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Czech Historiography Towards Relationships of the  
Second Czechoslovak Republic, Protectorate of Bohemia  
and Moravia and Czechoslovak Political and Military  
Emigration with the Direct Genesis and Course  
of the Polish-German War in September 1939.  
Status and Prospects for Research

*Historiografia czeska wobec związków II Republiki Czechosłowackiej,  
Protektoratu Czech i Moraw oraz czechosłowackiej emigracji polityczno-  
wojskowej z bezpośrednią genezą i przebiegiem wojny polsko-niemieckiej  
we wrześniu 1939 r. Stan i perspektywy badań*

ABSTRACT

The article presents a review of Czech research on the history of Poland during German preparations for World War II. The interest of Czech historians in these issues was conditioned by events from the history of the Czech countries and Czechoslovakia. The analyzed topic is therefore more related to the history of Czech/Czechoslovak-Polish relations. Particular attention was paid to the issues of re-demarcation of the border in Teschen Silesia in 1938 and organization of Czechoslovak anti-German resistance movement structures in Poland after the disintegration and occupation of majority of the areas of the former Republic by the German Third Reich. The current state of research suggests that there is still no cross-sectional study on the subject of less than a year of existence of the so-called Zaolzie within the Republic of Poland. The subject of analysis should also be the role of Czech lands in planning of the German invasion of Poland and during the 1939 Polish campaign itself. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was an important area of concentration of the aggressor's forces. The research of the German archives may result in a number of findings and extend the knowledge about processes of deployment and supply of Army Group "South". It would also be important to determine what arguments were used by German authorities in the Protectorate to influence Czech public opinion and incite anti-Polish sentiments just before the war and at during its very beginning.

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#### STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł daje przegląd czeskich badań historycznych dotyczących dziejów Polski na tle niemieckich przygotowań do II wojny światowej. Zainteresowanie tą problematyką historyków czeskich warunkowały wydarzenia z historii Czech i Czechosłowacji. Analizowany temat pokrewny jest więc raczej dziejom stosunków czesko/czechosłowacko-polskich. Szczególną uwagę zwracały kwestie nowego wytyczenia granicy na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w 1938 r. oraz budowy po rozpadzie i okupacji większości republiki przez III Rzeszę czechosłowackich struktur oporu antyniemieckiego w Polsce. Stan badań wskazuje, że nadal brak jest przekrojowego opracowania na temat niecałego roku funkcjonowania tzw. Zaolzia w obrębie RP. Przedmiotem studiów powinna być też rola ziem czeskich w planowaniu przez Niemcy napaści na Polskę i podczas samej kampanii 1939 r. Protektorat Czech i Moraw stanowił przecież istotny fragment zaplecza koncentrowanych sił agresora. Badania archiwaliów niemieckich mogą wnieść szereg cennych ustaleń dla wiedzy o procesach dyslokacji i zaopatrzenia Grupy Armii “Południe”. Ważne byłoby także ustalenie, jaką argumentacją posługiwały się na obszarze Protektoratu czynniki niemieckie, próbując antypolsko wpłynąć na czeską opinię publiczną u progu wojny i na jej początku.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Historia, Czechosłowacja, Polska, Śląsk Cieszyński, Zaolzie, Protektorat Czech i Moraw, Niemcy, przygotowania do wojny, Wehrmacht, Grupa Armii “Południe”, czechosłowacki zagraniczny ruch oporu

To ascertain the status of research on the attitude of Czecho-Slovakia<sup>1</sup> and its citizens to problems linked with the Polish September Military

<sup>1</sup> This name was introduced after introduction of Slovak autonomy. Although the Constitutional Act was adopted only on 22 November 1938, many historians still use the term ‘Czecho-Słowacja’ for the whole period of the II Czechoslovakian Republic.

Campaign of 1939 and events that preceded that important point in time, it is necessary to draw the attention of readers to the fact that it would be necessary to change optics and consider specificities linked with the history of this Country<sup>2</sup>.

As for scope of Czech historians' interest, they have built a different chronology to deal with such issues. What should be noted is that the 'September 1939' point in time has no significant meaning from the point of view of Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia and Czecho-Slovakia, at least not the same as in Poland. For them, other events were crucial and decisive: the Munich Conference of 30 September 1938, dismemberment of the Republic and annexation of Czech territories on 15 March 1939.

Such chronological framework also defines main areas of interest of Czech historians with regard to Poland. Generally speaking, we can divide issues under research into two categories. The first one refers to territorial changes after 30 September. As we all know, in October Czecho-Slovakia gave out not only Sudetenland to Germany, but also Zaolzie to Poland<sup>3</sup>. This particular fact significantly influenced Polish-Czech relations during the times of the Second Republic<sup>4</sup>. After 15 March 1939, the Zaolzie issue had fallen by the wayside. Poland, from the point of view of Czech authorities and Czech Nation, started to play a different role. It had become the Country that allowed and supported building structures of Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement. On the beginning of September 1939, the first Czechoslovak military unit was formed abroad, and its existence was formally acknowledged by the Government in Warsaw<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> I want to express my gratitude to my colleagues: Aleš Binar (University of Defence in Brno) and Pavel Kreisinger (Palacký University in Olomouc) for their remarks and comments during my work on the article.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'Těšínsko' (Pol. Cieszyńskie) is commonly used in the Czech historiography with regard to the part of Cieszyn Silesia that went to Czechoslovakia after announcing arbitration results on 28 July 1920 and/or handed over to Poland in 1938. It should be noted that the Polish term "Zaolzie" does not mean the same as the Czech 'Těšínsko' – geographical area with such name covered the territory with predominantly Polish population, i.e. Český Těšín and Fryštát.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'Second Republic' refers to the period from the Munich Conference to annexation of Czechia, Moravia, Silesia, separation of Slovakia and taking over the Northern part of Transcarpathia by Hungary.

<sup>5</sup> Officially, the name of the *Legion Czesko-Słowacki* (Eng. *Czech-Slovak Legion*) was used (Cz. *Legie Čechů a Slováků*), although the Polish President Decree of 3 September 1939 allowed the establishment of Czech and Slovak Legions. Such approach and name emerged due to traditional Polish policy towards Czecho-Slovakia, i.e. non-accepting the idea of 'Czechoslovakism'. Due to practical reasons, both national legions were to be formed

Due to limited volume of the article, the author focused on works of Czech researchers, despite the situation that some topics also evoked a great interest of many Polish scientists and Polish historiography. Such cases would be mentioned in the work only occasionally when it would be really needed. The article does not have an ambition to list all related works but will present the most significant prints, important for showing and evaluating the most important research trends. More detailed information would be provided to the reader in the annotations.

Here, it is necessary to draw attention of readers to the qualitative aspect of the Czech historical research after the political and social changes of 1989. Before November 1989, especially in 1970s and 1980s, modern interpretation of the 20th century history in the Czech historiography was more or less deformed by the Communist ideology. In addition, Czechoslovak Communist regime had not allowed for any objective and thorough research of regional territorial conflicts (including Zaolzie)<sup>6</sup>. Regular and free studies of such problems were possible only after the 'Velvet Revolution' in 1989. This improved both quality and quantity of historical works<sup>7</sup>.

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as one Unit. The text of the Presidential Decree – in: H. Batowski, *Agonia pokoju i początek wojny. Sierpień–wrzesień 1939*, Poznań 1984, p. 448.

