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Status and Prospects for Research on the Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the Policies of the Civil and Military Authorities in Connection with the Situation Before and During the Polish September Campaign 1939

Stan i perspektywy badań nad stosunkiem Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego w II Rzeczypospolitej do polityki władz cywilnych i wojskowych w związku z bezpośrednią genezą i przebiegiem Kampanii polskiej 1939 r.

ABSTRACT

In the article, the analysis of research was conducted – on the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards policies of the Polish authorities on the eve of WWII, the Polish Military Campaign of September 1939, and events during October 1939. This was complemented by review of the subject literature, including related to the Bishops

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Conference, efforts taken by particular bishops and Church institutions (including the military chaplaincy), Catholic press as well as examination of relations with the Greek Catholic Church in the context of Polish–Ukrainian ethnic conflict. The article also proposes future research activities.

Key words: Roman Catholic Church, Polish Military Campaign September 1939, II World War, Catholic clergy

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule dokonano analizy stanu badań nad zagadnieniem stosunku Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego w Polsce do polityki władz państwa polskiego wobec nadchodzącej II wojny światowej i wydarzeń Kampanii polskiej we wrześniu i październiku 1939 r. W publikacji dokonano przeglądu istniejącej najważniejszej literatury tematu, w szczególności działalności episkopatu, poszczególnych biskupów, instytucji kościelnych (w tym duszpasterstwa wojskowego), czy prasy katolickiej, a także relacji z Kościołem greckokatolickim w kontekście konfliktu narodowościowego polsko-ukraińskiego. W końcowej części pracy podjęto próbę wskazania dalszych perspektyw badawczych.

Słowa kluczowe: Kościół rzymskokatolicki, Kampania polska, II wojna światowa, duchowieństwo katolickie

The Roman Catholic Church in Poland had always a special place and role after the Great War, also in the social life of the reborn Polish Republic – with more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the population belonging to this confession. Most of them had been ethnic Poles, but the number also included ethnic minorities like Germans (however, most of them belonged to Protestant churches), some Lithuanians and Belarussians.

The supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church was not only caused by the demographic factor, but also by the role Church played in the history of the Country. It had a prominent place both in the pre-partition Poland and during the times of subjugation to aggressors. The Church had become an integral part of the Polish national identity and was a decisive factor in shaping the society. That allowed to survive ethnic and religious oppressions from protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia.

Also during the period of Polish rebirth, it assisted in building the society and the State, and encouraged citizens to defend the Country against Bolshevik aggression. It was the time of the direct threat to the very existence of the Nation, to the State and its main religion. The Church also supported all activities of an independent State during the peacetime. The position of the Roman Catholic Church and the Latin rite in the Second Polish Republic was well described and presented in so-called March Constitution. This document clearly stated that the Roman Catholic faith had the primary place among other confessions.

The Roman Catholic Church also played a significant role during the hardships of WWII. Poland had become an object of attack for two

totalitarian systems and again Church had to play the role in providing the tenets for social and national life. It was again a moral compass for Polish citizens in these cruel, difficult, and savage times of war. As a result, the clergy and laity had become important target for persecution and suffered heavy losses not only from German or Soviet hands, but moreover, and this should also be remembered, at the hands of Ukrainian nationalists.

The main objective of this article is to present the status of research on the Roman Catholic Church and proposing new research initiatives. They should include assessment of Church influence on the Polish society, mainly on Catholics, just before the war and during the Polish Military Campaign of September 1939. Chronologically, it will cover the period from the Czechoslovakian crisis and München Conference till last battles of the Polish Campaign in October 1939. Other aspects have not been taken into account here, i.e. diplomatic activities, relations between Polish Bishop Conference and Holy See, and the Vatican's attitude to Polish problems. The last two elements deserve a special attention and separate publication.

The subject literature on the Catholic Church during the interwar period and during WWII is quite extensive. There is no point in preparing the whole catalogue on such topic, but it is necessary to draw attention of the readers to the most important and valuable works on problems that are of interest for the Project.

Quite interesting, from the current point of view, was the Marxist approach to the history of the Church during the interwar period. One of the most useful elements is the work of Wiesław Mysłek. In his case, it is difficult to find any objective views and problems of interest for the Project as the Author passes in silence over the most important issues. He had just mentioned elements important, in his view, as related to deterioration of Polish–Holy See contacts due to policy of Vatican towards the Third Reich¹.

About the policy of Holy See towards Poland during the interwar period and WWII many works have been prepared. i.e. by Jarosław Jurkiewicz, Józef Szymański and Zofia Waszkiewicz². However, it is necessary to remember that they were written from the Marxist perspective, which had been always clearly reluctant and not friendly towards the Church.

As for new publications, printed after 1989, they already had no Marxist imprint as they were prepared in a non-ideological environment. One

¹ W. Mysłek, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1966, pp. 581–582.

² J. Jurkiewicz, *Watykan a Polska w okresie międzywojennym*, Warszawa 1958, J. Szymański, *Stosunek Watykanu do spraw polskich za czasów II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939*, Radom 1982; Z. Waszkiewicz, *Polityka Watykanu wobec Polski 1939–1945*, Warszawa 1980.

of most useful works are of Krzysztof Krasowski³. Other important print is the monumental book of Stanisław Wilk dedicated to the Polish Bishops Conference. On more than 100 pages, in one of the chapters, the author describes and evaluates facts and cases of Church and Bishops Conference's political engagement and the Church's concerns for the Nation and the State with the armed conflict already on the horizon⁴.

One of valuable contributions to the Project could become the article by Ryszard Bender dedicated to the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to social and ethnic problems⁵. The work of Jarosław Macała could also be used, as it delivers useful opinions on the idea of 'Catholic Poland' in the Second Polish Republic and relations between Polish Government and Catholic Church. Adam Gruszecki prepared the publication of the attitude of Catholics towards the social system of the Second Polish Republic⁶. Another important element is the extensive collection of articles on the religious life in Poland edited by Zygmunt Zieliński. They describe and judge the status and activities of the Church and its members in particular dioceses. Each presented diocese got its own article, mainly to describe, evaluate and understand its specifics in the most useful and effective way⁷.

Zenon Fijałkowski in his monograph on the status of the Catholic Church in the occupied Poland in 1939–1945, when describing and evaluating September 1939 events and the beginning of the war, focused his attention on organization of the Church under new conditions⁸.

