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Status of Research on Anti-Polish Propaganda in the Third Reich on the Eve of WWII and After its Outbreak

Propaganda antypolska w III Rzeszy w przededniu II wojny światowej i bezpośrednio po jej wybuchu – stan badań

ABSTRACT

Propaganda had been one of the fundamentals of the Third Reich. On the eve of German invasion of Poland in 1939, it was one of the main tools to mobilise the German society and win its support for war. It was also used to justify the war as worthy and just. As for Polish citizens, before the 1 September 1939 attack, it had been a tool of information dominance and disinformation, especially useful with regard to the German ethnic minority in Poland. The article presents the status of research on German wartime propaganda before the invasion in September 1939 and just after the attack against Poland. It points out at already printed studies and identifies knowledge gaps. It also draws attention of

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future researchers to archival materials and specific sources. They have not been fully explored, described, and evaluated. It means that there is still a lot to do in this area.

Key words: Nazi propaganda, War preparations, 1939, Aggression against Poland

STRESZCZENIE

Propaganda była jednym z filarów III Rzeszy. W przededniu niemieckiej agresji na Polskę w 1939 r. stanowiła ona narzędzie mobilizacji niemieckiego społeczeństwa do wojny i jednocześnie usprawiedliwiała ją jako słuszną i sprawiedliwą. Wobec Polaków w ich kraju, przed napaścią 1 września, miała ona stanowić narzędzie dominacji i dezinformacji, użyteczne zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do niemieckiej mniejszości w II Rzeczypospolitej. Artykuł przedstawia stan badań nad niemiecką propagandą wojenną prowadzoną przed agresją na Polskę we wrześniu 1939 r. i bezpośrednio po niej. Ma on za zadanie nie tylko wskazać na istniejące opracowania i luki w nich występujące, ale też skierować uwagę przyszłych badaczy na konkretne, obfitujące w źródła historyczne zasoby archiwalne. Ich stopień wykorzystania wciąż nie jest zadowalający, a to oznacza, że nadal jest na tym polu badawczym sporo do zrobienia.

Słowa kluczowe: nazistowska propaganda, przygotowania wojenne, 1939 r., agresja na Polskę

Revival of the Polish statehood after WWI surprised many Germans, who if ever wanted Poland to be a state, they saw it only as kind of German fiefdom within *Mittleuropa*, created on territories won from Russia. This surprise rapidly transformed into anger and hatred towards this country, which was not only able to regain independence and sovereignty, but was bold enough to claim and win, with support of Allies, areas considered by Germans an integral part of the 'German East'. The loss of 'always German' territories of the Greater Poland, Gdansk Pomerania, and part of Silesia, shocked the German public opinion to such a degree that the resentment to Poland and Poles had become a political canon. This was mainly based on centuries-old sense of superiority and concept of so-called of *Polnische Wirtschaft*. This was most emphatically expressed by the builder of Reichswehr gen. Hans von Seeckt, who stated in 1922: 'Polens Existenz ist unerträglich, unvereinbar mit den Lebensbedingungen Deutschlands. Es muss verschwinden und wird verschwinden durch eigene, innere Schwäche, und durch Russland – mit unserer Hilfe'¹.

Besides right and nationalistic groupings, such negative attitude towards Poland was shared by most of the German society. Average *Michael* in Germany was continuously fed with information, which excluded any efforts to at least neutral looks at the Eastern neighbour. This was exemplified by the case of the journalist from *Breslauer Sender*. She was not

¹ Irmgard und Ortrud – Zu Hans von Seeckt, irmgard-und-ortrud.de [access: 15.08.2022].

able to accentuate enough seasonal nature of the Country in her series of articles from Poland. She was officially reprimanded and finally fired. As noted by Professor Grzegorz Kucharczyk, anti-Polish sentiments were promoted 'not only by nationalists and national socialists, who had been on margins of the society for many years. It was the mainstream, the main political trend'².

Also German leftist groupings had no friendly and sympathetic feelings towards Poland. The main factor had been the fact of beating the Red Army during the Battle of Warsaw in 1920, when Bolsheviks tried to 'take the standard of Revolution to Germany'. For German socialists and communists, Poland was a 'reactionary country', with system created in accordance with the reactionary traditions of the Polish bourgeoisie. All this made Poland an enemy of the 'World Proletariat'. Fact of stopping Bolshevik advance to the Western Europe made the new state a hostile and artificial creation. This was clearly seen also in 1939–1940 and during the last weeks and months of WWII.

Irrespective of factors shaping the bitter anti-Polonism of some social groups in the Weimar Republic, the leading role was played by propaganda, directed both to domestic and foreign groups and actors. It systematically and continuously presented a negative image of Poland. It was presented in a slightly different ways in conservative, nationalistic and leftist media, but the main message was similar. All newspapers and journals claimed Poland had no right to exist as an independent and sovereign country, it should be erased from the map of Europe and the pre-WWI 'normalcy' should be restored.

