of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church towards the policies of Polish civilian and military activities related to the root causes of World War II and course of events during the Polish September 1939 Campaign. We have to emphasize that these phenomena have not been fully and comprehensively catalogued, both in Poland and abroad. Only

⁴⁰ И.В. Петров, *Между двух зол. Православное духовенство на временно оккупированных территориях РСФСР в 1941–1944 гг.*, Москва 2021.

⁴¹ М. Bozerianow, *Moja odpowiedź "ludziom tutaj"*, Arusha 1945; Е. Баслык, *Записки священника Ефстфия*, Минск 2004.

some specific aspects and topics have been scratched, but mainly on the margins of research on the general history of the Orthodox Church in the Second Polish Republic. This is also due to the fact that such elements of the twentieth Century records have not been thoroughly and deeply examined.

Taking into account the research status and main problems, it is possible to indicate several important research areas related to attitude of the PAOC towards the Polish State in 1939. They could become main topics of future scientific publications on the following aspects and areas: 1) the attitude of the hierarchy and clergy of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church towards the Second Polish Republic on the eve of the German and Soviet attacks on Poland; 2) attitude and activities of the Orthodox clergy (including military chaplains) during the military operations within Poland in September and October 1939; 3) participation of hierarchy, clergy and Orthodox Christians in defence preparation of the Second Polish Republic; 4) attitude of the laity (including representatives of social organizations and Orthodox fraternities) towards the policy of Polish civilian and military authorities, all related both to the context and the course of events during the military campaign; 5) influence of ethnic and social factors on the attitude of the Polish citizens of the Orthodox confession towards the Polish State during the 1939 Campaign; 6) relations of the PAOC clergy with the German and Soviet authorities in the first phase of the occupation of Poland; 7) evaluation of material damage and human losses of the PAOC during the military operations in 1939.

To conduct and finalize above-mentioned tasks, it is necessary to launch a series of archival research, both in Poland and abroad. The main source base could be established with materials and documents from archives and libraries in Poland. One of the most valuable elements on the situation of Orthodox societies in 1939 are reports of the Polish military (Corps District Commands II, III, IX) and civilian authorities (Ministry of Interior delegations and Voivodeship Offices in Luck, Vilnius, Nowogrodek, Brest, Bialystok and Lublin) on the mood of the civilian population in the Eastern voivodeships of the Second Polish Republic before and during the Polish September Campaign of 1939. Those documents are stored in the the Central Military Archive in Warsaw-Rembertow, Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw and in archives in Vilnius, Grodno, Brest and Luck.

One of the most important sources could also be documents generated by the Polish military establishment in the interwar period (General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, Non-Catholic Denominations Bureau, Main Orthodox Chaplaincy Department, Corps District Commands). This also refers to the civilian dimension – to papers of the Ministry of Religious

Denominations and Public Education. Such material would certainly allow to better understand the policy of the Polish State towards Orthodoxy.

Very interesting and useful archival source could also become church documents produced by the PAOC hierarchy (Holy Synod, Consistory) as well as different diocesan offices. Such files are deposited in the Archive of the Warsaw Orthodox Metropolis as well as in Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw and Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, also in Warsaw.

The significant number of files on the PAOC in 1939 could be retrieved from archives located within the United Kingdom, just to mention the archive of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum as well as Lambeth Palace – the Church of England Record Centre. The first entity has many documents with recollections of citizens who lived in the Polish Eastern Borderland and had been eyewitnesses of events in September and October 1939. Those stories include many facts on attitudes of specific ethnic and religious minorities, including those of the Orthodox Church. The latter has in its possession materials produced by the hierarchy of the Anglican Church. During the period in question, Orthodox and Anglican Churches had established and maintained lively contacts. Also during 1939 and in the next years, Brits expressed and showed strong interest in activities and the fate of the Polish Orthodoxy

The other category that has to be carefully scrutinized is the inter-war and war period press, newspapers, journals and other publications of that time. Its detailed analysis could allow evaluation of the attitude of the PAOC representatives to Polish military and civilian authorities, mainly in the context of the genesis of and the course of events of the Polish September 1939 Campaign. Some are really very interesting and useful, i.e. "Głos Prawosławia", "Gazeta Prawosławna", "Polski Żołnierz Prawosławny", "Woskresnoje Czenije", "Przegląd Prawosławny", "Ziarnko Prawosławne", "Dwutygodnik Prawosławny" and "Wiadomości Warszawskiej Metropolii Prawosławnej".

Those press releases could be especially useful for PAOC research, particularly to reconstruct fortunes of the most important representatives of the Orthodox clergy. In addition, in newspapers and journals published by the Warsaw Orthodox Metropolis, it is possible to find manifestos, messages and ordinances of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Some of them were related to the security and military situation. Another source could become the press published and distributed by different Polish ethnic minorities, mainly Ukrainian, Belarussian and Russian.

To conclude, the main topic of research still requires detailed and thorough research. On one side, it is necessary to exploit, to the biggest possible extent, already available literature, on the other – to confront

already accessible scientific contributions with new archival materials. It should allow in-depth verification and evaluation of attitude of PAOC towards the 1939 Campaign.

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