Another important work is this of Stanisław Podlewski that is dedicated to the fate of the Polish clergy during WWII. It documents German

³ K. Krasowski, *Szkice z dziejów papieżstwa*, vol. 1, eds. I. Koberdowa, J. Tazbir, Warszawa 1989; idem, *Episkopat katolicki II Rzeczypospolitej. Myśl o ustroju państwa. Postulaty. Realizacja*, Warszawa–Poznań 1992; *Biskupi katoliccy II Rzeczypospolitej. Słownik biograficzny*, Poznań 1996.

⁴ P. Wilk, *Episkopat Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*, Lublin 1982, pp. 791–793.

⁵ R. Bender, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce odrodzonej wobec problemów narodowych i społecznych 1918–1939*, in: *Życie polityczne w Polsce 1918–1939*, ed. J. Żarnowski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1985, p. 309 and next.

⁶ J. Macała, *Polska katolicka w myśli politycznej II RP*, Toruń 2005; A. Gruszecki, *Katolicy II Rzeczypospolitej o ustroju społeczno-politycznym*, Kraków 2007.

⁷ *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, ed. Z. Zieliński, Warszawa 1982.

⁸ Z. Fijałkowski, *Kościół katolicki na ziemiach polskich w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej*, Warszawa 1983.

crimes against Polish bishops, priests, nuns, and monks⁹. It should be noted that topics of Catholic Church political engagement and its actions to influence the population were treated only marginally, only in the form of small mentions. Still, there is no sizeable and comprehensive prints on the issue.

Under such circumstances, the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Mariusz Włodarczyk, on the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the direct threat of the armed conflict in 1939, is particularly valuable. It was defended at the Political Sciences Faculty of the Humanities Academy named after Prof. A. Gieysztor in Pultusk. The author touched a number of topics related to activities and plans of the Polish Bishops Conference, military chaplaincy, Catholic press, and media. It was prepared with the wide spectrum of different sources, mainly archival and press materials. It would be very useful if this dissertation would see publication¹⁰.

Basic information on members of the Polish Bishops Conference in the interwar period, including the range and scope of their involvement in patriotic and political initiatives just before the conflict and during the first weeks of occupation, could be found in above-mentioned works of K. Krawowski and Stanisław Wilk. This was done with the Conference considered as just an institution and also with regard to actions taken by its individual members, including these of the Primate of Poland – Cardinal August Hlond. Important sources for historians remain source editions of materials regarding teachings of the Primate. One of the most valuable is the selection of his works and speeches done by Stanisław Kosiński and teaching materials collected by Jan Konieczny. In both volumes, it is possible to find Primate's speeches and sermons from the period just before WWII. In many documents, Cardinal called the Polish society to make necessary sacrifices to save the Country¹¹. Jerzy Myszor and Jan Konieczny collected and published letters of Primate Hlond and Military Field Ordinary of the Polish Armed Forces, bishop Józef Gawlina from the period of 1924–1939. As for area of our interest, there are several important letters of the Bishop such as this sent out in August 1939 on organization

⁹ P. Podlewski, *Wierni Bogu i ojczyźnie. Duchowieństwo katolickie w walce o niepodległość Polski w II wojnie światowej*, Warszawa 1985.

¹⁰ M. Włodarczyk, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce wobec zagrożenia wojennego w 1939 r.*, Pułtusk 2012. The doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Prof. Wojciech Jakubowski, defended at the Political Sciences Faculty of Humanities Academy named after Prof. A. Gieysztor in Pultusk. On this occasion, author wants to express his gratitude to Mr. Włodarczyk, Ph.D. for sharing the copy of this Ph.D. Thesis.

¹¹ A. Hlond, *Daj mi duszę: wybór pism i przemówień 1879–1948*, ed. P. Kosiński, Łódź 1979; idem, *W służbie Boga i Ojczyzny: wybór pism i przemówień 1922–1948*, ed. P. Kosiński, Warszawa 1988; idem, *Dzieła. Nauczanie 1897–1948*, vol. 1, ed. J. Konieczny, Toruń 2003.

of all religious institutes and congregations in hospitals. That was one of the issues initiated by Gawlina. Another element that could be found in this paper is the question of the military training for clergy¹².

Kazimierz Smigiel described and assessed actions of Cardinal Hlond in September 1939, including circumstances of his departure from the Country and related polemics on this specific topic. The publication covered also fate of the Catholic Church in occupied parts of Poland, i.e. in Warthegau, with both Primate's dioceses (in Gniezno and Poznań)¹³.

Jan Pietrzak presented the attitude of the Cardinal towards 'Sanacja', also in on the eve of WWII¹⁴. Public speeches and sermons delivered before the outbreak of the armed conflict with Germany and his September stories could be found in short but very authentic and informative work of Jerzy Lis¹⁵.

Another important book is the monograph of Tomasz Serwatka on political concepts of Cardinal Hlond. Author carefully analyzed the attitude of the Primate towards the ruling establishment, its opponents, and the Nation itself, especially with regards to support to the Government and Beck's foreign policy just before the war.

Serwatka provided, as Smigiel did, detailed description of the Primate's position and activities in September 1939 and circumstances of his controversial evacuation from Poland. He also mentioned the most important excerpts from his public speeches and sermons (also delivered via radio) from the end September/October¹⁶. His message to the Polish Nation broadcasted by the Vatican Radio at the end of September could be found in documents collected and edited by Stanisław Kosiński¹⁷.

A lot of information on decisions and activities of the Cardinal on the brink of war, and especially on his controversial decision to flee the Country, could also be found in works of Romana Brzezińska, Jan Konieczny and Wojciech Necel¹⁸. Recent monographs on Hlond, written by Łukasz

¹² *Korespondencja Augusta Hlonda i Józefa Gawliny w latach 1924–1948*, eds. J. Myszor, J. Konieczny, Katowice 2003, p. 194 and next.

¹³ K. Śmigiel, *Kościół katolicki w tzw. okręgu Warty 1939–1945*, Lublin 1979, p. 75 and next.

¹⁴ J. Pietrzak, *Czy kard. August Hlond był zwolennikiem sanacji?*, in: *Kościół w II Rzeczypospolitej*, eds. Z. Zieliński, S. Wilk, Lublin 1981.

¹⁵ J. Lis, *August Hlond 1881–1948. Prymas Polski, Kardynał, działacz społeczny, pisarz, Katowickie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne*, Katowice 1987, pp. 9–10.

¹⁶ T. Serwatka, *Koncepcje społeczno-polityczne Prymasa Polski Augusta Hlonda (1926–1948)*, Poznań 2006, p. 13 and next.