The main thesis of anti-Polish German propaganda had been the statements on seasonality of Poland as a state, arguments that it was an artificial political creation built with anti-German decisions of Western allies, mainly France. The Second Polish Republic was presented as an effect of the 'Versailles dictate', as a country with no real historical and ethnic borders, a multiethnic and multi-denominational state, divided against itself, and more importantly – led by incompetent pseudoelites not able to govern modern country in the middle of Europe. Such an image was built with a clear objective – to convince Western elites that decisions related to Poland were wrong and improper. Germany also wanted Western decision makers to reflect on impact of their decisions and convince that allowing Poland to resurrect was a kind of 'giving a monkey a razor blade' situation. Of course, such propaganda made the situation in and

² Professor Grzegorz Kucharczyk: <https://www.tvp.info/49228369/prof-grzegorz-kucharczyk-niemcy-ktorzy-weszli-do-polski-w-1939-r-byli-wychowani-na-antypolonizmiewieszwiecej>, tvp.info [access: 15.08.2022].

outside Poland more difficult, as the Republic of Poland had to build its political, economic, and cultural relations from scratch.

Since the second half of 1933, the amount of anti-Polish propaganda unexpectedly diminished. Firstly, it was toned down and then, after the Nazis came to power, quite significantly limited. It had been a part of Hitler's political plans to secure rebuilding of German military potential. He needed several years of peace and normalisation of relations with neighbouring countries, including Poland. Such decisions were possible only due to the totalitarian character of new German regime in the emerging the Third Reich.

After winning, in quite a short time, the absolute power in Germany, Nazis subdued to their control all spheres of life, leaving only a small margin for individual freedoms. One of key areas, it was the sphere of propaganda with all its activities guided by Berlin gauleiter Dr. Joseph Goebbels and his *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (in short *Propagandaministerium* – Ministry of Propaganda, PROMI). In a brief time, media were administratively subordinated to Ministry – information agencies, editorial offices of newspapers and broadcasters, theatres, and film studios. Opposition media had either been liquidated or taken over. It was followed by selection and verification of employees by the Chamber of Culture, established in September 1933 (Ger. *Reichskulturkammer*), with seven branch chambers: Chamber of Literature (Ger. *Reichsschrifttumskammer*), Chamber of Film (Ger. *Reichsfilmkammer*), Chamber of Music (Ger. *Reichsmusikkammer*), Chamber of Theatre (Ger. *Reichstheaterkammer*), Chamber of Press (Ger. *Reichspressekammer*), Chamber of Radiobroadcasting (Ger. *Reichsrundfunkkammer*) and Chamber of Fine Arts (Ger. *Reichskammer der bildenden Künste*). Each actor, writer, film director, camera operator or journalist had to be a member of one of above-mentioned entities. Chambers had not accepted just anybody. They were introducing their own selections and verification procedures.

The last step to taking over propaganda activities in the Third Reich had been establishment of direct information management for all media. This was organized in the form of press conferences of the PROMI Minister (or his Secretaries of State, Walther Funk, or Otto Dietrich), with all main media representatives present. During such events, they were instructed on what and in which way information should be distributed. They also indicated no go areas.

During such conferences media received *Wochenparolen* (watchword for the week). Later they also got *Tagesparolen* (watchword for the day). Both types of information pointed out at main directions of propaganda. Thanks to such organization, the Ministry of Goebbels was able to manually control both domestic and foreign propaganda. In the latter case,

Goebbels had to cooperate and sometimes compete with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ger. Auswärtiges Amt, AA).

Under such conditions, the Nazi regime had been able to 'turn off' overnight anti-Polish propaganda in Germany. It worked both ways, as they also were able to 'turn it on' as the respective decision was taken. This happened on 28 March 1939, when Goebbels received the information from Auswärtiges Amt on the firm position of the Polish Government on Gdansk and decided to revert back to an anti-Polish rhetoric. It was implemented and exercised throughout the year of 1939, with its peak in the summer and early autumn. Next events, till May 1940, overshadowed Polish issues and pushed them out of the German propaganda mainstream. Sometimes, they surfaced during the war. One of such elements had been discovery of mass graves of Polish officers murdered in Katyn, which caused some changes in so-called *Polenpolitik*, although still to a limited extent. The Nazi anti-Polish propaganda in 1939 for quite a time had not been a subject of scientific research despite the situation that Polish-German relations, Polish September Military Campaign 1939, and the beginning of the German occupation of Poland were of main focus for Polish historiography.

It is hard to identify only one cause for such state of affairs. Most likely main key factor were efforts Polish historians to focus on the German invasion of Poland, military aspects of defence of the Nation, criminal dimension of German occupation, Polish fight with German occupiers and Polish martyrology. They blamed Germany for the armed conflict and did not put too much attention to other aspects of Polish-German relations before WWII and non-military dimensions of German war preparations. As for propaganda, they were focusing, in media and own propaganda, on the issue of provocation in Gliwice, and presented it as an example of example of perfidy and exemplification of Nazi criminal practices³.

