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Status and Prospects for Research on Polish-Romanian Relations since mid-September 1938 to December 1939

Stan i perspektywy badań nad stosunkami polsko-rumuńskimi od połowy września 1938 do grudnia 1939 r.

ABSTRACT

The author draws on Romanian periodicals such as “Basarabia”, “Dobrogea jună”, “Facla”, “Gazeta Basarabiei”, “Iașul”, “Informația”, “Lumea Românească”, “Neamul Românesc”, “Renașterea”, “Timpul”, and “Transilvania” to examine how Romanian public opinion regarded Poland during the period from the Munich Conference of 1938 to the end of 1939. Initially, these publications presented Poland in a positive light. However, following the German aggression against Poland, while sympathetic voices emerged, this

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support faded within a few weeks. By the end of 1939, the topic had largely disappeared from public discourse.

Key words: Romania, press, society, diaries, Poland, International Relations, Germany, USSR (Russia)

STRESZCZENIE

Autor na podstawie periodyków prasowych takich jak *“Basarabia”*, *“Dobrogea jună”*, *“Facla”*, *“Gazeta Basarabiei”*, *“Iașul”*, *“Informația”*, *“Lumea Românească”*, *“Neamul Românesc”*, *“Renașterea”*, *“Timpul”* i *“Transilvania”* analizuje stosunek rumuńskiej opinii publicznej do Polski w okresie od konferencji w Monachium 1938 r. do końca 1939 r. Okazuje się, że w tym okresie stopniowo zmienia się sposób przedstawiania obrazu Polski od przyjaznego do neutralnego. Po napaści Niemiec na Polskę pojawiają się oznaki współczucia w stosunku do zaatakowanego kraju. Jednak po kilku tygodniach ten temat całkowicie zniknął z rumuńskiej przestrzeni publicznej.

Słowa kluczowe: Rumunia, prasa, społeczeństwo, dzienniki, Polska, stosunki międzynarodowe, społeczeństwo, Niemcy, ZSSR (Rosja)

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I would pay most of my attention to the period between mid-September 1938, in fact pre-München Conference days, up to December 1939, when the Soviet-Finnish war broke out. The first purpose is to evaluate the Romanian historiography – what studies were written on Polish-Romanian relations on this period. The status of this study, which is rather a modest one, may indicate main tasks for the future. It is important to describe and evaluate how these relations evolved during the period mentioned. It seems that the first change of Romanian public discourse in the press happened due to the München Conference. After that, it was relatively neutral up to March–April 1939, when Germany intensified its pressures on Warsaw. During the same period Romania became politically much closer to Germany.

Among the authors, whose contribution would be highly useful in exploring the period in question are Nicolae Dascălu, Georgiana-Margareta Scurtu and Nicolae Mareș. In the first paragraph of this study, I will present and assess their contributions and sources exploited. Next, I would make a deep dive into the Romanian press from the period between the München Conference and November 1939. Due to the authoritarianism of Carol II, the Romanian press was not free (journalists, for example, used a metaphoric style to express their views), but as for foreign affairs, trends are less clear. Here, I would separate this issue into three parts – the press, radio broadcasting, and the perception of the personalities.

For instance, readers can get acquainted with the considerations of a historian and politician N. Iorga, who had become close to Carol II. Also, an interesting diary by Mihail Sebastian, Romanian playwright, essayist, journalist and novelist would also be cited and assessed. Besides, I would also present differences in the approach to the situation between the Bucharest press and local editions in Banat or Bessarabia. The last ones had a more marked and tabloid format.

THE ROMANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Romanian historians in their works were often referring to the attitude of the Romanian society towards Poland. This included the revival of the lost friendly relations in 1937–early 1938s¹. N. Mareş stated that Polish Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigły was more realistic than Minister J. Beck. References to the Romanian society attitudes also appeared in the correspondence of the Romanian diplomats. That is why I would start with the issue of strategic communication and continue with the assessment of mood and position of the Romanian society towards the most important developments of the time.

