Audrius A. Žulys. *Polska w polityce zagranicznej Litwy w latach 1938–1939. Studium z historii dyplomacji*, Gdańsk: Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, 2015. 458 p. ISBN 978-836-3029-82-1

Relations between the states and societies of Lithuania and Poland go back several centuries. Researchers and readers are understandably interested in how these relations have developed in various historical periods, especially in the 20th century when Lithuania and Poland entered the political arena as modern and independent states. Over the last few years, readers have had the chance to discover some very serious historical publications, among which I can mention the document anthologies¹ compiled by Edmundas Gimžauskas, Algimantas Kasparavičius, Paweł Libera and Giedrės Milerytė-Japertienė, and the monographs by Paweł Rokicki and Audrius A. Žulys.² The latter was published in Poland in 2015, and yet it has not lost its relevance even today, and will be of interest to a wide circle of readers.

Marek Kornat, Žulys' dissertation supervisor, notes in the introductory article that the author maintains a principle of objectivism in his monograph, consecutively and strictly basing his work on sources, and does not shy away from criticing when evaluating the foreign policies of both states (p. 10). Indeed, having read the monograph, we can agree with Professor Kornat. The author rests his findings on a rich source base, and has tried to maintain an impartial approach to the events and phenomena analysed. The monograph's conclusion suggests that the main source for this work were documents from the Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCSA) and the New Acts Archive (NAA) in Warsaw, also using certain collections from institutions in the USA and Great Britain (pp. 16–17). We would not be wrong in saying that the author's search for material must have been made much easier by the aforementioned comprehensive anthology of documents about the peripeetia of Lithuanian-Polish diplomatic relations in

¹ *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos santykiai: nuo Pirmojo pasaulinio karo pabaigos iki L. Želigowskio įvykdyto Vilniaus užėmimo (1918 m. lapkritis–1920 m. spalio)*, ed. E. Gimžauskas (Vilnius, 2012); *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos diplomatiniai santykiai 1938–1940 metais*, ed. A. Kasparavičius, P. Libera (Vilnius, 2013); *Lietuvių ir lenkų santykiai išėjimoje 1945–1990 metais*, ed. G. Milerytė-Japertienė (Kaunas, 2014).

² P. Rokicki, *Głinciszki i Dubinki. Zbrodnie wojenne na Wileńszczyźnie w połowie 1944 roku i ich konsekwencje we współczesnych relacjach polsko-litewskich* (Warszawa, 2015); A.A. Žulys, *Polska w polityce zagranicznej Litwy w latach 1938–1939* (Gdańsk, 2015).

1938–1940. In addition, note that both Lithuanian and Polish researchers have published significant works on the issue that the author selected to study (see the works by Piotr Łossowski, M. Kornat, A. Kasparavičius, Česlovas Laurinavičius, etc). Thus, quite a difficult task awaited Žulys: the presentation of an original synthesis about Poland's position in Lithuanian politics on the eve of the Second World War.

The subject of research in this monograph is diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Poland in 1938–1939. Indeed, the study spans a much broader period, as the author has also analysed the prehistory of diplomatic relations between both countries, that is, from the declarations of independence of the two states in 1918, until the beginning of diplomatic relations born out of an ultimatum. We could agree with Žulys that this introduction to 1938 is necessary, as it gives the reader a picture of the complicated relations between Lithuania and Poland prior to the ultimatum. The boundary date could be extended until mid-1940, especially since the author oversteps it many times when speaking about the internment of Polish soldiers in Lithuania (p. 409), and when he discusses the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the impact of the beginning of the Second World War on the destinies of Lithuania and Poland (pp. 419–421).

The author analyses a broad spectrum of issues from a chronological-topical point of view, searching for answers to the following questions: why relations between Lithuania and Poland were so conflict-ridden (Chapter 1, pp. 29–118); how diplomatic relations were established; what the reaction of society was in both countries and in other countries to the changed situation (Chapter 2, pp. 119–176); and what the form of the newly established relations was (Chapter 3, pp. 177–274), especially in 1939 on the eve of the Second World War (Chapter 4, pp. 274–360). The last chapter (Chapter 5, pp. 361–416) is devoted to evaluating the changes in Lithuania's geopolitical situation after the pact between the USSR and Germany of 23 September 1939 was signed. The monograph ends with indices of names and locations (pp. 445–458).