<sup>6</sup> See: M.K. Kamiński, *Moje doświadczenia z komunistycznym aparatem represji wymierzonym w słowo pisane*, in: *Cenzura w PRL. Relacje historyków*, ed. Z. Romek, Warszawa 2000, pp. 115–120.

<sup>7</sup> We now can use many bibliographic Czech historiography reviews on Czech-Czechoslovak-Polish relations. See also: J. Friedl, *Die tschechische Historiografie und die Geschichte Schlesiens des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Interferenzen zwischen Regionabewusstsein und Historiografie in Schlesien. Erträge der Tagung des Historisch-politischen Arbeitskreises des Heimatwerks schlesischer Katholiken*, ed. R. Bendel, Berlin 2021, pp. 19–52; idem, *Nie tylko Zaolzie. Dzieje Polski 1918–1990 w historiografii czeskiej*, in: *Widziane z zewnątrz*, vol. 2, Warszawa 2011, pp. 185–206; J. Vykoukal, *Polské dějiny a česko-polské vztahy po roce 1945*, in: *Česká polonistika a polská bohemistika na přelomu století/Czeska polonistyka i polska bohemistyka na przełomie stuleci*, Praha 2009, pp. 157–170; J. Valenta, *Česká historiografie v nejnovějších dějinách Polska v posledních třech desetiletích*, in: *Polonistické studie v České republice a bohemistické studie v Polské republice v posledních třiceti letech. Historické a filologické obory*, eds. M. Myška, R. Gładkiewicz, Praha 1995, pp. 71–90; idem, *Dějiny Polska v 19. a 20. století a česká historiografie, "Slovanské historické studie"* 2001, 27, pp. 60–80.

## THE PERIOD FROM THE MUNICH CONFERENCE TILL 15 MARCH 1939

Due to availability of necessary archival materials, Czech historian started serious research on September 1938 events only in 1950s<sup>8</sup>. Initially, they focused on diplomatic issues. The next decade saw the research on the role of Poland during so-called Sudetenland Crisis and situation in the part of Teschen Silesia annexed by Poland, after the ultimatum issued by Polish authorities. The 1960s, it was the time of liberalization of political and cultural relations in Czechoslovakia. Although some ideological distortions were clearly noticeable, but from the factographical point of view most of the elements are still of use today.

One of the most important examples was the comprehensive synthesis of Polish–Czech relations – *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*<sup>9</sup>. The team of authors, led by historian Václav Žáček, prepared the two-volume publication. The part on the interwar period, prepared by Jaroslav Valenta, was based on extensive archival research, but it does not have, as the whole work, any annotations<sup>10</sup>. Respective chapters describe and assess issues the problem of Zaolzie annexation and establishment of Czechoslovak resistance movement structures on the territory of Poland. However, due to the approach taken by authors and structure of the work, it could only be used now as a kind of review of the most important events.

The research on Zaolzie in the above-mentioned period was mainly conducted by scientists from the Silesian Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (Cz. *Slezský ústav Československé Akademie Věd – SÚ ČSAV*) in Opava, established in 1958, after the restructuring of the Silesian Studies Institute (Cz. *Slezský studijní ústav*). They prepared first works on the history of the Zaolzie and Czech/Czechoslovak–Polish relations in 1938–1939. One of characteristic features of their studies was identification of the period of October 1938 to the beginning of 1939 by Czech researchers, the time Zaolzie had been already a part of Poland, as the start of a more extensive historical unit, years between 1938 and 1945<sup>11</sup>.

In the spirit of communist ideology of the time, most of scientists presented the fight of local Polish and Czech populations (especially

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<sup>8</sup> One of pioneers of such an approach had been Robert Kvaček (1932–2024).

<sup>9</sup> *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*, vols 1–2, Praha 1964–1967.

<sup>10</sup> J. Valenta, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> More details on this specific topic with views and opinions on periodization of Silesian history at this time: M. Borák, *K problémům periodizace dějin Slezska v letech 1938–1945*, in: *K periodizaci dějin Slezska (Sborník z pracovního zasedání v Opavě 11.–12. prosince 2007)*, Opava 2008, pp. 189–197.

Communists) with fascism – firstly with Polish<sup>12</sup>, then German. Even with such approach, they had not been able to distort the real image of ethnic and social relations on the Olza river after October 1938. It was clear that all had to handle such issues with a great care. Pre-war events had been still vivid in the memory of local populations, but both Polish People's Republic and Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Cz. and Slov. Československá Socialistická Republika, ČSSR) authorities did not want to touch such sensitive issues, which could have jeopardized officially declared friendship between nations, two neighbouring and fraternal peoples of two socialist states.

Works prepared at that time concentrated on economic result of Zaolzie annexation by Poland and on German subversive acts on the eve of WWII. Despite all these elements some prints, especially those of Otakar Káňa<sup>13</sup> and Andělín Grobelný<sup>14</sup>, are still of permanent value.

We have to remember that research projects on Zaolzie in 1938–1939 were considered as a part of more general research on the Ostravsko Region. In the past, it was linked with studies on working-class movements and economic history of these geographically and historically defined regions. Ostravsko Industrial Region included both Moravia but also so-called former Austrian Silesia. Therefore, in the project we should also address and take into account publications on Moravian Ostrava agglomeration and Ostravsko Industrial Region during the times of the Second Republic<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> During this period, representatives of the Polish “Sanacja” regime had been termed by the Czechoslovak authors as fascists – See: M. Myška, *Z tajných zpráv NSDAP o Těšínsku*, Ostrava 1964, pp. 7, 10.

<sup>13</sup> O. Káňa, R. Pavelka, *Těšínsko v polsko-československých vztazích 1918–1939*, Ostrava 1970. Ryszard Pavelka was the pen name of the Polish historian Stefania Stanisławska, who after the March 1968 was not able to publish her works in Czechoslovakia under the real name.

<sup>14</sup> A. Grobelný, *Český Těšín – hlavní sídlo německé iredenty v letech 1938–1939*, part 4 Těšínsko, 1970, pp. 57–58; idem, *Německá menšina na Těšínsku v letech 1938–1939 a příprava války*, “Časopis Slezského muzea”, 1969, pp. 165–170; idem, *Německá menšina v Třinci a její spojení s Třetí říší*, in: *Z dějin třineckých železáren*, ed. S. Zahradník, Praha 1970, pp. 332–333; idem, *Działalność mniejszości niemieckiej na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w latach 1938–1945*, in: *Śląsk i Zagłębie Dąbrowskie w walce z okupantem hitlerowskim 1939–1945. Materiały z sesji naukowej zorganizowanej w 30 rocznicę najazdu hilerowskiego na Polskę. Katowice, 11–12 września 1969*, Katowice 1970, pp. 135–138; idem, *Nápor nacistů na Těšínsko v r. 1939*, “Časopis Slezského muzea” 1970, 2, pp. 128–138; idem, *Těšínsko jako předmět německé politiky v letech 1933–1939*, “Časopis Slezského muzea” 1970, 1, pp. 47–61.