N. Mareş published a book dedicated to Romanian-Polish relations in 1938–1939². He depicted the München moment and the events that followed up the breaking the Romanian-Polish alliance. On the other hand, we should take into consideration a hypothesis that the Polish position on Subcarpathian Rus' (in Romanian 'Rusia subcarpatică' or 'Maramureşul rutean') was a trick. I mean, the Polish position was the only reason for problems between the two allies but it was also used to start rapprochement with the Nazi's Germany.

It should also be mentioned that the Romanian side in the post-München period was very disappointed by the French attitude. As it appeared in a French report, dated 13 October 1938, the French Minister Adrien Thierry mentioned about changes in the Romanian public opinion attitude that permitted the German propaganda to have more impact. He wrote that France had to have a precise plan and act strongly to counteract, otherwise French influences would be eliminated from

¹ N. Mareş, *Lumini și umbre ale relațiilor româno-polone în perioada interbelică*, "Revista de Istorie Militară" 2010, 1–2, p. 67.

² N. Mareş, *Alianța Polono-Română între destrămarea și Solidaritate (1938–1939)*, București 2010.

the Romanian public life³. He did not cite the press, but it showed, and I would check it in the study, how this change was manifested itself in the Romanian press. It seems to me, and I would give some examples further, that somehow this had some effect on attitudes towards Poland. It had never been hostile, but it has become much more reserved.

As a separate case, there is no sufficient research in the Romanian historiography to see how the Silesian question was approached. Diplomacy had its channels and methods, but the ordinary citizen and several intellectuals saw the things differently. The drama writer Mihail Sebastian wrote in his diary on 1 October 1938: 'Peace. Some kind of peace. I do not have the courage to be joyful. The München Treaty did not send us to the front, it left us to live – but it prepares scary times for us. Just now, we would soon realize what is the Nazi pressure about.'⁴

When he heard the news that Cracow was taken by Nazis, he wrote with bitterness about the French-English attitude and that after minor panic, the joyful life in the Romanian capital Bucharest continued: 'The Germans are advancing in Poland, while the French and English stay at their lines. Before yesterday, Cracow has fallen. People talk that today evening this would be the fate of Warsaw. After 1–2 days of panic at Bucharest, the city is calm and quiet. The restaurants, the cinemas...'⁵.

I have also checked if Sebastian wrote anything on a meeting between Jozef Beck and the King Carol II in March 1939, but not much information on the topic remains available and useful. The author was an artist and his diary was mainly about theatre, novels he was writing or artistic projects he was about to launch. However, a careful reader would be able to notice a number of emotional moments, which can be added to a structural analysis of the Romanian press and radio broadcast of the time. If supplemented by other diaries, such personal documents can give us a new and complementary insight into the public perception of the situation and elements of strategic communication related to Poland. At least, his reflections on the German invasion in September 1939 prove that the topic was a highly discussed and there had been several rumors and fears surfacing around about what would happen next.

An important moment of that time in history was the meeting of Polish Minister Jozef Beck with the King Carol II and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Nicolae Petrescu Comnen aboard the ship *Lucafărul* in Galați on 18 October 1938. The main concern of Romania had been issues related

³ G.-M. Scurtu, *Relațiile internaționale în contextul celui de-al doilea război mondial*, București 2006, pp. 19–20.

⁴ M. Sebastian, *Jurnal 1935–1944*, București 1996, p. 185.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

to much longer border with Hungary after its advances in Subcarpathian region. Having lost its ally, Czecho-Slovakia, Romania remained being confronted with several countries, who contested its borders.

That kind of fear was a reasonable concern as proved by later events during the summer 1940. France was a remote country, far, far away and Paris abandoned its allies to their own fate⁶. As for public discussions and debates, main topics had been problems of civilian defense, mobilization and an urgent need to prepare Armed Forces and the Country for an armed conflict, including acquisition of weaponry and military equipment⁷. The Beck's policies were considered a kind of rapprochement with Budapest. Another case that worried Romanians had been the case of Subcarpathian Rus (see the paragraph on the Nicolae Iorga's article).