¹⁷ A. Hlond., *W służbie*.

¹⁸ *Sługa Boży August Hlond*, eds. J. Konieczny, W. Necel, Poznań 1994; R. Brzezińska, *Ku zwycięstwu: rzecz o kardynale Augustynie Hlondzie*, Ząbki 2004

Kobiela and Teresa Jankowska, mostly repeated, and confirmed earlier conclusions of researchers¹⁹.

The most important and prominent figure in opposition to the post-May 1926 establishment was Cardinal Adam Sapieha. A lot has been written on this topic, on his decisions and actions. There is a sizeable subject literature on such issues. The most comprehensive description and evaluation of the Episcopal Curia relations with authorities were provided in the article of Adam Vetulani²⁰. Additional information on Sapieha before the outbreak of WWII could be found in works of Jerzy Wolny and Tomasz Pawlikowski²¹.

In this context, the most interesting issue had been the problem of Cardinal resignation submitted to the Pope Pius XI and then to Pius XII. He offered his resignation and then, having in mind the necessity the Cardinal to be responsible and stay with his Cracow Church in the times of political breakthrough. He then decided that under the circumstances, the faithful of the Church should not stay without their spiritual leader.

During the last months of peace, Cardinal Sapieha wanted to strengthen patriotic and civic postures of his Christian folk and clergy. Such approach was well elaborated in works of Bolesław Przybyszewski and Jacek Czajowski²². Grzegorz Chajko presented in the biography of the Lviv Archbishop Bolesław Twardowski his engagement in all initiatives to build the defence potential of the Country (mainly with regard to support the Air and Anti-gas Defence League – Pol. Liga Obrony Powietrznej i Przeciwgazowej, LOPP). He even proposed to provide church bell towers for air defence observation posts. This had already happened several years before the war²³.

Also some other important figures of the Polish Bishops Conference in 1938–1939 are very interesting and deserve our attention. This refers mainly to the Ordinary of Kielce, bishop Czesław Kaczmarek. His posture

¹⁹ L. Kobiela, *August Hlond 1881–1948, Stowarzyszenie Pokolenie*, Rzeszów–Katowice 2018; T. Jankowska, *Całkowicie oddany Bogu i Kościołowi. Sługa Boży Kardynał August Hlond*, Warszawa 2017.

²⁰ A. Vetulani, *Arcypasterz krakowski na przełomie epok. Adam Stefan Sapieha w latach 1912–1939*, in: *Kościół*.

²¹ J. Wolny, *Arcybiskup Adam Stefan Sapieha w obronie Narodu i Kościoła polskiego w czasie II wojny światowej*, in: *Księga Sapieżyńska*, vol. 2, *Działalność kościelna i narodowa Adama Stefana Sapiehy*, ed. J. Wolny, Kraków 1986, pp. 214–216; T. Pawlikowski, *Kardynał Sapieha*, Lublin 2003.

²² B. Przybyszewski, *Adam Stefan kardynał Sapieha. Pasterz Dobry – Ksiązę Niezłomny*, Łańcut 2002, pp. 244; J. Czajowski, *Kardynał Sapieha*, Wrocław 1997, p. 121 and next.

²³ G. Chajko, *Arcybiskup Bolesław Twardowski (1864–1944)*, Rzeszów 2010, pp. 362–363.

and activities were presented in the book of Daniel Wojciechowski²⁴. The situation in the neighbouring Diocese of Sandomierz and the role of its Apostolic Administrator Jan Kanty Lorek was described by Bogdan Stanaszek in his work on the clergy of this diocese²⁵. Overview of pastoral teaching of Stanisław Adamski, the Bishop of Katowice before WWII, was included to the work of Rudolf Brom²⁶. As for other hierarchs of the Church, it is necessary to mention the work on one of leading critics of the 'Sanacja' Government, the Ordinary of Łomża, bishop Stanisław Kostka Łukomski, prepared by rev. Tadeusz Białous.

The author underlined a very patriotic attitude of this bishop, who in his many pastoral letters in 1939 and during his public appearances always emphasized how necessary and right is to stand up and defend the Country. However, at the same time he was very realistically assessing Polish chances for a military success²⁷.

M. Włodarczyk in his Ph.D. Thesis also presented a dozen or so Polish bishops of the time, giving his attention for the most prominent figures of the Polish Bishops Conference. Particular place was given to Cardinal August Hlond. His views, opinions, and ideas from the period just before the war were reconstructed by the author on the base of his prints and sermons delivered to his Christian folk. Especially valuable and useful are findings on the Vilnius Archbishop Romuald Jałbrzykowski, Ordinary of Częstochowa Teodor Kubina, Ordinary of Kielce C. Kaczmarek, Ordinary of Sandomierz J.K. Lorek. They were based on analysis of Church Parish and Curia documents.

As for Jałbrzykowski, one thing should be mentioned here, and it is an important pastoral letter from the beginning of April 1939. In this document, he called upon the faithful and clergy to raise money for the defence of the Country. Bishop T. Kubina many times stressed the seriousness of the situation, which required strong posture and major clarity in the matter of defence. One of the manifestations of building the national unity on the brink of war was the statement of the Archbishop of Częstochowa to cast the ballots in the parliamentary elections, in the second half of 1938. This should be noted as this hierarch was widely known for

²⁴ D. Wojciechowski, *Biskup Czesław Kaczmarek (1895–1938–1963): w 40. rocznicę śmierci*, Kielce 2003.

²⁵ B. Stanaszek, *Duchowieństwo diecezji sandomierskiej w latach 1918–1939*, Lublin 1994, p. 428.

²⁶ R. Brom, *Nauczanie pasterskie biskupa katowickiego Stanisława Adamskiego (1930–1967)*, Katowice 2009.

²⁷ T. Białous, *Biskup Stanisław Kostka Łukomski (1874–1948). Pasterz niezłomny*, Rajgród 2010, pp. 193–194, 221 and next.

his strong criticism with regard to the ruling establishment. During the Eucharistic Congress in Zawiercie at the end of June, he called everybody – in case of war – to start praying for the victory of the Polish soldiers.

The author cited not only pastoral letter of Bishop Kaczmarek, but also instructions issued to priests of his diocese, sent out just before the outbreak of the armed conflict with Germany, in last days of August 1939. He ordered priest not to leave their churches, folk and parishes and wanted them to be actively involved in all organizations that would provide aid to the victims of war.