<sup>15</sup> M. Myška, *Ostravsko mezi Mnichovem a 15. březnem 1939*, “Slezský sborník” 1963, 3, pp. 257–276; 1963, 4, pp. 404–423; V. Plaček, *Ostravská průmyslová oblast v letech 1938–1945*,

Political changes after so-called Prague Spring of August 1968 negatively influenced the development of the Czech historiography. Many authors, who before sympathized with political and economic reforms, had to give up their scientific projects and accept political limitations put on science. Since that time, the main accents were placed on 'fight with fascism' during WWII and emphasizing the leading role of Communists in the struggle with Nazism/Fascism. As a result, the problem of Zaolzie and relations with Poland had found itself in the margins of the 'official science' It resulted in articles and other publications of secondary scientific value and importance<sup>16</sup>. The only one exception had been the insightful study of Grobelný on social impact of Zaolzie annexation by Poland<sup>17</sup>.

The qualitative change started in the second half of 1980s with the research carried out by a member of SÚ ČSAV – Mečislav Borák. His dissertation on the anti-fascist resistance movement in Zaolzie in 1938–1945 of course included elements highlighting the merits of people and entities supporting Communists, but also touched on issues that had not been described and assessed before, such as the establishment and action of the Silesian Resistance Movement (*Slezský odboj*)<sup>18</sup>. Understandably, he focused on the period of WWII and dedicated most of his print to events of that time. His dissertation, completed in 1987, was not officially published<sup>19</sup>, but had built a starting point for further research on Zaolzie,

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in: *Průmyslové oblasti*, vol. 3, Opava 1971, pp. 8–46; N. Prokešová, *Následky mnichovské dohody pro ostravskou průmyslovou oblast*, "Slezský sborník" 1969, 1, pp. 1–30; N. Pavelčíková, *Politicko-sociální podmínky vývoje ostravsko-karvinského revíru v letech 1938–1945*, in: *Studie o vývoji průmyslu a průmyslových oblastí*, vol. 2, *K dějinám uhelného hornictví v Československu*, Opava 1972, pp. 139–173.

<sup>16</sup> B. Gracová, *Těšínsko v říšskoněmeckém tisku na podzim 1938*, "Těšínsko" 1979, 1, pp. 1–4; eadem, *Polský tisk a hospodářský význam Těšínska koncem roku 1938*, "Časopis Slezského muzea" 1974, pp. 1–14; eadem, *Polský buržoazní tisk o některých otázkách společenského života na Těšínsku roku 1938*, "Časopis Slezského muzea" 1976, 2, pp. 139–150; eadem, *Německý tisk o Těšínsku na počátku roku 1939*, "Těšínsko" 1979, 1, pp. 14–15. A very valuable study of Czechoslovak evacuation of Zaolzie in autumn 1938 was prepared by Rudolf Žáček (*Zábor Těšínska v říjnu 1938 a problematika jeho evakuace*, "Časopis Slezského muzea" 1988, 37, pp. 209–225).

<sup>17</sup> A. Grobelný, *Sociální problémy v zabrané části Těšínska od října 1938 do září 1939*, "Slezský sborník" 1979, 77, 4, pp. 278–293.

<sup>18</sup> M. Borák, *Odboj proti fašismu na odtrženém území Těšínska v letech 1938–1945*, Opava 1987, msc.

<sup>19</sup> Today it is kept in the library of the Silesian National Museum (*Slezské zemské muzeum*) in Opava. Another copy is available at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (*Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky*) in Prague.

especially on the part that was under the Polish rule for eleven months of 1938 and 1939.

The fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia in November 1989 meant also lifting all the limitations for historical research. After years of hiding and misrepresentation of the modern history of Czech lands and Czechoslovakia, the strong demands surfaced to explain and re-interpret the so-called 'blank spots' and for an impartial interpretation of already known facts. On one side, it resulted in the historical publication boom, on the other – it meant focusing of research on elements, which would meet demands and requirements of the population.

It resulted in a project to synthesize the history of Teschen Silesia (Cz. *Nástin dějin Těšínska*) conducted by the group of researchers from the Silesian Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (Cz. *Akademie věd České Republiky – AV ČR*)<sup>20</sup> in Opava. It was a kind of response to heated debates, mainly carried out in the local press, on the history of the region and status of the Polish ethnic minority. After decades of suppression, debates and discussions started to thrive<sup>21</sup>. The main objective of that project had been presentation to wider audience the most important information on the history of the region. The specificity of this work had been inclusion of polemic elements presented by historians from the ethnic Polish minority: Jan Rusnok and Stanisław Zahradnik. They questioned some conclusions and a number of elements in prepared publications. The work also included a part on problems from the period of October 1938–September 1939 prepared by M. Borák. Editorially, it followed the accepted, traditional pattern of above-mentioned project. It described and evaluated events in Teschen Silesia in 1938–1945. Due to the format of the publication, this chapter provided only synthetic review of problems and most important issues in the region<sup>22</sup>. Similar editorial approach was assumed for preparation of the two-volume synthesis of the Teschen Silesia, prepared at the turn of the century<sup>23</sup>.

Following development in the Czech historiography after fall of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia one fact should be noted as some historians were able to restart their research stopped or at least limited

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<sup>20</sup> After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences ceased to operate. In the Czech Republic it was replaced by AV ČR.

<sup>21</sup> M. Borák, *Očima Poláků. Historie a současnost československo-polských vztahů a polská menšina v Československu v zrcadle polského tisku na Těšínském Slezsku v letech 1989–1992*, Opava 2010.

<sup>22</sup> *Nástin dějin Těšínska*, Ostrava–Praha 1992 (Polish edition: *Zarys dziejów Śląska Cieszyńskiego*, Ostrawa–Praga 1992).

<sup>23</sup> D. Gawrecki et al., *Dějiny českého Slezska 1740–2000*, vol. 2, Opava 2003.



by so-called 'normalization' regime after 1968. The typical example of such a situation is the case of A. Grobelný. His important work on steel works in Třinec in 1938–1945 saw the publication only in 1990<sup>24</sup>.

Since 1989, it was Mečislav Borák, who had become the leading researcher of history of Zaolzie after its annexation by Poland<sup>25</sup>. He prepared the source edition on delimitation of this area and explored Czech diversionary activities<sup>26</sup>. He was the first scientist, who described incidents and ambushes related to delimitation process of the Polish-Czech border in the area of Czaca (Slov. Čadca) and Jaworzyna Spiska (Slov. Tatranská Javorina) in November 1938<sup>27</sup>. He also pointed out at problems in Transcarpathia, where during the late autumn the same year the Polish diversionary groups started to operate<sup>28</sup>. He also touched other important issues and aspects of Zaolzie transfer to Poland<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> A. Grobelný, *Třinecké železářny 1938–1945*, Opava 1990.

<sup>25</sup> Thanks to him we can use annotated bibliography of articles on occupation of Zaolzie, i.e. on the period of 1938–1939, which have been published in "Těšínsko" magazine since its establishment in 1957 until 2007. It has a regional character and impact. Some other works of local authors have also been printed and quite often they had not been noticed by professional historians. As we do not have enough space for their analysis, we would only refer to the study: M. Borák, *Dějiny Těšínského Slezska 1938–1945 na stránkách Těšínska*, "Těšínsko" 2007, 50, 4, pp. 4–6. See also: *Bibliografie časopisu "Těšínsko" 1985–2006*, Český Těšín 2007.

<sup>26</sup> M. Borák, *Česká diverze na Těšínsku v letech 1938–1939*, "Slezský sborník" 1996, 94, 1, pp. 45–53.