I would also refer to some other publications of Romanian historians, which, if connected with memoirs, can also provide a lot of information on a specific atmosphere and public mood in September-October 1938. Eliza Campus in 1975 wrote that in Romania there had been a common understanding of the fact that the political, security and military situation would bring unpredictable results⁸. Some examples of such attitudes are present in memoirs or diaries, such as notes of the known drama writer Mihail Sebastian.

In several places in his diary, the author, sometimes in a convoluted manner, underlined that he expected the antisemitism, which would proliferate because of the Hitler's success at München. But he also pointed out at the interesting fact that several persons, visiting and leaving Romania, were stopped and detained at the borders of several states during November-December 1938.

Another important source is the so-called *Journal of the last years* of N. Iorga. Despite some shortcomings and a necessity to make some editorial corrections, it provides a perspective on how the Romanian society reacted to the events of 1938-1939⁹. N. Iorga was a friend of Poland and

⁶ I. Sîrbu, *Izolarea politică a României și problema Basarabiei*, "Codrul Cosminului" 2005, 11, p. 127.

⁷ For example, the newspaper from Romanian port at Black Sea – Constanța – "Dobrogea jună", which usually have been writing about maritime transport, on 10 October 1938 reported the agenda of the day from official point of view, also to calm the spirits: 'The decisions, which are taken have the purpose to convince the public opinion to the defensive measures and are to bring balance, which is necessary for an effective management of the complicated situation'. "Dobrogea jună" 10 October 1938.

⁸ E. Campus, *Politica externă a României în perioada interbelică (1919-1939)*, București 1975, p. 81.

⁹ N. Iorga, *Jurnalul ultimilor ani 1938-1940: Inedit*, București 2019.

even if he was not satisfied nor happy with Polish decisions related to Zaolzie, he wrote dozens of articles supporting Poland in 1939¹⁰.

We can also add to the bibliography the notes of the Romanian Prime Minister A. Călinescu, assassinated when the German invasion of Poland had already been in full swing¹¹. Despite the fact that he was highly loyal to the King Carol II, his papers may be used as a complementary source as they might reveal some aspects of the situation from the official, governmental perspective. Despite so many years, several of his opinions and assessments are still not widely known to the public and historians. Only some researchers, with their projects focused on this specific period, accessed such documents.

In 2021, a post-conference monographic volume was published with a number of articles on Poland in 1939, on Polish asylum seekers and refugees, and other aspects. Also, Ion Constantin presented his views and considerations on events that were taking place 80 years ago¹².

Radu Florian Bruja dedicated his article to the Polish drama in September 1939 and used opinions and information available in Romanian memoirs and diaries¹³. He noticed that an 'analysis of the content of the journals as well as memoirs of those who lived their lives during the events of September 1939, may build a different image of how Romanians saw and assessed situation of Poland'. He mainly used papers of known Romanian politicians and diplomats, but also of some important public personalities and finally of a number Iron Guard activists.

His conclusion was that the Polish drama was not received with emotion, but with pragmatism¹⁴. Gabriel C. Bârtaș focused on the internment

¹⁰ There had been also a study on Iorga as a person who covered Romania's foreign propaganda during the interwar period. Unfortunately, it does not cover the years of 1938–1939, but stops at 1935–1936. N. Dascălu, *Nicolae Iorga și propaganda externă*, "Revista Istorică" 1991, 5–6.

¹¹ A. Călinescu, *Însemnări politice 1916–1939*, București 1990.

¹² I. Constantin, *80 de ani de la Marele Refugiu Polonez – moment emblematic al tradiționalei prietenii polono-române*, in: *O relațiilor polsko-rumuńskich na przestrzeni wieków w stulecie nawiązania polsko-rumuńskich relacji dyplomatycznych*, ed. E. Wieruszewska-Calistru, Suceava 2021, pp. 136–154.

¹³ R.F. Bruja, *Drama Poloniei din septembrie 1939 reflectată în memorialistica românească*, in: *O relațiilor*, pp. 156–178.