Very valuable is also information on Bishop Lorek (in 1939, the Sandomierz Diocese Apostolic Administrator), and his support to initiatives to raise money for National Defense Fund (Pol. Fundusz Obrony Narodowej) and Anti-Aircraft Defense Bonds (Pol. Pożyczka Obrony Przeciwlotniczej). As in the case of Bishop Kaczmarek, Włodarczyk was able to find special instructions issued by Bishop Lorek calling to support Polish Armed Forces, to back initiatives to provide aid to war victims, and to organize Church services in the intention of the Polish victory. He also wanted clergy to get acquainted with the principles of air defence, all to save human lives.

The same author has shown Polish Church dilemmas linked with its relations with the Armed Forces, and in particular with the issue of blessing of military equipment and arms. He used the example of the Sandomierz Apostolic Administrator to discuss problems of compatibility of Church's moral teachings with the request from the military. Bishop Lorek was strongly against such initiatives. He used arguments that the blessing could only be given to non-lethal pieces of equipment, i.e. military unit symbols and standards, gear for the military Health Service and communication equipment.

The figure of the Siedlce Bishop Henryk Przeździecki should also be mentioned here. He died before WWII (in May 1939), but he had been, already from the half of the 1930s of twentieth century, very much involved in all activities aimed at building support for the Polish Armed Forces. Especially, the last months of his life, it was the time of his increased activity in this domain. He tried, with a great success, to mobilise his priests and clergy to support FON and LOPP. One month before his death, he even transferred a large amount of his own money to the LOPP fund²⁸.

Due to its specificity, quite a separate issue had been the attitude of bishop Stanisław Adamski, who was responsible for the Katowice Diocese. On one side, he had in his area a significant group of German

²⁸ M. Włodarczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 83 and next.

Catholics, on the other – a part of Silesia inhabitants presented no clear national identity, especially with regard to the very existence and culture of the Polish State.

In this very context, Włodarczyk has shown a balanced attitude towards Polish authorities and the German ethnic minority. On one side, he defended rights of this ethnicity to held Church services in German, but on the other he has also been a great Polish patriot. He kept encouraging support to the Polish Armed Forces and showing loyalty to the Country. He had always emphasized that as for the issue of Polish independence, there is no room for a compromise. The author also underlined that to give example to the faithful of the Church, he stayed in his Diocese in Silesia, despite the possibility for evacuation offered to him by Polish authorities²⁹.

The posture of Catholic hierarchs after breaking out the war in September 1939 is a separate issue. The issue of Cardinal Hlond and elements related to his departure were already described above. As for Cardinal Adam Sapieha, the most prominent figure of the Polish Bishops Conference during the war and informal spiritual leader of Poles at the time, his posture and activities were comprehensively presented by T. Pawlikowski and M. Włodarczyk.

The second author also described the activity of Citizens' Committee for Aid to War Victims (Pol. Obywatelski Komitet Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny) led by this Cardinal³⁰. More could be found in the Cardinal's biography by J. Czajowski³¹.

Andrzej Czesław Żak presented the person and activity of the Warsaw Vicar General Stanisław Gall³². Grzegorz Chajko described in the biography the uncompromising posture of Archbishop Twardowski, the Lviv Ordinary, with regard to aggressors and occupants. Archbishop took the hardline approach and was for example strongly against proposal of the Lviv Military Commander who wanted to surrender the town to Soviets³³.

Kazimierz Śmigiel, as cited before, offered the summary of the adventures and trouble of the Włocławek Ordinary, Bishop Karol Radoński who left the Country to travel through Hungary and Yugoslavia, in his book on the war history of the Church in Warthegau³⁴. In the biogra-

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 96 and next.

³⁰ T. Pawlikowski, *op. cit.*, p. 67 and next; M. Włodarczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

³¹ J. Czajowski, *op. cit.*, p. 129 and next.

³² A.C. Żak, *Pierwszy biskup polowy Wojska Polskiego: arcybiskup Stanisław Gall 1865–1942: jubileusz 75-lecia Ordynariatu Polowego WP*, Warszawa 1994.

³³ G. Chajko, *Arcybiskup*, p. 363.

³⁴ K. Śmigiel, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

phy of the Lodz Ordinary, Bishop Włodzimierz Jasiński, by Kazimierz Dąbrowski, reader can find information on his appeal to the population of the city, encouraging to defend this important town and motives of his decision not to be evacuated from Lodz, despite such a proposal from the Voivode³⁵. More information on this Bishop is included in the work of Kasper Sipowicz, who focused his research on religious persecution in the Warthegau, and also in the above-mentioned print of Kazimierz Śmigiel³⁶. Maria Dębowska presented the situation of the Church in Volhynia and also described activities of the Luck Ordinary, bishop Adolf Szelażek during first weeks of war³⁷. T. Białous in a very comprehensive and precise way provided a lot of information on the posture and activities of the Lomza Ordinary, Bishop Stanisław Kostka Łukomski³⁸.

The figure of Katowice Bishop Stanisław Adamski, who had to deal with very difficult social and ethnic problems and had been forced to always look for compromise solutions, was characterized by Jerzy Wolny and Jerzy Myszor. J. Myszor not only referred to the posture and activities of Bishop Adamski in September 1939, but also to the Third Reich policy to liquidate the Katowice Diocese and its fight with Bishop, who was making each and every effort to save Polishness of Silesia³⁹.

Also J. Macała provided another insight to decisions and activities of Bishop Adamski, just before the war, also assessments related to the issue of services in German and Czech languages (after annexation of the Cieszyn Zaolzie). The demand not to use such languages in the services was submitted to the Bishop by the Office of the Silesian Voivode⁴⁰.

It is also necessary to mention here those bishops who had no such glorious cards in September 1939 as hierarchs mentioned above. It could be proved with their pastoral letters and proclamations directed to faithful

³⁵ K. Dąbrowski, *Arcybiskup Włodzimierz Jasiński 1937–1965*, Łódź 2015.

³⁶ K. Śmigiel, *op. cit.* p. 75; K. Sipowicz, *Prześladowania religijne w Kraju Warty*, Łódź 2016, p. 149.

³⁷ M. Dębowska, *Kościół katolicki na Wołyniu w warunkach okupacji*, Rzeszów 2008, p. 79 and next; M. Dębowska, *Diecezja łucka za rządów biskupa Adolfa Piotra Szelażka*, in: *Sługa Boży Adolf Piotr Szelażek. Życie, działalność, duchowość*, eds. L. Zygnier, R. Dmowski, Ciechanów 2017, p. 61 and next.