<sup>27</sup> M. Borák, *Československo-polská "malá válka" u Čadce 25. listopadu 1938*, "Historie a vojenství" 1998, 47, 4, pp. 65–90; idem, *Starcie zbrojne polskiego i czechosłowackiego wojska pod Czacą 25 listopada 1938 roku*, in: *Od Zaolzia po Jaworzynę. Rewindykacje graniczne jesienią 1938 roku. Materiały z seminarium naukowego zorganizowanego w 60. rocznicę powrotu Zaolzia i Jaworzyny do Polski*. Nowy Targ, 27 listopada 2003 r., ed. R. Kowalski, Nowy Targ 2004, pp. 69–100 (next edition: 2013); idem, *Incident pod Tatrami 27. listopadu 1938 a delimitace hranic mezi Polskem a Česko-Slovenskem*, "Historie a vojenství" 1998, 47, 5, pp. 3–24.

<sup>28</sup> M. Borák, *Obrana Podkarpatské Rusi (říjen 1938–březen 1939)*, in: "Česko-slovenská historická ročenka", Brno 1997, pp. 165–177; idem, *Boje československé armády na Slovensku a Podkarpatské Rusi (říjen 1938–březen 1939)*, "Sborník Vojenské akademie v Brně" 1999, 2, pp. 123–128.

<sup>29</sup> M. Borák, *Struktura a činnost Policie Slezského vojvodství na Těšínsku v letech 1938–1939*, "Časopis Slezského zemského muzea" 2013, 62, 1, pp. 1–23; idem, *Personální složení jednotek Policie Slezského vojvodství na Těšínsku v letech 1938–1939*, "Časopis Slezského zemského muzea" 2015, 64, 1, pp. 61–70; idem, *Těšínské Slezsko v rámci okupovaného pohraničí v letech 1938–1945*, in: *Historie okupovaného pohraničí 1938–1945*, vol. 11, Ústí nad Labem 2006, pp. 83–135; idem, *Únos "bílého orla". Incident u polského konzulátu v Moravské Ostravě 26. 12. 1938*, in: *Ostrava. Příspěvky k dějinám a současnosti Ostravy a Ostravska*, vol. 20, Ostrava 2001, pp. 466–472. The bibliography of this author is quite extensive and includes a number of

Borák is also author of a very interesting and inspiring study on this specific area<sup>30</sup>. His works could be complemented by memoirs of General Alois Vicherek with comments provided by Ladislav Kudrna<sup>31</sup> and biographic article on General František Hrabčík, the Head of Czecho-Slovak Delimitation Commission in Zaolzie, prepared by Karel Podolský<sup>32</sup>.

One of the most important and difficult problems linked with the transfer of Zaolzie to Poland had been the issue of refugees. It is assessed that about 30,000 Czechs, some under dramatic circumstances, had to leave their houses and the region. This topic was of interest for Jan Kuklík, Jan Gebhart<sup>33</sup>, and Jan Benda<sup>34</sup>, who examined these events and put them in the context of internal and political changes in the II Republic. Lubomír Nenička<sup>35</sup> and Aleš Homan<sup>36</sup> explored the problem how situation in Zaolzie influenced the status and conditions in Moravská Ostrava and its surroundings. Apart from the issue of Transcarpathia, it could be stated that after annexing Zaolzie and parts of Kysuce (so-called Czadczyzna), Orava and Spiš (Pol. Spisz), Poland considered the problem of territorial disputes with Czecho-Slovakia as solved. Polish authorities had been ready to rebuild bilateral relations on a new basis. The short lifetime of the Second Republic did not allow to complete such

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popular science articles. Some of them could be accessed on-line – [www.mecislavborak.cz](http://www.mecislavborak.cz) [access: 06.07.2022].

<sup>30</sup> M. Borák, *K problémům periodizace dějin Slezska v letech 1938–1945*, in: *K periodizaci dějin Slezska (Sborník z pracovního zasedání v Opavě 11.–12. prosince 2007)*, ed. D. Gawrecki, Opava 2008, pp. 189–197.

<sup>31</sup> L. Kudrna, *Zpráva divizního generála Ing. Aloise Vicherka o událostech od československé mobilizace do 4. března 1941. Neznámý archivní dokument ve světle faktů, "Securitas imperii"* 2011, 18, 1, pp. 70–143.

<sup>32</sup> K. Podolský, *Divizní generál František Hrabčík, "Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis. Facultas Philosophica, Historica"* 1994, 26, pp. 83–92.

<sup>33</sup> J. Gebhart, J. Kuklík, *Druhá republika 1938–1939. Svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě*, Litomyšl 2004.

<sup>34</sup> J. Benda, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí 1938–1939*, Praha 2013.

<sup>35</sup> L. Nenička, *Druhá republika na Ostravsku 1938–1939*, Opava 2010; idem, *Důsledky uprchlického problému pro národnostní vztahy v Moravské Ostravě v období druhé republiky, "Slezský sborník"* 2006, 104, 1, pp. 49–63. Obecněji k uprchlickým táborům v té době: F. Dostál Raška, *Uprchlické tábory v Čechách a na Moravě po mnichovském diktátu, "Soudobé dějiny"* 2001, 4, pp. 732–745.

<sup>36</sup> A. Homan, *Moravská Ostrava jako útočiště uprchlíků z německého a polského záboru na podzim roku 1938*, in: *Ostrava 21. Sborník příspěvků k dějinám Ostravy a Ostravska*, Ostrava 2003, pp. 221–239.

initiatives. Only some surveys were carried out and their results could be accessed in some works of the Polish historiography<sup>37</sup>.

Czech scientists, as mentioned above, were focusing on delimitation of Zaolzie and related issues as well on their impact on the situation in the Republic. One of exceptions had been the work by J. Gebhart on bilateral contacts of Intelligence structures during last months of Czecho-Slovakia<sup>38</sup>, between the dismemberment of the Second Republic and the outbreak of WWII.

### 15 MARCH–1 SEPTEMBER 1939

The dismemberment of Czecho-Slovakia, establishment of the Slovak State (later named the Slovak Republic), occupation of Transcarpathia by Hungary and creation of the German protectorate on the remaining part of the Czech Republic constitutes a major milestone in the modern history of this region, of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. During the next year and half a national resistance movement was organized, both in the Country and abroad. Poland had played a role in such processes as the Czecho-Slovak Embassy in Warsaw and the Consulate in Cracow were not handed over to Germany.

Due to its geographical location, Poland had naturally become a transit country for refugees from Czecho-Slovakia that started to migrate to the West since the spring 1939. Those were mainly the people, who wanted to flee their Country from political and ethnic persecution (Communists and Jews) and also Czechs and Slovaks intending to join Czecho-slovak Armed Forces units that were to be formed in France and United Kingdom. They wanted, as their predecessors from the times of Great War, to fight for independence of the Country. There had been a common belief that a war would soon break out and they all waited for such development with great hopes<sup>39</sup>. Due to worsening Polish-German relations, it was getting more and more apparent that Poland would be a next target of German aggressive actions.

Therefore, it was Poland territory, on which first cells of so-called foreign resistance movement were established, led politically by the former

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<sup>37</sup> J. Tomaszewski, *In Search of a New Policy (Poland and Czecho-Slovakia at the End of 1938)*, in: *Magister Noster. Sborník statí in memoriam prof. PhDr. Janu Havránkovi, CSc.*, eds. M. Svatoš, L. Velek, A. Velková, Praha 2005, pp. 517–524.