One of pioneers, who initiated the change, was the distinguished Polish historian and an outstanding expert in the field of Polish-German relations, Professor Tomasz Szarota. In 1976, he presented in Trzebiezowice, in the Lower Silesia, the paper *On shaping the image of Poles and Germans in the Polish and German public opinion during the times of WWII*.

This print was the starting point for two monographic articles: *Niemcy w oczach Polaków podczas II wojny światowej* ("Dzieje Najnowsze" 1978,

³ E.J. Osmanczyk, *Dowody prowokacji. Nieznane archiwum Himmlera*, Warszawa 1951; A. Szefer, *Hitlerowska prowokacja gliwicka*, Warszawa 1989; Drama documentary: *Operacja Himmler*, directed by Z. Chmielewski, 1979.

no. 2)⁴ and *Stereotyp Polski i Polaków w oczach Niemców podczas II wojny światowej* ("Sobótka" 1978, no. 2)⁵. They opened a new dimension and possibilities for a wider approach to Polish and German stereotypes and as a consequence – research on role of stereotypes in propaganda activities⁶. Professor Szarota made later a kind of summary with his 1988 great monograph publication *Niemiecki Michel. Dzieje narodowego symbolu i autostereotypu* (Warszawa 1988)⁷.

The very topic of German propaganda on the eve and during invasion of Poland in 1939 was presented incidentally and only in one bigger publication. This was the paper of journalist and historian Eugeniusz Guz from 1969: *Jak Goebbels przygotowywał wrzesień* (Warszawa 1969)⁸. The scientific value of this paper is limited as it had been a popular science work, without application of the proper scientific apparatus, with no possibility to falsify thesis included to the book.

It should also be noted that this author specialized in papers on the *German Federal Republic* and 'revisionists from the West' and was engaged in many activities that were to please and support Communist authorities in Warsaw.

During the 1970s, the first analysis of the Nazi Germany propaganda apparatus was prepared. It had been the monograph of the Pomeranian historian Andrzej Czarnik *Prasa w Trzeciej Rzeszy. Organizacja i zakres działania* (Gdańsk 1976)⁹. This publication has not lost its value and meaning, mainly due to extensive archival research, conducted mainly in German archives (mostly in Potsdam). The paper is not sizeable (230 pages) but presents the status of research as of half century ago¹⁰.

The same decade saw the publication of Bogusław Drewniak *Teatr i film Trzeciej Rzeszy w systemie hitlerowskiej propagandy* (Gdańsk 1972)¹¹,

⁴ T. Szarota, *Niemcy w oczach Polaków podczas II wojny światowej*, "Dzieje Najnowsze" 1978, 10, 2, pp. 143–172.

⁵ T. Szarota, *Stereotyp Polski i Polaków w oczach Niemców podczas II wojny światowej*, "Sobótka" 1978, 2, pp. 191–218.

⁶ E.C. Król, *Polska i Polacy w propagandzie narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*, Warszawa 2006, p. 15.

⁷ T. Szarota, *Niemiecki Michel. Dzieje narodowego symbolu i autostereotypu*, Warszawa 1988.

⁸ E. Guz, *Jak Goebbels przygotowywał wrzesień*, Warszawa 1969.

⁹ A. Czarnik, *Prasa w Trzeciej Rzeszy. Organizacja i zakres działania*, Gdańsk 1976.

¹⁰ A. Czarnik published very interesting study on German propaganda during 1939: *Z dziennika hitlerowskiego propagandyisty: zapiski Wernera Kocha z Człuchowa z lat 1936–1941*, Słupsk 1998.

¹¹ B. Drewniak, *Teatr i film Trzeciej Rzeszy w systemie hitlerowskiej propagandy*, Gdańsk 1972.

which had been somehow a kind of follow up to the work of the same author printed in 1969 *Kultura w cieniu swastyki*¹². Both papers touched issues related to propaganda, but it had not been the main topic of analysis. We had the comparable situation in the case of monograph of Hubert Orłowski *Literatura w III Rzeszy* (Poznań 1975)¹³. German propaganda issues were also covered by the historian from Wrocław, Karol Fiedor, in his work *Bund Deutscher Osten w systemie antypolskiej propagandy* (Warszawa, Wrocław 1977)¹⁴.

As for foreign publications, research on the Nazi Germany propaganda system had been quite extensive and resulted in many valuable publications. It would be worthy to mention a few, mainly those, which proved to be still important and stood the test of time. Already in the 1960s some important monographs were printed by D. Strothmann *Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik. Eine Beitrag zur Publizistik im Dritten Reich* (Bonn 1963), Z.A.B. Zeman *Nazi-propaganda* (London, New York, Toronto 1964), O.J. Halle *Presse In der Zwangsjacke* (Berlin, München 1965), E. Leiser *Deutschland erwache! Propaganda im film des Dritten Reichs* (Reinbeck b. Hamburg 1968), G. Albrecht *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart 1969), M. Messerschmidt *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat. Zeit der Indoktrination* (Hamburg 1969)¹⁵.