³⁸ T. Białous, *op. cit.*, p. 226 and next.

³⁹ J. Wolny, *op. cit.*, p. 224; J. Myszor, *Posługa pasterska biskupa P. Adamskiego w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939–1945*, in: *Duszpasterz czasu wojny i okupacji – biskup Stanisław Adamski: 1939–1945*, ed. J. Myszor, Katowice 1994; idem, *Historia diecezji katowickiej*, Katowice 1999, p. 295 and next.

⁴⁰ J. Macała, *Duszpasterstwo a narodowość wiernych. Kościół katolicki w diecezji katowickiej wobec mniejszości niemieckiej 1922–1939*, Katowice–Wrocław 1999, p. 124 and next.

of the Church, in which they fore example had called to show obedience to occupation authorities.

Such letters were prepared by the Pelplin Suffragan Bishop Konstanty Dominik already on the fourth day of the war, when German forces seized Pomerania. A copy could be found in the work of K. Leszczyński. Also Jan Śledzianowski, Daniel Wojciechowski and M. Włodarczyk indicated controversies linked to the statements that the Kielce Ordinary Bishop, C. Kaczmarek, welcomed German troops entering the city⁴¹.

In this context, Śledzianowski's biography of Kaczmarek published in 1991, is especially important as it includes his pastoral letters from September 1939, addressed to clergy and his flock. They showed how engaged the Bishop was in aid to the local population and upkeeping its spirit⁴².

Czesław Tomczyk in his work on the Czesłochowa Diocese during the German occupation, presented the situation and described behaviour and activities of Bishop T. Kubina (including very controversial issue of him passing on to Einsatzgruppe the information on the structure and composition of his organization⁴³. Tomczyk also marshalled the facts of exploiting the authority of the Catholic Church in the area of the Czesłochowa Diocese by Germans, including building the system of German propaganda newspapers for their own purposes⁴⁴.

The Roman Catholic Church has always been an important factor in building and strengthening Polish patriotism. Therefore, it is necessary to remember about the special role of Catholic priests on the Polish society and their influence on the local population. However, although a lot has been written about political and social role of the Catholic clergy during the interwar period, most of the authors evaluated its attitude and action in the last few months before WWII only sketchily and selectively.

Only a number of priests had been properly presented and evaluated, mainly those the most involved in patriotic activities. Very good example of such an approach, is the assessment of activities of rev. Karol Milik, the director of the institution that had well-earned opinion of an entity supporting Polishness in the area of the Prussian partition of Poland – the

⁴¹ J. Śledzianowski, *Ks. Biskup Czesław Kaczmarek w pamięci duchowieństwa diecezji kieleckiej*, Kielce 1989; J. Śledzianowski, *Ksiądz Czesław Kaczmarek biskup kielecki 1895–1963*, Kielce 1991; D. Wojciechowski, *op. cit.*, passim; M. Włodarczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 204 and next.

⁴² J. Śledzianowski, *Ksiądz*, p. 63 and next.

⁴³ C. Tomczyk, *Diecezja częstochowska w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej*, in: *Studia z historii Kościoła w Polsce*, vol. 4, Warszawa 1978, p. 253 and next.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

Popular Libraries Association. It could be found in the work of Piotr Nowak dedicated to the clergy of the Poznań Diocese⁴⁵.

It is known that the Polish Catholic clergy was one of groups, which had been one of victims of persecution by coming German troops. Wehrmacht and German security services perceived this social group and its structures among people from villages and cities, in parishes and dioceses, as particular element building and strengthening the Polish patriotism, national identity and sense of fidelity to the Country.

Regardless of such estimates, in many cases the direct cause for organizing executions of clergy was the real or even alleged involvement in support to Polish Armed Forces. Many such cases were presented in monographs of several dioceses on the times of occupation. For the Czechochowa Diocese it was done by C. Tomczyk⁴⁶.

As for the topic of terrorizing and oppressing the Polish clergy, one of the important and valuable works in the Biographical Dictionary of Priests from the Diocese of Chełmno by Jan Szylling. This entity was one of the most affected by German repression and extermination. Author included in this monograph presentations of priests killed in the first months of occupation for their patriotic posture and influencing the local population in this spirit⁴⁷.

Larysa Michajlik, in her monograph on the history of the Catholic Church in the North-Eastern Borderlands of the Second Polish Republic during WWII, submitted stories of priests killed and persecuted by Soviets, Red Army and sentenced by a vigilante justice organized by local Communists in area of Grodno⁴⁸.

Grzegorz Chajko described the situation in the Archdiocese of Lviv that was one of the main targets of the Red Army offensive and presented the facts of Catholic clergy persecution by Soviets. He also evaluated the attitude of Catholic priests towards Communism and Nazism⁴⁹. Rev. J. Myszor assessed cases of persecution in the Katowice Diocese in September 1939⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ P. Nowak, *Duchowieństwo w Archidiecezji Poznańskiej 1918–1939*, Poznań 2017, p. 314.

⁴⁶ C. Tomczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 236 and next.

⁴⁷ J. Szylling, *Męczeństwo – Służba – Walka. Duchowieństwo diecezji chełmińskiej w latach drugiej wojny światowej*, Toruń 2019.

⁴⁸ L. Michajlik, *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie 1939–1956*, Warszawa 2008, p. 37 and next.

⁴⁹ G. Chajko, *Duchowieństwo archidiecezji lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego wobec komunizmu i hitleryzmu (do 1945)*, in: *Kościół katolicki w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w obliczu dwóch totalitaryzmów (1917–1990)*, vol. 1, eds. M. Krzysztosiński, J. Wolczański, Rzeszów–Stalowa Wola–Lviv 2015.

⁵⁰ J. Myszor, *Historia diecezji katowickiej*, Katowice 1999, p. 317 and next.

The role of the Polish Military Field Ordinariate Bishop in war preparations and during the armed conflict is a separate issue. The most important and valuable monograph is that on the interwar period by Janusz Odziemkowski and Bolesław Spychała⁵¹. Authors provided many important details on the functioning of the military chaplaincy in the Polish Armed Forces, using many sources and materials – also to answer the question about the influence of chaplains on morale of troops and quality of military training⁵².