¹⁴ R.F. Bruja, *op. cit.*, p. 176. Among the diaries and memoirs he used are those of the King Carol II, C. Argetoianu, N. Iorga, I. Hudiță, D.C. Amzăr, N. Iorga, Martha Bibescu, Irina Procopiu, known priest Gala Galaction, C.C. Giurescu, T. Gârbea, Communist N.D. Cocea, R. Bossy, E. Dorian, A. Călinescu, Z. Boilă, A. Șafran, M. Sebastian, N. Tudorică, V.S. Cârdeș, and G. Hobincu. See: C. Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. 5, (1 iulie–31 decembrie

of J. Beck in Romania since September 1939 to his death in 1944¹⁵. Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor tried to assess the role of Poland in Romanian-German relations during the autumn of 1939¹⁶. A separate research area had been the northern 'Maramureş' – 'Subcarpathian Ruthenia'¹⁷.

M. Tăriță published the Romanian translation of "Beck's Notes", prepared during and after the meeting with the King Carol II¹⁸ and Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen on 19 October 1938 in Galați¹⁹. In the introduction to his print, he pointed out at the fact that the issue of the Polish-Romanian relations, in the context of 1938–1939 events, had to be revisited by scholars.

There is still a lack of in-depth analysis of the evolution of the Polish-Romanian relations in the autumn of 1938, as historians of diplomacy did not take a critical and comprehensive approach to the events. During the last 20 years, a number of articles and books on the Romanian diplomacy in Poland and Warsaw was prepared and printed. This could be exploited despite some problems with idealization of the situation, sometimes a superficial approach to research problems and efforts to use the past in the modern time politics. Some authors still do hope that their work would give a new impetus to the discussion on Polish-Romanian relations in 1938–1939²⁰.

As for authors dealing with Romanian foreign relations and the Romanian press, the most important researcher had been Eusebiu Narai from the West University in Timisoara. He analyzed elements published in the local newspaper from the Banat region – "Vestul". In his opinion, Hungary and Poland have played a game with Germany²¹. However, this judgment has not been supported by documents and other materials.

1938), București 2002; R. Bossy, *Amintiri din viața diplomatică*, vol. 2, (1938–1940), București 1993.

¹⁵ G.C. Bârtaș, *Colonezul Jozef Beck în România (18 iunie 1939–5 iunie 1944)*, in: *O relačjach*, pp. 179–199.

¹⁶ B.-A. Schipor, *Problema poloneză în relațiile româno-germane din toamna 1939*, in: *O relačjach*, pp. 200–206.

¹⁷ Moraru and other historians of 2010s began to use the term 'Ucraina subcarpatică', instead of the previously applied 'Rusia subcarpatică'. The Romanians from that region name themselves as Maramuresheny, means the inhabitants of Maramureh.

¹⁸ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie, ref. no. MF B 16223.

¹⁹ M. Tăriță, *Întâlnirea dintre Iosif Beck și Carol al II-lea (19 octombrie 1938), descrisă în notițele lui Beck*, "Revista de Istorie a Moldovei" 2018, 3, pp. 129–134.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

²¹ E. Narai, *Atitudinea Marilor Puteri europene față de crizele internaționale majore din 1938–1939, reflectată în paginile cotidianului bănățean Vestul. Studiu de caz: Anschluss-ul*, "Quaestiones Romanicae" 2020, 8, 2, p. 205.

The article dealt with two years of 1938–1939. Author referred to several articles from “Vestul” from February–March 1938, when Austria was annexed by Germany. What was quite interesting, Banat journalists had the intuition that next cases would be either Gdansk, or Czecho-Slovakia. One remark, which has to be made with regard to “Vestul” and other newspapers in 1938–1939, it was the usage of the term Russia instead of USSR.

If the number of studies on local press was bigger, it would have been easier to see how effectively the strategic communication worked. In the case of Banat, it seemed that sympathy towards Poland was as strong as was the national attitude. It is evident that Poland had much more sympathy at Chisinau than in Timisoara.

ROMANIAN PRESS AFTER MÜNCHEN

It seems that immediately after München there had been rumors, possibly intentionally distributed, about attacks on the Romanian border and on Romanian embassies. One of echoes of such stories was the article in “Dobrogea jună” dated 3 October 1939.