Next important works were published in 1970s and some of them are still considered current and valid, even 'classical', including E.K. Bramsted *Goebbels und die nationalsozialistische Propaganda 1924–1945* (Frankfurt a. Main 1971), K. Koszyk *Deutsche Presse 1914–1945. Geschichte der deutsche Presse* (vol. 3, Berlin 1972), W. Becker *Film und Herrschaft. Organisationsprinzipien Organisationsstrukturen der national-sozialistischen Filmpropaganda* (Berlin 1973), K. Kirchner *Flugblattpropaganda im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Erlangen 1974–1981), J. Sywottek *Mobilmachung für die totalen Krieg. Die propagandistische Vorbereitung der Bevölkerung auf den Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Opladen

¹² B. Drewniak, *Kultura w cieniu swastyki*, Poznań 1969.

¹³ H. Orłowski, *Literatura w III Rzeszy*, Poznań 1975.

¹⁴ K. Fiedor, *Bund Deutscher Osten w systemie antypolskiej propagandy*, Warszawa–Wrocław 1977.

¹⁵ D. Strothmann, *Nationalsozialistische Literaturpolitik. Eine Beitrag zur Publizistik im Dritten Reich*, Bonn 1963; Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi-propaganda*, London–New York–Toronto 1964; O.J. Halle, *Presse In der Zwangsjacke*, Berlin–München 1965; E. Leiser, "Deutschland erwache!" *Propaganda im film des Dritten Reichs*, Reinbeck b. Hamburg 1968; G. Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik. Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches*, Stuttgart 1969; M. Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat. Zeit der Indoktrination*, Hamburg 1969.

1976), W.A. Boelcke *Die Macht des Radios. Weltpolitik Und Auslandsrundfunk 1924–1976* (Frankfurt a. Main 1977)¹⁶.

The last two decades of the 20th century also were teeming with works on the Nazi propaganda. We got several great monographs, and some works fundamental for understanding the operation of Goebbels apparatus. One important event brought a lot of momentum to research, and this had been the discovery of the Head of PROMI diaries, which allowed us to get inside his head and see thoughts of this genius of evil.

The first critical issue of Joseph Goebbels' *Tagebücher* was published in 1992 and the book has been re-issued several times. The print has become an entry point for many other works, such as great monograph by R.G. Reuth *Goebbels: The life of Joseph Goebbels – The Mefistophelean of Nazi Propaganda* (Eugene 1993)¹⁷, works of D. Irving *Goebbels – Mastermind of the „Third Reich* (London 1996)¹⁸, T. Thacker *Joseph Goebbels: Life and Death* (London 2009)¹⁹, P. Longerich *Goebbels: A Biography* (New York 2015)²⁰ and some more.

At the turn of Centuries, some more papers on the topic saw the publication: A. Diller *Rundfunkpolitik im Dritten Reich* (München 1980), O. Buchbender, H. Shuch *Die Waffe die auf die Seele zielt. Psychologische Kriegführung 1939–1945* (Stuttgart 1983), E.-M. Unger *Illustrierte als Mittel zur Kriegsvorbereitung in Deutschland 1933 bis 1939* (Köln 1984), P. Longreich *Propagandisten in Krieg. Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (München 1987) and G. Paul *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Bonn 1992)²¹.

¹⁶ E.K. Bramsted, *Goebbels und die nationalsozialistische Propaganda 1924–1945*, Frankfurt a. Main 1971; K. Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse 1914–1945. Geschichte der deutsche Presse*, t. 3, Berlin 1972; W. Becker, *Film und Herrschaft. Organisationsprinzipien Organisationsstrukturen der nationalsozialistischen Filmpropaganda*, Berlin 1973; K. Kirchner, *Flugblattpropaganda im zweiten Weltkrieg*, Erlangen 1974–1981; J. Sywottek, *Mobilmachung für die totalen Krieg. Die propagandistische Vorbereitung der Bevölkerung auf den Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Opladen 1976; W.A. Boelcke, *Die Macht des Radios. Weltpolitik Und Auslandsrundfunk 1924–1976*, Frankfurt a. Main 1977.

¹⁷ R.G. Reuth, *Goebbels*, Warszawa 2004.

¹⁸ D. Irving, *Goebbels – mózg III Rzeszy*, transl. B. Zborski, foreword C. Madajczyk, Gdynia 1998.

¹⁹ The book was not published in Polish.

²⁰ P. Longreich, *Goebbels. Apostoł diabła*, transl. M. Kilis, Warszawa 2014.

²¹ A. Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik im Dritten Reich*, München 1980; O. Buchbender, H. Shuch, *Die Waffe die auf die Seele zielt. Psychologische Kriegführung 1939–1945*, Stuttgart 1983; E.-M. Unger, *Illustrierte als Mittel zur Kriegsvorbereitung in Deutschland 1933 bis 1939*, Köln 1984; P. Longreich, *Propagandisten in Krieg. Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop*, München 1987; G. Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder. Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933*, Bonn 1992.