<sup>38</sup> J. Gebhart, *Poznámky k čs.-polským zpravodajským kontaktům do 15. března 1939*, "Slezský sborník" 1996, 1, pp. 34–37.

<sup>39</sup> G.F. Kennan, *Z Prahy po Mnichovu. Diplomatické zprávy 1938–1940*, Praha 2021, p. 166.

President, Edvard Beneš. He did not believe that Poland would be able to stop an aggressor and decided to establish the main center for formation of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces in France. Czechs and Slovaks, who wanted to join the new force, were sent to locations in France to join the French Foreign Legion. French authorities promised to relieve them from the duty for the new Czechoslovak Army as soon as the war would break up. Warsaw, in order not to upset relations with Germany, did not want, at that time, to allow formation of Czechoslovak military units on the Polish territory.

Polish authorities were mostly interested in contacting Czechoslovak military specialists (mainly pilots) to join Polish Armed Forces. Unlike politicians close to Beneš, military emigration concentrated around General Lev Prchala, who wanted Poland to become the organizational and logistic hub for rebuilding Czechoslovak Armed Forces. He also criticized the policy of the former President towards the North Eastern neighbor. For Polish politicians and military commanders such developments had been a kind of schizophrenic situation. On one side, they wanted to establish cooperation with General Prchala, who had very good contacts with the Main Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. On the other, they had to continue relations with President Beneš, who was not the most popular political figure on the Vistula River.

However, the President was supported by the Czechoslovak Intelligence led by Colonel František Moravec. Just before German troops entered Czechia, Moravec was able to evacuate by air his Staff and Intelligence materials to United Kingdom, mainly files on Czechoslovak Intelligence assets in Germany. At that time, Polish authorities were very much interested in Czechoslovak Intelligence reports. Moravec was ready to accept Polish requests in return for allowing the transit of Czechoslovak military personnel from Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and Slovakia.

Despite such complicated situation, it was possible to prevent the rift in the Czechoslovak resistance movement. In August 1939, Beneš appointed General Prchal as the Commander of the Czechoslovak military units in Poland that were to be formed after the start of hostilities between Poland and Germany. General acknowledged the former President as a political leader of the resistance movement. On 30 April 1939, with the support of Czecho-Slovak Consulate in Cracow, so-called 'Military Group' was established. Most refugees and volunteers were sent to France, but also at the end of August 1939, in the military camp in Bronowice Małe, about 800 Czech and Slovak soldiers were stationed. They were to become a future Czech-Slovak legion.

This small historical digression was necessary to explain the role of Poland in building and supporting the Czech resistance movement.

It also shows reasons for such an interest of some Czech historians in specific topics related to this period of time. Studies on anti-Nazi resistance movement had become one of key areas for historical research. Already in 1958, the book of the known journalist Rudolf Kopecký was published in Rotterdam on this particular topic. It was based on the report prepared 14 years earlier for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile<sup>40</sup> and had been a source edition than a historical monograph. First scientifically important publication was printed in 1963 and prepared by Jan Křen<sup>41</sup>, who focused his research on the beginning of Czechoslovak resistance elements formed out of the Country. At the time, it constituted a breakthrough in research due to extensive exploitation of archival sources. As for more general dimension, the problem of building Czechoslovak foreign resistance movements elements was finally extensively addressed in quite an extensive way by already mentioned synthetic work *Češi a Poláci v minulosti*.

More detailed description of relations between Polish and Czechoslovak soldiers in 1939 was provided by the publication on the Czechoslovak resistance movement organized in the West, written by Toman Brod and Eduard Čejka<sup>42</sup>. This kind of work was only possible to be prepared in the 1960s, when the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Cz. and Slov. Československá socialistická republika, ČSSR) provided freer social and political conditions for the population of the Country.

Despite evident ideological conformism of authors, which was still not possible to avoid, above-mentioned prints proved that studies on topics related to 1939 were quite advanced and still developing. Presented conclusions on the establishment and operation of the Military Group in Cracow resulted in strong reaction from the side of the former Vice-Consul of the Czecho-Slovak Republic in the city, Vladimír Henzl, who published his memoirs and launched a polemic with theses presented by J. Křen, T. Brod and E. Čejka in specialistic journal "Historie a vojenství". Finally, all above-mentioned authors corrected their positions in next editions of their works<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> R. Kopecký, *Československý odboj v Polsku v r. 1939*, Rotterdam 1958. See also: J. Plachý, *Krakov, 30. dubna 1939*, "Paměť a dějiny" 2019, 1, p. 15, annotation 30.

<sup>41</sup> J. Křen, *Do emigrace. Buržoazní zahraniční odboj 1938–1939*, Praha 1963.

<sup>42</sup> E. Čejka, T. Brod, *Na západní frontě. Historie čs. vojenských jednotek na západě v letech druhé světové války*, Praha 1963. After the fall of Communism new edition was published without ideological distortions – E. Čejka, *Československý odboj na Západě (1939–1945)*, Praha 1997.

<sup>43</sup> V. Henzl, *Krakov. První československá vojenská skupina za hranicemi*, "Historie a vojenství" 1964, 13, 6, pp. 982–1006; J. Plachý, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

The importance of works published in 1960s would be clearly noticeable when we make their comparison with publications released during next two decades of so-called 'normalization'. First part of General Ludvík Svoboda memoirs, covering his activities in Poland in 1939, was printed three years after the "Prague Spring", but the second part with details of his internment in the Soviet Union saw the publication only after November 1989<sup>44</sup>. The work of Karel Richter on the Czechoslovak resistance movements elements in Poland, published in "Historie a vojenství" did not increase our knowledge, especially when we compare it with the book by J. Křen<sup>45</sup>. The booklet by Zdeňko Šmoldas describing stories of Czechoslovakian pilots in Poland in 1939 was also partially corrupted with a clear ideological distortion<sup>46</sup>.

Editions of documents should be mentioned as well. First such publications were available in the 1960s. One of the most important was two-volume collection *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943*<sup>47</sup>. The first volume included materials on the history of Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement, different documents, notes and recollections prepared by the Secretary of the Czechoslovak President Beneš – Jaromír Smutný. The editor also incorporated materials on the Czechoslovak resistance movement on the Polish territory.

The second part comprises documents on the situation in Protectorate, contacts of the resistance movement with foreign partners and German policy in occupied territories. As for our project, it is important that we would be able to access and analyze reports of the Czechoslovak resistance on the attitude of Czech society towards Poland on the eve of WWII and role of Polish authorities in building the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement.

New research perspectives emerged only after 1990, when after falling ideological barriers and lifting most of limitations, researchers got access to previously unavailable archival fonds. Already in 1995, Jan Němeček defended his dissertation in the Institute of History of the Czech Republic Academy of Sciences (Cz. *Historický Ústav Akademie Věd České Republiky*

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<sup>44</sup> L. Svoboda, *Cestami života*, vol. 2, Praha 1992. A dozen years later also his diary was published (idem, *Deník z doby válečné. Červen 1939–leden 1943*, Praha 2008).