One of the most critical voices towards Poland in the Romanian press was this of the historian N. Iorga, a member of the King’s faction. During the interwar period, he was a friend of the Second Polish Republic. He was also the editor of the newspaper “Neamul Românesc”. Despite his conflict with the Iron Guard leader Z. Codreanu, he held a position of significant authority and prestige within the Romanian society, including right-wingers. He drafted a bitter article entitled *Polhungary*. It was reprinted by local press, for example by Chisinau newspapers. The article had all been about the Polish hegemony: ‘With the incorporation of areas inhabited by Ruthenian Maramuresh (who are still resisting, also thanks to the support of their brothers from Galitsia), a new state would be created, which would not become a strong country because Poland and its ambassadors want to keep their positions safe²².

There had also been a case of the publication of a map of Slovakia with main areas of interest for Hungary and its operations. Another example was the first page of the newspaper “Lumea românească” dated 25 October 1938 (No. 505). The map was placed under texts on holidays on the Romanian coastline and information on the health of the President of Czecho-Slovakia, Edvard Beneš.

²² ‘Lumea Românească’ 25 October 1938.

OVERVIEW OF ROMANIAN PRESS IN 1939

As for Romanian press in 1939, till the breakout of WWII, the number of texts referring to Poland had been quite low. Generally speaking, main problems related to German–Polish affairs and the case of Gdansk were reflected in the same manner as in other foreign media. As for Bessarabian newspapers, there had been just few positive reflections on Poland, such as celebration of the Polish national holiday of 3 May 1939. During the festivities, the personnel from the Polish Consulate was present, as well as a number of diplomats and representatives of Romanian authorities in Bessarabia.

The local press also covered issues related to the German demands of March 1939 and Romanian attitude with regard to the situation in Poland. On 22 March 1939, the Iași newspaper „Iașul” informed its readers that the Polish President would have a radio interview on 21 March. He emphasized the will of Polish citizens to defend their independence and the country’s sovereignty. He underlined that any foreign pressure and demands would not be accepted and tolerated²³. Besides the other news from Europe, at the same page, it published the text on anti-German protests in Warsaw against the German aggression in Czecho-Slovakia.

On 4 April 1939, the newspaper “Basarabia” published at its front page excerpts from the Polish press about German demands related to Gdansk²⁴. It had the title mentioning the denunciation of the Pact between Poland and Germany. Subtitles were – *The attitude of Poland towards the Gdansk issue* and *Hesitation of Poland would lead to a disaster*. Bessarabian journalists cited “Gazeta Polska” and “Wieczór Warszawski”. However, most of the front page was dedicated to other international events, such state ceremonies in Prague. Another information on Poland referred to Polish President Ignacy Mościcki obtaining extraordinary powers.

Before the war, journalists and editorial staff of Romanian newspapers presented a pessimistic approach to the development of political, security and military situation. They compared the situation to that before the München Conference, but with more dim prospects for Warsaw and Poland. For example, foreign assessments were used in the article from “Relazioni Internazionali”, which was a kind-of comparison of Poland’s situation to the status of Czecho-Slovakia before the München Conference: ‘We do not know if the scenario is written again by Mr Mussolini, Mr Ciano, or only by Mr Gayda, but it had a significant meaning. As stated, ‘The Government in Warsaw has to know that in Europe exist

²³ “Iașul” 22 March 1939.

²⁴ “Basarabia” 4 April 1939.

only four Great Powers and that for an 'European balance' the existence of Poland is not an essential element'. We know that this is a very serious situation, even in comparison Beneš and Czecho-Slovakia. Poles should get rid of illusions that they have support and sympathy in Rome.'²⁵

The author of the second article on Münchenization was quite intuitive with regards to tactics, which would be used by Germany (Priscus was probably a pen-name). It is interesting that he pointed out at the fact that in France there had been efforts to calm the war spirits, encouraging politicians not to get involved to the defense of Poland, as it was in the case of Czecho-Slovakia. Priscus mentioned that possibly some secret contacts had been established between financial circles of Germany and Great Britain to avoid the war. The editor of this newspaper, "Facla", known writer Ion Vinea and his newspaper editorial staff, in comparison to those magazines mentioned above, dedicated more effort and space to prepare and publish the best in-depth analysis of the events. It was not presenting just pure data and information.