We should however take into account more papers printed abroad on Nazi propaganda, and more generally on the phenomenon of the Nazi German State and its turbulent history. We could find there many references to the German propaganda system, which had become one of main pillars of the regime and great support to all wartime regime activities. These are publications of M. Broszat, R. Evans, G. Aly, M. Burleigh, M. Kitchen, U. Velker and W.L. Shirer²². Such a list could be much longer, as after WWII more than 65,000 works on the history of the Third Reich and Nazism have been printed. This was carefully calculated ten years ago by prominent British historian Sir Richard Evans²³. However, not too many of them would be useful to support the research on anti-Polish German propaganda in 1939.

In Poland, only at the end of 1980s the first important book on German propaganda in 1939 was distributed to bookstores. It happened not by chance, but it was an initiative of the Western Institute (Pol. Instytut Zachodni), which has become the leading scientific entity carrying research on Polish-German relations. In 1988, Janusz Sobczak released the 500-pages book *Polska w propagandzie i polityce III Rzeszy*²⁴. The author, Deputy Director of the Western Institute, expert on German history and on Polish-German relations, guaranteed high quality of scientific work. Today, the problem is that this book presented status of research as of the beginning of the 1980s and also carried the burden of Communist ideology of the time. This author was focussing earlier on 'German revisionism', and such scientific problems were under a special surveillance and control of Communist authorities. The main reason for such a situation had been the objective of the regime to use anti-German sentiments to generate more public support for its policies.

The real breakthrough in this research area came in the 1990s. This was linked with more open archival materials access policy for Polish scientists in Germany. It was also related with the changing internal situation in Poland and increasing awareness of Polish historians to assume a broader perspective on WWII realities and give up approaches taken

²² M. Broszat, *Der Stat Hitlers. Grundlegung Und Erwicklung seiner inner Verfassung*, München 1976; R.J. Evans, *Nadejście Trzeciej Rzeszy*, transl. M. Grzywa, Warszawa 2015; idem, *Trzecia Rzesza u władzy*, transl. M. Grzywa, Warszawa 2016; idem, *Wojna Trzeciej Rzeszy*, transl. M. Grzywa, Warszawa 2016; G. Aly, *Państwo Hitlera*, transl. W. Łygaś, Gdańsk 2014; M. Burleigh, *Trzecia Rzesza – nowa historia*, transl. G. Siwek, Warszawa 2000; M. Kitchen, *Trzecia Rzesza – charyzma i wspólnota*, transl. L. Otrębski, Warszawa 2012; U. Voelker, *Hitler – narodziny zła. 1889–1939*, transl. M. Antkowiak, Warszawa 2015; W.L. Shirer, *Powstanie i upadek Trzeciej Rzeszy. Historia Hitlerowskich Niemiec*, transl. M. Grzywa, Oświęcim 2019.

²³ R.J. Evans, *Nadejście*, Warszawa 2015, p. 7.

²⁴ J. Sobczak, *Polska w propagandzie i polityce III Rzeszy*, Poznań 1988.

during the rule of Communist regime, which schematized and limited research on many topics and issues. In this area, we owe much to two distinguished Polish historians, Wojciech Wrzesiński and Hubert Orłowski, who laid the foundations for next research projects.

The first of above-mentioned authors published in 1992, after a series of smaller works²⁵, the monograph *Sąsiad. Czy wróg? Ze studiów nad kształtowaniem się obrazu Niemca w Polsce w latach 1795–1939* (Wrocław 1992)²⁶.

The second prepared the Polish edition of his earlier print, released in German: *Polnische Wirtschaft. Nowoczesny niemiecki dyskurs o Polsce* (Olsztyn 1998)²⁷. Unfortunately, at that time, there had been no solid scientific projects on the German propaganda in 1939. This gap was partially filled in with works of Stanisław Żerko *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1938–1939* (Poznań 1998)²⁸ and Bogusław Drewniak *Polen und Deutschland 1919–1939. Wege und Irrwege kultureller Zusammenarbeit* published in 1999 in Germany (Düsseldorf)²⁹. The first book, although focuses on Polish-German diplomatic relations, also presented issues related to German propaganda. The second, referred mainly to cultural relations, but such issues had always been of great interest for propaganda, which is linked with this dimension of the social life.

In 1999, the first Polish monograph on the Nazi Germany propaganda system was published. That included topics related to the Ministry of J. Goebbels. This had been a sizeable and very scientifically valuable work of the employee of the German Studies Department in the Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Political Studies – Professor Eugeniusz Cezary Król *Propaganda i indoktrynacja narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945* (Warszawa 1999)³⁰. Till today, this work is considered the main and fundamental monograph on the topic, mainly due to proper exploitation of German archival materials and international subject literature.