The author highlights the most important problems in each chapter that help readers reach a better understanding of the realities of the time. He looks at problems from both external and internal points of view. For example, when discussing the beginning of diplomatic relations (pp. 119–175), he explains the position of Lithuania's elite and society from within the 'Lithuanian kitchen' (the internal aspect), and for Poland through the prism of the 'Polish kitchen' (the external factor). We should note in general that Žulys' work will contribute to a better understanding of the positions of 'the other side': it will help Lithuanian readers better understand the Polish representatives at the time, and it will give Polish readers an idea of the motivation behind Lithuania's decisions. On the other hand, it should be interesting not only to local researchers but also to the ordinary inhabitant of Kaunas or Warsaw to read about impressions and memories of Kaunas or

Warsaw as recalled by participants in the events of the day (such as Polish politicians and members of the government, or the Lithuanian ambassador in Warsaw Jurgis Šaulys) (pp. 199–200, 413–415), or how representatives of one side or the other characterised diplomats (such as the Lithuanian ambassador in Warsaw Kazys Škirpa, or the Polish ambassador in Kaunas Frantyszek Charwat, pp. 200–201, 206–209).

Naturally, it would not be possible to reconstruct Lithuanian-Polish relations without an analysis of the broader international context. Thus, the attention Žulys gives to the politics of neighbouring countries (the USSR, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, etc) is completely understandable, especially the first two. Without doubt, the USSR and Germany had an impact on the stances and decisions of Lithuania and Poland. In the introduction, the author draws the reader's attention to the revisionist policies of these two countries (p. 24).

However, I would like to mention a few polemical points. Two important problems infected relations and the mood of society in both states: the Vilnius question, and the situation of ethnic minorities (Lithuanians in Poland, and Poles in Lithuania). The first problem had a major influence on the second. In Chapter 4, the author mentions briefly the situation of the Lithuanian and Polish communities after 1938 (pp. 211–214). It would be logical to discuss the development of the situation of these communities up to the ultimatum, that is, from 1918 to 1937. After all, a year after the ultimatum, Frantyszek Charwat, the Polish ambassador in Kaunas, explained to staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland that the obstacles to the development of good relations between Lithuania and Poland were the Vilnius question and the ethnic minorities issue.³ It is a fact that both sides used the ethnic minority factor to serve their own interests. That is why a more comprehensive presentation of the situation of Lithuanians in Poland and Poles in Lithuania up to 1938 would have allowed readers to appreciate the complexity of this issue, and its importance in inter-state relations. The author does make a reference to the reaction of Lithuanian society to the restrictions on Lithuanians' rights in the Vilnius region and the Poles in Lithuania prior to the declaration of the ultimatum (pp. 114–115), but this is insufficient.

When writing about the internment of Polish soldiers in Lithuania, it would be logical for the author to discuss the situation of Polish civilian refugees in Lithuania. They made up the largest group in numbers who were looked after by both Lithuanian and Polish institutions abroad. The author mentions his intention to examine this topic in the introduction (p. 27), but it is not developed further.

³ F. Charwat, 'Rok stosunków polsko-litewskich', in: *Zeszyty Historyczne*, 125 (1998), p. 134.

A few more minor comments. The author should clarify certain names, such as the name of Sadowska, the member of staff at the Polish Embassy in Kaunas. In one instance, the author calls her Eugenija (p. 210), although in another, she is Genowefa (p. 411). In the document anthology 'Lithuanian and Polish Diplomatic Relations in 1938–1940' the staff member mentioned was Genowefa Sadowska (pp. 409, 469). Besides, it would be better to indicate a person's full name when mentioning them for the first time, such as the case of Frantyszek Kowal (pp. 210, 411). Certain location names should also be specified. Was the incident which became the formal pretext for Poland's ultimatum near the village of Trasninko or Trasninkai (pp. 120, 122, 458)? He should also check the page number of the location of Strielčiškės. In terms of ethnic Lithuanian villages (such as Rakelijos/Rachelany [p. 167] and Šypliškių/Szypliszki [p. 167]), when mentioning them for the first time, it would be better to indicate both the Polish and the Lithuanian usage.

In summary, the monograph by Audrius Žulys will help readers understand why relations between Lithuania and Poland were so tense for such a long time, and what negative legacies should not be repeated.

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