ROMANIAN PRESS AND INVASION OF POLAND (SEPTEMBER 1939)

Another interesting example was the newspaper "Timpul", which published different opinions and narratives generated by Great Powers on the eve of the war against Poland. A general idea was that all the parts agreed that the civil population should not be a target for attacks, including air raids. Germans claimed that only military objects were attacked by aircrafts. In this context, the newspaper published the map of Polish map, as of 4 September, with places attacked by the German Luftwaffe – Poznan, Plock, Warsaw, Warka, Cracow, Krosno and Iwonicz.

The next newspaper, "Situația", had more sympathy towards Poland, although manifested it in a very balanced form. The anonymous author began his article with the following statement: 'After 48 hours since the beginning of Polish-German armed conflict, we still believe that the tragedy could be avoided, despite heavy gun fire and air raids of the German Armed Forces'. After the statement of Adolf Hitler that he supported the idea of the US President about avoiding attacks on the civil population, the author wrote: "On the other side, the official Polish reports mentioned women and kids among many victims in the cities bombed by German

²⁵ "Facla" 21 August 1939.

aircrafts"²⁶. There had been a big title on the first page, printed in red: *Fighting continues on the Polish-German Front*²⁷.

One of interesting cases was that of the Orthodox newspaper from Cluj-Napoca "Renașterea"²⁸. It strongly condemned the German–Soviet Pact of 23 August 1939. Despite the fact that it was a religious newspaper, in its second September 1939 issue (No. 37), it included information about war, also on Italy, Netherland, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Bulgaria, USA, all who had declared their neutrality.

When France and England declared the war on Germany, people of Romania had been in a kind of shock as they considered that as the beginning of a new World War. In fact, not much happened in the West after this important moment, and such announcements were considered a political declaration.

In the issue of "Renașterea" dated 17 September 1939, a small text was published on the heroic fight of Polish troops with Germany and that the unities of German Wehrmacht were stopped at the outskirts of Warsaw on 10 September and German units were forced to retreat²⁹. The next issue, dated 1 October 1939, was solely dedicated to the assassination of the Prime Minister. There was no news from Poland anymore, except one – information about expression of solidarity by Verdun Mayor to the President of Warsaw. Another text was published on 8 October 1939 (No. 41), after the news on Hitler's peace proposals and information on position of USA with regard to European developments.

As for the situation of Poland, it was underlined that it had to face another national tragedy, the Fourth Partition of Poland. The Country was divided for the fourth time in its history, that time by the German Third Reich and USSR. The last elements of Polish defense have fallen, Warsaw was in ruin, and the Hel peninsula seized. President Moscicki resigned from the office (in December 1939, he went to Switzerland). It was expected that in a very short time Hitler would enter Warsaw³⁰. In-depth analyses of texts published in regional newspapers and journals, also from Transylvania, Bessarabia and Banat, could still help to provide

²⁶ "Timpul" 4 September 1939.

²⁷ Rom. 'Luptele continuă pe frontul polono-german'.

²⁸ Its issues can be consulted on the web page of the Lucian Blaga Library in Cluj Napoca, the digital collection 'Transilvanica'.

²⁹ The next issue on 24 September 1939 mentioned the attack of the Red Army and the fact that Soviets sent to a couple of states, including Romania, a note about neutral attitude towards them and about the dissolution of Polish organizations in Gdansk.

³⁰ "Renașterea" 8 October 1939, p. 4.

an extended perspective on how the Romanian society perceived the events of 1938–1939.

As for national news magazines, journals and newspapers, we can use an example of “*Informația*”. It was one of few media that informed, on 3 October 1939, about capturing the Hel Peninsula by Germans. Most of texts on war had been very cautious and balanced. They also presented proposals submitted by Hitler and Ciano, and printed information about very aggressive declaration of Ribbentrop on declarations and decisions taken in London and Paris.