²⁵ W. Wrzesiński, *Polskie badania nad stereotypami Niemców i Polaków*, in: *Z badań nad dziejami stosunków polsko-niemieckich*, Poznań 1991; *Wokół stereotypów Polaka Niemca*, ed. W. Wrzesiński, Wrocław 1991.

²⁶ W. Wrzesiński, *Sąsiad. Czy wróg? Ze studiów nad kształtowaniem się obrazu Niemca w Polsce w latach 1795–1939*, Wrocław 1992.

²⁷ H. Orłowski, „*Polnische Wirtschaft*”. *Nowoczesny niemiecki dyskurs o Polsce*, Olsztyn 1998.

²⁸ S. Żerko, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1938–1939*, Poznań 1998.

²⁹ B. Drewniak, *Polen und Deutschland 1919–1939. Wege und Irrwege kultureller Zusammenarbeit*, Düsseldorf 1999. Till now, there is no Polish publication of this book, as in the case of the next important work of the same author on the gutter press in the General Government.

³⁰ E.C. Król, *Propaganda i indoktrynacja narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*, Warszawa 1999.

E.C. Król dedicated the last chapter to the topic of *Problematyka polska w propagandzie i indoktrynacji narodowego socjalizmu*. This has become a prelude to his next book, a separate monograph – *Polska i Polacy w propagandzie narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*³¹. The next, updated, and corrected edition by Bellona Publishing House was planned for 2025. However, even the first and only so far edition of that 2006 book still keeps the high level of quality and usability. It was based on extensive research in Polish and German archives, on the extensive subject literature and deep knowledge by this expert of Nazi German propaganda. It also should be added that E.C. Król was also author of several important monographic articles on this specific research area³².

The work of Eugeniusz Guz, an author already mentioned in the context of 1969 publication, titled *Goebbels o Polsce i sojusznicznym ZSRR*³³ has a completely different character. Unfortunately, this 1999 work is not a typical scientific publication, but is rather a popular science print. In addition, the author had been a kind of controversial figure and was accused of collaboration with Communist security services. Undoubtedly, he wanted to prepare good and solid publication. Unfortunately, the lack of proper research apparatus applied to the project excluded the possibility to verify the content of the print. In addition, negative picture of the book was built due to brief list of references and bibliography, which also had some serious omissions and mistakes.

To explore the issue of anti-Polish Nazi Germany propaganda in 1939, we can use works on the beginning of German occupation of Poland and papers on German propaganda actions directed to ethnic Germans and Poles on territories seized by the regime in Berlin. The first group consists of prints prepared by historians, who started their research already in the 1960s and 1970s of the previous Century and resulted in important monographs and useful historical publications. In this area, we should mention such authors as M. Broszat³⁴, H.-A. Jacobsen³⁵, K. Jońca³⁶, C. Klessmann³⁷,

³¹ E.C. Król, *Polska i Polacy w propagandzie narodowego socjalizmu w Niemczech 1919–1945*, Warszawa 2006.

³² On works of Professor Król, in: *Jak patrzeć na Polskę, Niemcy i świat? Księga jubileuszowa profesora Eugeniusza Cezarego Króla*, Warszawa 2017, pp. 13–15.

³³ E. Guz, *Goebbels o Polsce i sojusznicznym ZSRR*, Warszawa 1999.

³⁴ M. Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–1945*, Stuttgart 1961.

³⁵ H-A. Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933–1938*, Berlin–Frankfurt a. Main 1968.

³⁶ K. Jońca, *„Noc kryształowa” i casus Herszela Grynszpana*, Wrocław 1992.

³⁷ C. Klessmann, *Die Selbstbehauptung einer Nation. Nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik Und polnische Widerstandsbevegung im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945*, Düsseldorf 1971.

C. Łuczak³⁸, C. Madajczyk³⁹, F. Ryszka⁴⁰, and already mentioned J. Sobczak⁴¹. Each of them was referring to German propaganda activities during the Polish September Military Campaign 1939 and first months of German occupation.

As for German propaganda in occupied Poland, we have only a few works dedicated to this specific topic. One of them is the article of T. Szarota *Jawne wydawnictwa i prasa w okupowanej Warszawie*, included to the joint publication released in 1972, to the Volume II of *Warszawa lat wojny i okupacji 1939–1944*.

The second print is more sizeable, and this was the Ph.D. dissertation of Marek Tuszyński, presented in 1976: *Hitlerowska propaganda polityczna w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie*. It has not been officially published, but the manuscript is available in Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of History. We've come across similar situation in the case of Lucjan Dobroszycki, and his *Die legale Polnische presse im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945* (München 1977)⁴², which is not available in Polish⁴³, but could be accessed in the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of History. A year later, in 1978, in the "Dzieje Najnowsze" journal, the article of M. Tuszyński was published *Propaganda hitlerowska w Generalnej Guberni przeciwko tzw. plutokracjom zachodnim w okresie od września 1939 do kwietnia 1943 r.*⁴⁴

Times of 1980s saw the publication of few monographs, with three considered the most important and useful: W. Wójcik *Prasa godzinowa Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (1939–1945)* (Kraków 1988); J. Jarowiecki *Prasa w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945* (Warszawa 1980); E. Cytowska *Szkice i dzieje prasy pod okupacją niemiecką (1939–1945)* (Warszawa, Łódź 1986). Other prints from this decade had mostly fragmentary character⁴⁵.