<sup>45</sup> K. Richter, *Počátky československého vojenského odboje v Polsku*, part 1, "Historie a vojenství" 1978, 27, 6, pp. 22–39; K. Richter, *Počátky československého vojenského odboje v Polsku*, part 2, "Historie a vojenství" 1979, 28, 1, pp. 93–111; K. Richter, *Počátky československého vojenského odboje v Polsku*, parts 3, "Historie a vojenství" 1979, 28, 2, pp. 78–90.

<sup>46</sup> Z. Šmoldas, *Českoslovenští letci v Polsku 1939*, Praha 1984.

<sup>47</sup> *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943*, eds. L. Otáhalová, M. Červinková, parts 1–2, Praha 1966.

– HÚ AV ČR) – “Československý odboj v Polsku 1939”. It was based on materials collected during extensive archival research both at home and abroad, including Poland. Němeček analysed the process of formation of the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement, also in Poland, with the main focus on the political dimension. The most important issues under exploration had been issues related with plans, decisions and activities of the Czecho-Slovak Embassy in Warsaw, resistance movement leadership and conflict between General Prchala and Beneš.

Although the dissertation regrettably had not seen the official publication yet<sup>48</sup>, some elements were exploited by other authors and used in many other publications<sup>49</sup>. Due to such situation J. Němeček is considered now one of the best experts on the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement during World War II<sup>50</sup>.

Mentioning Němeček achievements, we should note one work, which is inextricably bound to his name: the publication series *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky*. It is a large-scale, although still non-completed project aimed at releasing to the public main documents on the diplomacy of the Czechoslovak Republic, similar to the case of US source editions of *Foreign Relations of the United States* and Polish *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne*. For the purposes of our project, the most useful would be the volume with more than 260 documents from the period 16 March 1939–15 June 1940. Many of them refer to the issue of building and developing the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement on the Polish territory before the outbreak of WWII<sup>51</sup>.

The next important area of research that was of interest for Czech historians had been issues of military contacts between two countries,

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<sup>48</sup> J. Němeček, *Československý odboj v Polsku 1939*, Praha 1995, msc. A copy is available in the HÚ AV ČR library.

<sup>49</sup> J. Němeček, *15. březen a čs. zastupitelské úřady v Polsku*, “Historie a vojenství” 1994, 43, 6, pp. 22–41; idem, *Armádní generál Lev Prchala a československý odboj v Polsku*, *Historie a vojenství* 1994, 43, 3, pp. 107–132; idem, *Polsko a československý politická emigrace v roce 1939*, “Slovanský přehled” 2006, 92, 2, pp. 203–223; idem, *Československý odboj v Polsku v roce 1939 a arm. gen. Lev Prchala*, in: *Fragmenty dějin. Sborník prací k šedesátinám Jana Gebharta*, Praha 2006, pp. 283–300. Němeček has also touched the issue of functioning of diplomatic and consular offices in Poland after 15 March 1939 – See: idem, *Soumrak a úsvit československé demokracie. 15. březen a československé zastupitelské úřady*, Praha 2008.

<sup>50</sup> The dispute between General gen. Prchal and Beneš was reflected in: J. Kuklík, J. Němeček, *Proti Benešovi. Česká a slovenská protibenešovská opozice v Londýně 1939–1945*, Praha 2004, pp. 48–77. More details on the Czech resistance movement could be found in comments to memoirs of General A. Vicherek. See: annotation 31.

<sup>51</sup> *Od rozpadu Česko-Slovenska do uznání československé prozatímní vlády 1939–1940*, eds. J. Němeček et al., Praha 2002.

mainly between military Intelligence structures. As I have already mentioned, information about German military preparation for aggression on Poland collected by Colonel Moravec's Intelligence was of a great importance for Polish military command and control structures. However, internal divisions within the Czechoslovak resistance abroad had also an impact on bilateral Intelligence cooperation. Jan Gebhart and Jan Kuklík dedicated part of their scientific efforts to this specific topic. For example, they presented talks of Major Josef Bartík with representatives of the II Branch of the Polish Main Staff<sup>52</sup>. Recently, the biography of this officer was published by Pavel Kreisinger. He described in detail two visits of Bartík to Poland, during which decisions were taken about the role of General Prchala in the resistance and arrangements were discussed on "Operation Transfer", i.e. relocation of Intelligence officers' family members from the Moravec group to United Kingdom<sup>53</sup>. However, the biography of the Chief of Czechoslovak Intelligence, written by Jiří Šolc, includes only some remarks on cooperation in Poland in March–September 1939<sup>54</sup>. In addition, it contains a number of inaccuracies<sup>55</sup>.

Through such channels Poland had the opportunity to establish contacts in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, including the organization *Obrana národa* (ON). Part of available factual materials was presented by J. Šolc and Stanislav Kokoška. They also prepared an edition of documents on ON's plans, decisions and activities in 1939–1942. A portion of this print includes elements on relations with Polish Intelligence in 1939<sup>56</sup> and preparation of uprising in Protectorate if Germany invaded Poland. The most recent work of Milan Vyhlídal also included some new information on this topic, thanks to the access to the manuscript of memoirs of František Fárek, the officer of the II Branch of the Main Staff of the Czechoslovak Army. It allowed author to shed new light

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<sup>52</sup> J. Gebhart, J. Kuklík, *Československo-polské vojenské zpravodajské styky na jaře a v létě roku 1939*, "Historie a vojenství" 1992, 41, 3, pp. 66–94.

<sup>53</sup> P. Kreisinger, *Brigádní generál Josef Bartík. Zpravodajský důstojník a účastník prvního i druhého československého odboje*, Praha 2011.

<sup>54</sup> J. Šolc, *Ve službách prezidenta. Generál František Moravec ve světle archivních dokumentů*, Praha 1994, pp. 66–74.

<sup>55</sup> See: S. Kokoška, *Moravcova zpravodajská služba bez legend?*, "Historie a vojenství" 1994, 43, 6, pp. 171–178.

<sup>56</sup> J. Šolc, *Podpalte Československo. Operace Perun*, Praha 1991; S. Kokoška, *Vedení Obrany národa a Polsko*, "Slezský sborník" 1996, 94, 1, pp. 75–82; *Obrana národa v dokumentech 1939–1942*, ed. S. Kokoška, Praha 2017. Stanislav Kokoška has recently published an article on Czechoslovak communist emigration in Poland in 1939: S. Kokoška, *Komunistický exil v Polsku v roce 1939*, "Paměť a dějiny" 2023, 1, pp. 56–67.



on events linked with Polish cooperation with Czechoslovak resistance and "Operation Transfer"<sup>57</sup>.

At the turn of Century, Jiří Friedl made an effort to comprehensively describe and evaluate Polish-Czechoslovak military cooperation in 1939–1945. Some chapters in his book<sup>58</sup> covered issues of forming Czechoslovak military units for foreign resistance movement on the eve on the war. He also assessed activities of the Military Group in Cracow and negotiations with the Polish Main Staff on forming a Czecho-Slovak military unit. The role of the Military Group was also presented by Jiří Rajlich<sup>59</sup> and Ladislav Kudrna<sup>60</sup> in their work on Czecho-Slovak pilots. The second of the authors described everyday life and activities of Czecho-Slovak soldiers. Also, Jiří Plachý wrote the article on the Military Group. It has mainly commemorative character, but also presents many elements that could be useful for assessing the process of establishment of such organizational and coordination elements<sup>61</sup>.