Last chapter describes the place and role of the Polish Military Field Ordinariate in months just the breakout of WWII and the September 1939 Military Campaign. In also includes points on activities of the Field Ordinariate Bishop, copies of his sermons and proclamations. In addition, the book presents activities and role of chaplains on the September 1939 battlefields and stories of these priests who lost their lives during the Campaign. Both authors underlined important role and positive influence of military chaplains and Christian values, promoted by priests on soldiers, who had not always been Catholics⁵³. As for the situation of military chaplains in the Northeastern Poland, in areas annexed in September by Soviets, it was comprehensively presented by L. Michajlik in her book on the history of the Catholic Church in the Grodno District during WWII⁵⁴.

Also M. Włodarczyk, mentioned here already several times, covered issues of the military chaplaincy in one of the chapters of his book. He used a number of archival material and copies of press articles, including very important publication, which was considered an official periodical of the Episcopal Curia – “Internal Order of the Military Field Ordinary” (Pol. “Rozkaz Wewnętrzny Biskupa Polowego”). That allowed him to analyze decisions and activities of Bishop J. Gawlina and his Curia in the crisis situation and in the wartime. He was able to evaluate methods of the Bishop to mobilize his chaplains for hard and difficult work and asked them to call Christians to support all national defence initiatives.

What is also important, Włodarczyk presented activities of Bishop Gawlina and his Curia on the forum of the Polish Bishops Conference. He promoted knowledge about security and defence-related issues in this specific environment. He wanted to convince other hierarchs how important

⁵¹ J. Odziemkowski, B. Spychała, *Duszpasterstwo wojskowe w II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1987.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 165 and next.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 207.

⁵⁴ L. Michajlik, *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie 1939–1956*, Warszawa 2008, p. 25 and next.

is to prepare priests to understand the specificity of the military service and how chaplains should use their capacity to become a kind of spiritual guides for the military and civilians. Gawlina was even able to convince the Bishops Conference to introduce new trainings for theology students on air defence and anti-gas defence. It was complemented by obligatory lectures in diocesan seminaries on the military chaplaincy⁵⁵.

Włodarczyk also presented elements related to military chaplaincy publications in the press. They mainly referred to questions how to justify military action and explain the 'Just War' term. Such elements had been a part of theoretical and practical preparations of readers to the coming armed conflict and to justify and rationalize the necessity of defending the Country against any aggressor. On the pages of "Rozkaz..." a series of articles by Father Bocheński was published already several months before the war, since April 1939, and they served a purpose indicated above. Vast fragments of such articles were cited by Włodarczyk. These publications had been an important element to shape attitudes of the clergy and the faithful. Włodarczyk wrote: 'The series of Father Józef Maria Bocheński articles have played a significant role in processes of soldiers' education and training for a coming war, at each and every level of command. They presented clearly articulated attitude of the Catholic Church and repeated its ethic teachings on issues that could have made the conscience of a soldiers uncomfortable. Such publications allowed soldiers to realize that military actions with all their consequences could be positive from the moral and religious points of view and even considered a positive and desired outcome. As Bocheński indicated, Poland satisfied all the morally positive conditions related to Just War. All mistakes and the fault were with the German invader [...]' "Rozkaz..." was readily available to files and ranks of the Armed Forces (it was an obligation and duty for each military chaplain to get and use such a publication). It resulted on wide knowledge of their content by the troops and chaplaincy⁵⁶.

The separate but very interesting question was the issue of blessing of armament and military equipment by priests and hierarchy. As we are all aware, the Polish Catholic Church did not recommend such services and limited its actions to blessing of non-lethal equipment as elements that would not be used to inflict death and pain on others. Also Bishop Gawlina assumed such a position. However, such attitude had not been common within the Polish Catholic clergy as indicated by the vivid expression of such controversies in the polemic published in journals connected to Curia of Gawlina. Thanks to Włodarczyk, who quoted opinions

⁵⁵ M. Włodarczyk, p. 130 and next.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

of many priests, we are able to learn about arguments of all sides. The best and most useful example are articles of rev. Jan Wojtyniak in "Rozkaz..."⁵⁷.

Also, the issue of Catholic organizations still deserves better attention. The Catholic press and journals should be better examined and evaluated. In 1930s of the twentieth century, more than two hundred Catholic periodicals were printed and distributed. They were prepared, edited, and circulated by the Catholic Action organization (Pol. Akcja Katolicka) under the aegis of specific dioceses and Church institutions, including charities. However, there is not too much information on the attitude of the Catholic press and other media towards last prewar months events.

Some bits and pieces could be found in the monograph of Jerzy Pils on relations of the Catholic Church with radio and film during the interwar period⁵⁸. The most comprehensive analysis of Catholic publications before the war was conducted by M. Włodarczyk, who pointed out at the most important prints such as "Przegląd Powszechny", "Prąd", "Przewodnik Społeczny", "Pro Christo. Wiara i Czyn", "Ruch Katolicki" and "Kultura".

As indicated by the Włodarczyk, such press and journals manifested the attitude that could have been fully identified with the necessity of the active defence of the Polish Statehood, including the armed struggle. They also emphasized ideological character of the war that had to be conducted by Christian Poland: on one side with the pagan Nazism, on the other – the battle with the godless Communism.

We also should turn our attention to articles in the Catholic press that had been directed to women. Such publications underlined their role in the upcoming war and warned about its total character. They cautioned that not only very existence of the Nation but also lives of their husbands and sons would be in danger. Authors placed accents also on the spiritual dimension. They emphasized that winning the war is not only the question of military equipment and armament. The moral force is required also to face the enemy on the battlefield. Therefore, Poland should win the spiritual arms race as it was able to build the moral and cultural strength on the base of the Gospel and Christian principles. Authors used the authority of Saint Thomas Aquinas and papal teachings that the physical defence of the Country against aggression is the duty of each Christian.

Another interesting aspect examined by Włodarczyk was the issue of Polish press reaction to the results of the München Conference and its implications for Czechoslovakia and Poland. It is noteworthy that the Polish media, in spite of all the criticism that can be levelled at Czechs

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 136 and next.

⁵⁸ J. Plis, *Kościół katolicki w Polsce a prasa, radio, film 1918–1939*, Lublin 2001.

for their passive posture and the total lack of will to combat, also pointed out at the national Czech character and lack of real and strong Catholic faith. The press claimed that it would not be the case in Poland and Poles would take up arms and fight with an aggressor. They emphasized that for Catholics there was no such approach like a peace at any price. To justify the defensive war to fight for the independence, there had been even articles on morally acceptable aggression against the country, which is led in its internal and foreign policies by a criminal ideology⁵⁹.