³⁸ C. Łuczak, *Polityka ludnościowa i ekonomiczna hitlerowskich Niemiec w okupowanej Polsce*, Poznań 1979.

³⁹ C. Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, vols 1–2, Warszawa 1970.

⁴⁰ F. Ryszka, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego. Rzecz o systemie państwa i prawa Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1974.

⁴¹ J. Sobczak, *Propaganda zagraniczna Niemiec weimarskich wobec Polski*, Poznań 1973.

⁴² L. Dobroszycki, *Die legale Polnische presse im Generalgouvernement 1939–1945*, München 1977.

⁴³ L. Dobroszycki, *Prasa jawna dla ludności polskiej w Generalnej Guberni 1939–1945*, typescript. This Ph.D. dissertation was defended in the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1967.

⁴⁴ M. Tuszyński, *Propaganda hitlerowska w Generalnej Guberni przeciwko tzw. plutokracjom zachodnim w okresie od września 1939 do kwietnia 1943 r.*, "Dzieje Najnowsze" 1978, 10, 3, pp. 73–91.

⁴⁵ J. Lewandowski, „*Goniec Krakowski*” (27.X.1939–18.I.1945). *Próba monografii*, Warszawa 1978; J. Rawska, *Sprawa polska w prasie godzinowej (lipiec 1944–styczeń 1945)*, Warszawa

Next important works were published in 1990. This was the study of Piotr Kołtunowski *Strategia propagandy hitlerowskiej w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie na podstawie „Krakauer Zeitung”. 1939–1945*, issued in Lublin. The next important work had been the book of S. Lewandowska *Prasa okupowanej Warszawy 1939–1945*, printed in Warsaw in 1992⁴⁶.

Next valuable work emerged in 1996 and it was the doctoral dissertation of Grzegorz Hryciuk *Gazeta Lwowska” 1941–1944*, printed by the University of Wrocław Publishing House. The same Publishing House published in 2000 the monograph of the author of this article, based on his doctoral thesis *O Nowy Porządek Europejski. Ewolucja hitlerowskiej propagandy politycznej dla Polaków w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*⁴⁷.

During next years, there has been a regression and stagnation in research on German propaganda in the occupied Poland. Only in 2013, the next very valued book of Sebastian Piątkowski *Okupacja i propaganda. Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w publicystyce polskojęzycznej prasy niemieckiej (1939–1945)* (Lublin–Radom 2013) was made available to readers⁴⁸.

After above-mentioned publication, we had quite a long break in such research. Its causes and consequences and prospects for overcoming the crisis in this area were described and evaluated in the article of Monika Naporą from the Institute of History at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin with the meaningful title *O potrzebie dalszych badań nad prasą gadzinową. Stan obecny i perspektywy badawcze*⁴⁹. This text also included references to some more articles, which partially covered issues related to German propaganda in occupied Poland.

As for perspective for research on anti-Polish German 1939 propaganda, the most important sources remain archival materials and libraries. Unfortunately, most of them are located out of Poland, mostly in Germany. In Poland, in Polish Ossolineum and National Library in Warsaw, we can access most of the issues of newspapers printed in Polish but

1980; W. Wójcik, *Język prasy gadzinowej lat 1939–1945 na tle metod niemieckiej propagandy*, Kraków 1990; E. Cytowska, *Szkice i dzieje prasy pod okupacją niemiecką (1939–1945)*, Warszawa–Łódź 1986.

⁴⁶ P. Kołtunowski, *Strategia propagandy hitlerowskiej w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie na podstawie „Krakauer Zeitung”. 1939–1945*, Lublin 1990; S. Lewandowska, *Prasa okupowanej Warszawy 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1992.

⁴⁷ G. Hryciuk, *„Gazeta Lwowska” 1941–1944*, Wrocław 1992; T. Głowiński, *„O Nowy Porządek Europejski”. Ewolucja hitlerowskiej propagandy politycznej dla Polaków w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945*, Wrocław 2000.

⁴⁸ S. Piątkowski, *Okupacja i propaganda. Dystrykt radomski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa w publicystyce polskojęzycznej prasy niemieckiej (1939–1945)*, Lublin–Radom 2013.

⁴⁹ M. Naporą, *O potrzebie dalszych badań nad prasą gadzinową. Stan obecny i perspektywy badawcze*, „Dzieje Najnowsze” 2021, 53, 2, pp. 187–201.

edited and printed and distributed by Germans (so-called collaborationist rag, or 'gadzinówka' in Polish) and some German newspapers, such as 'Völkische Beobachter'.