The issue of affiliation of Zaolzie to Poland was a little bit aloof of the main interest of Czech historians. This was reflected in main research projects on resistance structures in the Ostrava region, including areas annexed by Poland. The main focus of Czech scientists had been on building and functioning of main trails and illegal traffic from the Protectorate to Poland<sup>62</sup> and on the German action to seize railway tunnels in Mosty koło Jabłonkowa on the eve of the German invasion of Poland<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> M. Vyhřídál, *Vojenští zpravodajci proti nacistické okupaci. Odbojová skupina Tři konšelé*, Praha 2022.

<sup>58</sup> J. Friedl, *Na jedné frontě. Vztahy československé a polské (Polskie Siły Zbrojne) armády za druhé světové války*, Praha 2005 (Polish translation: *Na jednym froncie. Czechosłowacko-polskie stosunki wojskowe 1939–1945*, transl. G. Gasior, Gdańsk–Warszawa 2011).

<sup>59</sup> J. Rajlich, *Josef František. Pokus o pravdivý příběh československého stíhače*, Cheb 2010 (the work was translated to Polish and English); idem, *Nadporučík letectva Jiří Král. Zakladatel a první velitel čs. vojenské jednotky v Polsku*, "Historie a vojenství" 2006, 55, 1, pp. 74–90.

<sup>60</sup> L. Kudrna, *Když nelétali. Život našich letců v Polsku, Francii a Británii za 2. světové války*, Praha 2003.

<sup>61</sup> J. Plachý, *Krakov, 30. dubna 1939, "Paměť a dějiny"* 2019, 1, pp. 3–15.

<sup>62</sup> I. Stolařík, *Patřili k prvním. Komentované dokumenty a vzpomínky k činnosti Obrany národa na Ostravsku*, Ostrava 1994; M. Skýpala, *Obrana národa na Ostravsku*, Přerov 2002; P. Plachá, *Beskydská převaděčka Marie Pětrošová*, "Historie a vojenství" 2019, 68, 1, pp. 83–95.

<sup>63</sup> B. Gracová-Grobelná, *Nacistická provokace proti Polsku v Mostech u Jablunkova a Hlivičích koncem srpna 1939*, "Těšínsko" 1974, 3, pp. 1–6.

## AFTER THE BREAKOUT OF WWII

The course of events during the September Military Campaign of 1939 influenced research areas focused on the attitude of Czech population towards the resistance movement being organized on the Polish territory. The tempo of German offensive thwarted any possibility for an uprising in the Protectorate. Battles and offensives also influenced activities of Czech resistance structures.

Just before the German attack, the bigger part of the Czecho-Slovak Military Group was redeployed to Leśna training area, close to Baranovichi, in the North-Eastern part of Poland. When war started, the last remaining obstacles to formation of Czecho-Slovak military units were abolished. On 3 September 1939, the President Moscicki's Decree was published in the press that allowed creation of Czech-Slovak Legion<sup>64</sup>. It was an unprecedented development as it meant official recognition of the Czech-Slovak military unit during WWII. It happened a month before the analogous decision of the French Government<sup>65</sup>. The main part of the Legion reached Leśna Camp in first days of the Campaign. In Bronowice Male, only part of the Staff remained with the task to wait for volunteers. After few days, Legion received orders to deploy to Tarnopol. Its soldiers had just few machine guns and gas masks. Only some had their own uniforms – those in which they had broken through abroad, deserting, for example, from service in the Slovak army or the protectorate gendarmerie. Part of the unit supported air defense elements in the town. On 17 September, when Soviet Red Army started its invasion of Poland, the Legion commanded by LTC. Svoboda was still in Poland and did not manage to move to Romania. It surrendered to Soviets and soldiers were interned<sup>66</sup>.

Czechoslovak pilots (93 in total) were grouped in the Air Base in Dęblin. On 2 September, three of them were killed in the German air raid<sup>67</sup>. They had been the first Czechoslovak victims of WWII. Germans

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<sup>64</sup> H. Batowski, *op. cit.*, p. 448. See: annotation 5.

<sup>65</sup> The Czechoslovak Army in France started to be formed in France on the basis of bilateral agreement concluded on 2 October 1939.

<sup>66</sup> Only the group of about 100 soldiers, commanded by Capt. František Divoký, reached Romania. When war erupted, they were stationed in Cracow. Due to the direct danger to the city, they left Cracow and moved eastwards to join the Czech and Slovak Legion. They did not succeed but were able to leave Poland and avoid internment by the Soviet Red Army.

<sup>67</sup> In total, in September 1939 six Czechoslovak soldiers died during the Campaign (four pilots and two legionnaires – J. Plachý, I. Pejčoch, *Zemřeli na Západě. Ztráty československé pozemní zahraniční armády v Polsku, Francii, na Středním východě a ve Velké Británii v letech 1939–1945*, Praha 2012, p. 5.

were able to destroy most of the Polish Air Force and Czecho-Slovak volunteers were employed to evacuate planes to reserve airfields. They also carried out a number of combat sorties during the Campaign.

As described, the participation of Czecho-Slovak soldiers in the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939 was episodic in nature. This could be a reason that such stories did not attract too much attention of Czech historians. In 1966, Dana Nývltová published a source edition on the establishment of the Czech-Slovak Legion (including the Decree of Polish President Moscicki and report of Leśna Camp Commandant, LTC Karol Zborowski)<sup>68</sup>.

Next important step had been publication of report of a close associate of General Prchala, the First Captain of the General Staff (Cz. štábní kapitán generálního štábu) Jan Krček, on plans, decisions and activities of the Legion in September 1939. The print was prepared and edited by J. Němeček<sup>69</sup>. Almost twenty years ago, the work of Josef Váňa and Jan Rail on participation of Czecho-Slovak pilots in the September 1939 Campaign saw the publication<sup>70</sup>. However, we should note that print is a conglomeration of different sources and works, without application of basic scientific methods and tools. Also J. Friedl dedicated a separate chapter to Czechoslovak soldiers in the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939<sup>71</sup>. In his later work<sup>72</sup>, the same author published new results of his research.

Fast advance of German troops in Poland led to the situation that Czech plans for uprising and diversionary activities on the territory of Protectorate remained on paper. In addition, the German aggressor started mass arrests to intimidate the Czech society and weaken its will to resist. In addition, German propaganda launched intensive activities using lies and manipulations, mainly in the press distributed in the region. Initial study on this specific topic was prepared by Blažena Gracová<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> *Legion Čechů a Slováků v Polsku r. 1939*, ed. D. Nývltová, "Historie a vojenství" 1966, 15, 1, pp. 98–118.

<sup>69</sup> *Zpráva špkt. Jana Krčka o československém legionu v Polsku*, ed. J. Němeček, "Historie a vojenství" 1993, 42, 2, pp. 134–162. More on this officer: P. Kreisinger, *Plukovník generálního štábu Jan Krček (1901–1961). Dlouhá cesta účastníka zahraničního odboje (velitele Gabčíka a Kubiše) k rehabilitaci*, *Historie a vojenství* 2017, 66, 4, pp. 70–83.

<sup>70</sup> J. Váňa, J. Rail, *Českoslovenští letci v polské obranné válce 1939*, Praha 2003.

<sup>71</sup> J. Friedl, *Na jedné*, pp. 103–126.