The separate question is the attitude of clergy and hierarchs of other Catholic Rites in Poland. Main problems to be discussed are the posture of the Greek Orthodox Church, its demographic potential (11% of Poland's population, 1/7 of all Polish Catholics), and position of this Church with regard to the idea of building modern Ukrainian national identity and political aspirations of Ukrainians.

This was clearly against Polish national interests, especially in the area of the Eastern Lesser Poland. The Greek Orthodox Church clergy, monks, nuns, and laity supported new ideas and also built the national identity of their faithful. They even resorted to activities undermining the Polish authority in areas, which were perceived as ethnically Ukrainian. There is an extensive body of literature on the subject. One of the main sources could be the work of rev. Władysław Piętowski. He analyzed the postures and activities of the Greek Orthodox clergy, also related to this Church attitude towards the Polish population before 1939⁶⁰.

Another important and pioneering publication is that of Florentyna Rzemieniuk, who presented the whole spectrum of political and social activities of the clergy, including anti-Government activities during the interwar period and just before the outbreak of WWII⁶¹. Another detailed analysis of anti-State activities of the Ukrainian underground movement with the application of the vast source base was conducted by Lucyna Kulińska⁶². Such phenomena were also examined for local populations,

⁵⁹ M. Włodarczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁶⁰ W. Piętowski, *Stosunki polsko-ukraińskie po wybuchu II wojny światowej. Zarys*, Czarna k Łańcuta 1988.

⁶¹ F. Rzemieniuk, *Walki polityczne duchowieństwa greckokatolickiego o niepodległość Ukrainy w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej (1918–1939)*, Siedlce 2003; eadem, *Stosunek greckokatolickiego duchowieństwa do państwa polskiego w czasach II Rzeczypospolitej*, "Rocznik Historyczno-Archivalny" 2004, 18.

⁶² L. Kulińska, *Działalność terrorystyczna i sabotażowa nacjonalistycznych organizacji ukraińskich w Polsce 1922–1939*, Kraków 2009; idem, *Antypolska działalność duchowieństwa greckokatolickiego w II Rzeczypospolitej*, in: *Polityczne, religijne i kulturalne aspekty sprawy polskiej na Kresach Wschodnich*, ed. B. Grott, Kraków 2009.

for example for Lemkivshchyna and Bieszczady Mountains⁶³. This was not the whole research spectrum, but it is necessary to state that the anti-Government attitudes had been well covered by source materials, also archival documents. It should be mentioned that we had also other Greek Orthodox Church postures evidently supporting the Polish Statehood. This last problem has just been only signalled in the subject literature, for example in the work of Anna Krochmal on relations between Catholic and Greek Orthodox Church clergy during the interwar period in the important Przemyśl Diocese⁶⁴.

The literature review leads us to the conclusion that abovementioned problems still had not been comprehensively done and not up to necessary details, especially with regard to political and social position of the Church and its influence on public sentiments in the last months before the war. In practical terms, each area presented above requires further research, filling the gaps with regard to research deficiencies and assuming a new, more comprehensive, and multi-dimensional approach.

The best known and examined are issues of the regular military chaplaincy. However, it would be still useful to widen and step up scientific research in order to be able to identify methods and effectiveness of influence of chaplains on files and ranks, also taking into account moral aspect of warfare. Next interesting element would be examining stories of military chaplains during the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939.

There are still some issues that require more research and analysis. One of them is the position of the Polish Bishops Conference as a whole with regard to the coming war. To do that, it is necessary to complement assessments with evaluation of attitudes of a number of bishops as we do not have the full information about all members of the Conference.

Some questions should still be answered – to what extent were all bishops engaged and involved in the spiritual formation of their faithful to prepare them for the hard times of the armed conflict? What was the scope and extent of their support to civilian and military authorities?

⁶³ P. Przybylski, *Rola duchowieństwa greckokatolickiego w kształtowaniu się opcji narodowych wśród Łemków w latach 1918–1947*, Toruń 2006; G. Wnętrzak, *Działalność proukraińska duchowieństwa greckokatolickiego na terenie Łemkowszczyzny w latach 1935–1939 w świetle raportów wojewody krakowskiego i lwowskiego*, in: *Dylematy kulturowe i społeczne pogranicza*, vol. 13, eds. P. Fraczek, J.K. Karolczuk, Sanok 2021; idem *Działalność proukraińska księży greckokatolickich w Bieszczadach w latach 1935–1939 w raportach wojewody lwowskiego*, in: *Współczesne regionalizmy i separatyzmy polityczne i kulturowe w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej*, eds. D. Miszewski, G. Wnętrzak, F. Dabrowski, Warszawa 2021.

⁶⁴ A. Krochmal, *Konflikt czy współpraca? Relacje między duchowieństwem łacińskim i greckokatolickim w latach 1918–1939*, Lublin 2001.

How did they act and behave in the first weeks of war? If they did little or nothing – that also needs explanation and assessment.

Undoubtedly, it would also be very interesting to evaluate attitudes of particular bishops towards political establishment through the prism of their political sympathies. It is sensible to ask about their positions with regard to and expression of support to either 'anti-Sanacja' political opposition, or Christian Conservatives, or National Democrats. The question remains how their attitude was motivated and what was the main factor that determined their actions? Available subject literature allows an assessment that there had not been big differences among the members of the Conference and all cooperated and supported Polish civilian and military authorities. However, a full and credible statement could only be prepared after detailed and comprehensive research that should include all members of this body, with the main focus on Ordinaries.

Another element that requires more study is the attitude of particular hierarchs in the first days of the Polish Military Campaign of September 1939 and how they managed to direct and control priests and clergy in their dioceses. The most important person for such examination should be Cardinal August Hlond, as the fact of him leaving the Country still evokes many discussions, and generate many interpretations and assessments, sometimes diametrically different. As the result, the question arises how actions, political and religious posture of Hlond on one side, and Sapieha attitude on the other, influenced activities and position of priests and clergy in Poland, in dioceses and parishes.

Unquestionably, it is essential to develop and widen the cognitive perspective with regard to the Catholic press in Poland as well. The research should include much wider catalogue of Catholic journals and newspapers – to create the possibility to look at research problems from many different perspectives. This should be done mainly for the most popular and most widely distributed press titles. The main problem to be thoroughly studied is how divergent had been postures of hierarchs and clergy and how we see elements presented in the work of M. Włodarczyk or rather we should talk about uniform and helpful attitude towards Polish civilian and military authorities? What is even more important, we should carefully look into the problem of Catholic press with regard to its geographical dimension and distribution. For example, in Silesia, due to its long and distinguished tradition, Catholic journals and newspapers attracted many loyal readers.