There is also a possibility to access newsreels from the times of German occupation of Poland. They are stored in the archive of the Documentary and Feature Film Studios at 21 Chelmska Street in Warsaw (so-called *Tygodnik Dźwiękowy Guberni Generalnej* or *Tygodnik Dźwiękowy Gubernii Generalnej*, the Polish version of German *Die Deutsche Wochenschau*).

We can also use leaflets, brochures and posters stored in Ossolineum, in the Jagiellonian University library and in the archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (former Archive of the Chief Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation; pol. Główna Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu). Also archival sources stored in the Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw can be scientifically exploited as they have documents from Polish diplomatic structures, including the Polish Embassy in Berlin.

The most important documents are stored in German archives, i.e. in Berlin's Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, with most of its resources transferred to this location in 1996 from Bundesarchiv-Potsdam and Bundesarchiv-Koblenz. The archives mentioned have now just rudimentary resources on the topic that could be useful for research on German propaganda. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde has mainly fonds and files of PROMI, NS-Reichspropagandaleitung, Reichsführer SS Personal Staff, Amt Rosenberg (foreign NSDAP policy), the Third Reich Chancellery, General Government Chancellery and General Government offices, of the Reichkulturkammer (Chamber of Culture), and also of RSHA documents (the Reich Main Security Office).

In Berlin, we have also German newsreels and other mechanical documents. They are stored in Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (BA-FA) Berlin-Kottbuser Tor. Some press-type resources are also available in a number of Berlin libraries. Some staff is accessible in Deutschebücherei in Leipzig. Almost complete sets of Wehrmacht propaganda campaigns materials are open to researchers in Bundesarchiv-Koblenz, as well as documents of the Deutsche Nachrichtenbüro (DNB) and personal files of people responsible for German propaganda in 1939.

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA) in Freiburg im Breisgau has fonds and files on propaganda activities conducted in the German military and by military institutions and units. This archive has documents of Oberkommando des Herres and Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Abteilung Wehrmachtpropaganda), Fremde Heere Ost, and Inland Department of Reichswehrministerium. Freiburg has also an extensive collection of German leaflets from the times of WWII.

Another useful source of archival materials is the Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes in Bonn (PA-AA). It stores documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Third Reich, including files regarding relations with Poland in 1939, including organizations of ethnic Germans in Poland and propaganda initiatives launched by AA. We should focus our attention on materials on the crisis in Polish-German relations in 1939. They look very promising, and they have not been so far properly explored and evaluated.

Part of PROMI documents is stored in München in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte München (IfZG). Those are documents from press conferences of Jozef Goebbels, files of German propaganda Chief Dr. Dietrich and materials from Pressrundschreiben RPA Berlin. IfZG has also a big collection of leaflets from times of WWII, and a collection of 30 propaganda brochures in German relating to the causes, course and direct consequences of the attack on Poland in 1939. In the Goethe-Institut, also in München, there are also interesting collections of mechanical records, including newsreels and feature films made between 1930 and 1945.

SUMMARY

To wrap everything up, the problem of anti-Polish German propaganda in 1939 was covered by Polish and to a lesser degree by foreign research projects. However, it is still difficult to consider this topic as properly examined and assessed. Without works of above-mentioned Professor E.C. Król, the situation would have been much more difficult and complicated.

His flagship work of 2006 constitutes the cornerstone of scientific efforts taken up so far. Without this book, we would have been left with just some articles and works on WWII stereotypes and popular science publications, which had not undergone a rigorous scientific assessment.

Fortunately, the topic of Nazi propaganda during the German occupation of Poland was explored and evaluated much better. We have several works of Polish historians already available. It is still quite modest but meaningful contribution to our knowledge on German activities directed at the Polish society. There had been recently some regress in the research on this area, but we have now some efforts aimed at breaking the stalemate. This should be supported and assisted by new efforts to have another look at Polish realities of those times, not only from the martyrology and resistance movement perspectives. New projects should rather focus on the system introduced by Germans in occupied territories and German methods and tools to pursue political, military and social objectives.

Polish and German archival resources presented above (author wants to note that he has only limited experience in this area) look very promising and there are no deficits that could be used to justify modest achievements in this specific historical area. We should reiterate that apart from works of Professor Król, the current unsatisfactory research status is more the result of years of neglect and abandonment than problems with access to sources. What is more, resourceful archives and libraries, mainly German, should prompt us to launch next source research, deepen our knowledge and build up our understanding of issues related to German propaganda activities against Poland. The status is almost at the same level as it was 30 years ago, when possibilities for research in foreign archives and institutions had been much more limited. Therefore, we should encourage new efforts and verify our achievements.

Undoubtedly, any effort to deepen our knowledge on anti-Polish German propaganda activities in 1939 could become a part of initiatives to get war reparations from our Western neighbour. They could indicate and prove that Germany had deliberately sought to launch military action against Poland. It can be done with a fresh look at old and new source materials, reviving the scientific debate on the topic and building and promoting a Polish, scientifically solid historical narrative.

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NOTA O AUTORZE

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