<sup>72</sup> J. Friedl, *Českoslovenští vojáci a jejich putování polským zázemím v září 1939*, in: *Cestování Čechů a Poláků v 19. a 20. století. Sborník z mezinárodní vědecké konference (Praha 6.–7.9.2007)*, eds. P. Kaleta, L. Novosad, Praha 2008, pp. 188–202.

<sup>73</sup> B. Gracová, *Česká společnost a napadení Polska v září 1939*, "Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Ostravské univerzity. Historica-geographica" = „Acta Facultatis Philosophicae

Zaolzie was seized by German forces already in the first day of war. This led to the situation when Czech fascist groups submitted demands to include the region to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. This initiative, also supported by the Government in Prague, ultimately failed, i.e., due to unrests in some towns in the Protectorate on 28 October and then in November. The whole Zaolzie territory was annexed by Germany. This interesting episode of Polish-Czech-German relations was already explored, described and evaluated by many historians<sup>74</sup>.

After this event, Polish issues have nearly disappeared from the orbit of the interest of Czechs and Slovaks. The direct result of the military campaign in Poland in September and October 1939 had been establishment by the Germans of several temporary Prisoner-of-War camps. Only few were prepared on the Protectorate area and much more – in Sudetenland. Germans were well aware that location of POW camps on the Czech territory would be irrational due to impossibility to provide complete isolation of prisoners from the local, Czech population. It was to be avoided at all costs due to necessity to secure order in the region, which was strategically important for Berlin<sup>75</sup>.

The Czech historiography devoted little attention to the course of events during the Polish September Military Campaign 1939. One of prints on such a topic was the popular publication of Karel Richter *Válka začala v Polsku*, which provided a view from the Czech perspective<sup>76</sup>. It is also noteworthy to read and analyze the innovative and revelatory article of M. Borák, who put WWII events in Silesia within the

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Universitatis Ostraviensis. Historica-geographica" 1992, 27, pp. 37–51; eadem, *Zur Rolle der Presse im Okkupationsregime des Protektorats Böhmen und Mähren. Anspannung, Aktivismus, Widerstand und das Beispiel der antipolnischen Kampagne*, in: *Polen und die böhmischen Länder im. 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Politik und Gesellschaft im Vergleich. Vorträge der Tagung des Collegium Carolinum in Bad Wiessee vom 15. bis 17. November 1991*, ed. P. Heumos, München 1997, pp. 189–216.

<sup>74</sup> J. Friedl, *K pokusu o připojení Těšínska k Protektorátu Čechy a Morava na podzim 1939*, "Těšínsko" 2009, 52, 3, pp. 1–6; A. Grobelný, *Nápor nacistů na Těšínsko v roce 1939*, "Časopis Slezského muzea" 1970, 29, 2, pp. 134–136; J. Gebhart, J. Kuklík, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české*, vol. 15a, Praha–Litomyšl 2006, p. 334; T. Pasák, *Pod ochranou Říše*, Praha 1998, p. 165. See popular science article: (ok), *Velká hra o Těšínsko před 30 lety*, "Nová Svoboda" 31 October 1969, pp. 2–3.

<sup>75</sup> A. Grobelný, *Nacistický tábor pro zajaté Poláky v září 1939 v Paskově*, "Těšínsko" 1989, 32, 3, p. 23; A. Adam, *Otroci třetí říše. Pobočné koncentrační tábory na území České republiky*, Praha 2016, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> K. Richter, *Válka začala v Polsku. Fakta o německo-sovětské agresi*, Praha 2004 (the next edition: 2018).

larger interpretative context<sup>77</sup>. He also presented a comparative study of Czecho-Slovak and Polish Armed Forces created in France, and assessments of changes within the military structures of both Nations, both before and after the defeat of Poland in 1939<sup>78</sup>. The fall of Poland in September 1939 did not end Czech-Czecho-Slovak-Polish contacts within the military dimension. On the contrary – they evolved and developed in the new emigration realities in the West.

## CONCLUSIONS

Presented summary of the status of research on the situation of the Second Czecho-Slovak Republic and after its fall, of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and relations of such elements with preparations and course of events during the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939 allows identification of several key moments for problems to be explored, described and assessed.

An important determinant had been a direct influence of events in Poland on Czecho-Slovakia and Czech territories. This was mainly annexation of Western part of the Zaolzie by Poland in October 1938 and impact of this event on population and bilateral relations. The fall of Czecho-Slovakia and seizing Czech territories by Germany in March 1939 created the whole new situation. Poland had become an important country for building Czech and Slovak foreign resistance structures, all to restore and rebuild the Czechoslovak State.

On one side, the Second Polish Republic had been a transit country for Czech and Slovak migrants. Some politicians even wanted Poland to become a center for organization of resistance movement but such initiatives and proposals also caused some tensions and led to internal divisions within Czech and Slovak emigrant communities. Understandable, this evoked an interest from Czech scientists and prompted them to launch some new research projects.

Although the main center for the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement was finally established in France, it is also true that Poland had been the first country to acknowledge and support formation of Czecho-Slovak military unit – the Czech-Slovak Legion. However, the course of events was so dynamic and fast that participation of Legion and Czecho-Slovak

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<sup>77</sup> M. Borák, *Evropská dimenze dějin Slezska v letech 1938–1945*, in: *Evropská dimenze slezských dějin*, eds. Z. Jirásek et al., Opava 2009, pp. 97–101.

<sup>78</sup> A. Binar, *Československé a polské pozemní vojsko ve Francii před zahájením západního tažení (1939 a 1940)*, in: S. Polnar et al., *Ozbrojené síly a československý stát*, vol. 2, Brno 2021, pp. 71–90.

pilots in the Polish September Military Campaign was just a small episode in the whole history of the Czechoslovak foreign resistance.

As presented above, interest and activities of Czech historians were mainly linked with key moments of Czech and Czechoslovakian history. Still, some elements remained undiscovered, undescribed and not properly evaluated. For example, there is no Czech publication that would have comprehensively described and assessed the period, in which Zaolzie was annexed and controlled by Poland.

Another important element is the role of these parts of the Czechoslovak territory (i.e. the Protectorate and areas annexed by the Third Reich) after the Munich Conference and in German military preparations for an attack on Poland. Those regions had been an important part of rear areas for German troops, during preparation, concentration and active combat phases for units from the Army Group "South". Most certainly, it was taken into account by *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* planners and military staffs.

Therefore, historians' plans should include archival research with regard to plans, decisions and actions of German occupational authorities as well as military preparations carried out in the Protectorate and Sudetenland. Studies of German military archival documents most likely would provide additional data and information and help to evaluate the place and role of the Czech territory in building the Eastern Front by Germany, with redeployed troops and transfer of necessary supplies.

Apart from operational and logistic issues, another area for analysis could be media and information warfare (press, radio, newsreels), to understand what arguments and elements had been used by Germans in their propaganda warfare with Poland, including efforts to incite and reinforce anti-Polish sentiments in the Czech public opinion before the outbreak of WWII. The research on results, impact and echoes of the Polish September Military Campaign of 1939 should complement the overall picture of the social and political situation in Czecho-Slovakia. The most important element should be evaluation how and to what degree the fast and effective German military operation in Poland affected public moods and attitude of Czech public opinion and of plans, decisions and activities of resistance movement in the country.

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