The Catholic Church as an institution, was holding considerable authority and played an important role in almost all social strata of the population. However, it should be noted that Catholics was a group that had not been ethnically homogenous. Therefore, it is required to conduct

detailed and comprehensive research that would include both the Polish press as well as titles published for ethnic minorities.

Another question that also should be addressed are problems resulting from moral dilemmas, all from the Catholic point of view. As Włodarczyk explained, such issues are neither simple nor easy to solve, despite the situation that the term of the 'Just War' and 'Right for Defence' did not generate any major controversies for Catholics. It would be quite interesting to check if discussions on pages of the Catholic press had an impact on faithful of the Church, on soldiers and the society as a whole or if it had just evoked emotions and moral questions. We have to realize that accomplishing such tasks would require long, painstaking, and intricate research. However, there are also some simpler topics as the question of blessings of military armament and equipment. It had been widely commented by the military and civilian circles. The attitude of the Church was even perceived as a kind of building a distance between the Church and the defence establishment.

In addition, it would be also necessary to touch other problems that had not been sufficiently described and evaluated in the subject literature. The most important task should be assessing attitudes of parish priests and vicars towards the coming war and their place and role in local communities. It would require long and detailed research.

Such topic is important because of few reasons. The teaching of bishops, although important and shaping the clergy in dioceses, had a limited influence on the faithful of the Church. Much more important was the posture of parish priests and vicars. Therefore, another research problem should be submitted for a next study – how were the teachings of bishops used by the clergy during the last month and weeks of peace? We should also identify other views and cases of priests distancing themselves from recommendations of hierarchy or even of boycotting bishops' prints and proclamations. We should also find reasons for such reactions.

As for the mixed ethnic environment, such as in Katowice, Vilnius, to some extent Poznań and Chełmno Dioceses, one important question should still be asked – on attitudes of clergy coming from ethnic minorities or priests sympathizing with such populations. One relatively numerous group should be carefully studied, i.e. clergy of the German ethnicity, who very often occupied posts of parish priests and had often been involved in political activities during the interwar period. In many cases they took actions not only against authorities but also thwarted plans and actions of local bishops, like in the case of Bishop of Katowice in his diocese.

It is also necessary to have a closer look on postures and anti-State activities of German Catholic priests. They have been carefully monitored

and evaluated not only by authorities (in case of Silesia, mainly by officials at the Voivodeship level), but also by Church hierarchy and Polish Catholics. No doubt that such problems require further detailed research as they have been only partially examined. Careful and arduous studies can bring many new elements, new documents, and new materials.

Another interesting question is the problem of the Roman Catholic clergy activities in the areas where the Catholic faith was clearly associated with the Polishness, and priests had to operate in the environment that was shared with other Catholic rites and confessions. This mainly referred to contacts of the Catholic Church with the Greek Orthodox Church in the situation when the latter in a more or less indirect way supported Ukrainian independence aspirations. The main problem was that they could have contributed to a disintegration of the Polish State.

The Greek Orthodox Church clergy and laity promoted such ideas quite openly and continued to shape mind and souls of their flock. This was done along with activities that were to undermine the status and position of Polish authorities in areas considered by this Church as ethnically Ukrainian. One more question should be asked here – on reactions of the Catholic clergy to initiatives and actions launched by priests and clergy of the Greek Orthodox Church.

On the other side, it is necessary to look beyond such issues and examine attitudes of the Greek Orthodox clergy in a much more detailed way, taking into account internal differentiation of this group, including facts of loyalty to the Polish State and their evaluation by both Polish and Ukrainian ethnic groups in the Eastern part of the Lesser Poland.

Also reactions of the Catholic clergy and hierarchy to decisions and activities of the Orthodox Church should be more thoroughly examined as this rite was the second most numerous Church in the Second Polish Republic. It can and should be done as there is a lot of available sources of the Polish civilian and military administration provenance related to the above-mentioned question.

The next area that should be elaborated is the influence of Greek Orthodox Church on plans and actions of Roman Catholics. This could have been an important factor in remote parts of the Eastern Lesser Poland, where the influence of the Orthodox was dominant and more and more important.

Next problem for a study is the question of Roman Catholic Church counteractions focused on negative phenomenon impacting the Greek Orthodox population. In some areas, i.e. in Lemkivshchyna, the local population was mostly pro-Polish. A part of it, local yeomanry, even set themselves a higher target – to be a part of Polishness and promote a Polish nationality.

Therefore, also the organization, plans and activities of the pro-military and patriotic Polish Yeomanry Association (Pol. Związek Szlachty Zagrodowej) in the last months before the war, should be much more elaborated as this association was supported, also directly, by the Roman Catholic priests, such as rev. Antoni Miodoński. He still awaits an author who will take up the task to prepare his biography.

As for additional source materials that can be used for research, Church archives should be further explored and exploited. In the first place, the Archive of the Primate of Poland in the Gniezno Archdiocesan Archive should be visited and surveyed. In particular, *Acta Hlondiana* should be carefully studied. Also other Polish archives can be exploited, including the Archive of Modern Records in Warsaw with its important fonds of Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education and Ministry of Interior. In the latter, for example it is possible to find a number of studies and reports on the situation in areas with many ethnicities, where the Polishness and commitment to the independence and welfare of the State were mainly found within the Catholic communities. This refers to Eastern borderlands and – to some extent – also Western voivodeships.

In this context, fond of different Voivodeships offices might be useful, as reports of Voivodes and Starosts from 1938–1939. They include many useful information on ethnic relations and religious problems on the eve of the upcoming armed conflict. The next thing to be done is to re-examine resources available in the Central Military Archive in Warsaw, mainly fonds of General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces and Corps District Commands.

Some thought and effort should be given to analysing the press, Church newspapers and journals, state-controlled and independent press, both supporting ‘Sanacja’ and opposition groupings. In each case, it would be necessary to identify press titles that favoured the Catholic Church and those, which took openly hostile attitude towards Catholic clergy and hierarchs, as in the case of Socialists and some members of the Polish People’s Party. This would certainly contribute to prepare and present much wider assessment of the Catholic Church status and activities before the war. Also regional press should be taken into account and carefully examined as it touched important local problems and could talk much more about regional ethnic, religious and social specificities than the central press, edited and printed in Warsaw.

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