The proposal of Hitler was presented in Romanian media as information collected by one of “*Telegraf*” journalists and communicated from Amsterdam. There were two points in this information – the first one was the creation of a Polish puppet state and the second – on a conference of five powers to solve existing problems. This was just a kind of flash news but it was also an indicator that Romanian media started to be influenced by Germany.

There was no news about refugees or victims of German and Soviet attacks. The local Romanian press still presented friendly and positive attitude towards Poland as in the case of the Cluj Orthodox newspaper. We can find next such examples during the research.

POST-SEPTEMBER ATTITUDE TO POLAND AND GERMANY

As for information on political, security and military situation, after the end of the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939, Romanian press mainly re-printed texts from German and French-English media. Pro-German sympathies started to surface before the Soviet-Finnish war. By the end of the year, Poland and Polish issues died down and had not been main topic in magazines, newspapers and journals. One of last articles on Polish topics was published the agricultural journal in Transylvania (it was not only about agriculture) – “*Transilvania*”, September–December 1939 issue.

Several authors underlined the necessity to remain united, keep calm and carry on. They, for example, referred to the speech of C. Argetoianu, former Prime Minister, who stated that ‘everyone had to cut links with the past and assemble around the Crown and National Flag’. There had also been mentions about war spreading all over Europe since September 1939. However, nobody even tried to point out at main powers, which set the whole continent on fire, Germany and USSR, on 17 September 1939³¹.

³¹ “*Transilvania* (buletin de tehnică a culturii)” September–December 1939, pp. 301–305.

Since mid-November 1939, we do not see any more references to Poland. It was a moment, when Bessarabian newspapers started to publish materials that could be assessed as pro-German. One of the most distinct examples had been the article with a photograph of German soldiers waiting at the train for their letters from home, titled *News from home* (*Vești de acasă*)³².

On the top of the same page, other information was printed about protests in Prague and execution of nine students. In practical terms, the Bessarabian newspaper copied and translated information from the German news agency DNB. It was the moment, when regular journalism ended for "Gazeta Basarabiei" and other magazines, journals and newspapers. It is very likely that this change happened under the pressure from the Government. Hopefully, archival research would reveal documents related to such developments in media. This specific newspaper had already on its front page the word – 'cenzurat'.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

This article is a short overview of the Romanian historiography of the interwar period and the most important works on international relations and Polish–Romanian relations in 1938–1939. It also refers to several important developments from that period. i.e. the München Conference, situation in Subcarpathian Rus, Germans demands submitted to Poland in March–May 1939 and some other events.

Analysis of the content of Romanian press from the München Conference to November 1939 allows identification of some important caesurae. Since mid-October 1938, Romanian public opinion started to consider Warsaw's support for Budapest as inappropriate. Since March 1939, a number of texts on German demands and political pressure on Poland was published, complemented by information on Paris and London declarations, decisions and activities. As for the period of March–September 1939, media repeated previous ideas and concepts. With more politically and militarily active Germany, also the tone of the Romanian press started to change, although we can still identify different approaches in the Romanian media, including press. The "Facla" was one of the few with high level of analysis and interesting conclusions, which indicated that Poland would soon face a fate similar to Czecho-Slovakia.

As for the project, it is very likely that a detailed analysis of the Romanian press at national and local levels as well as examination of the budget

³² "Gazeta Basarabiei" 20 November 1939.

of the Ministry of National Propaganda, memoirs and personal diaries, could build a wider research perspective with regard to the 1938–1939 period. In September 1939, Romanians provided a lot of support to Polish emigrants and refugees. This quickly changed and the Government in Bucharest started to change its options and began acting as a pro-German actor. This did not prevent Romania's losses of the territory in the summer 1940, Ion Antonescu's rise to power and revival of the Iron Guard. Being sympathetic, ironic and fatalist towards Czechoslovakia, Poles and Poland, Romanians, despite declared neutrality in the conflict, were very close to repeat the fate of above-mentioned countries.

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