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MANIFESTATIONS OF CLOSER GERMAN-SOVIET POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY RELATIONS, IN THE YEARS 1921-1926, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE STATE SECURITY, AS ASSESSED BY THE SECOND DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE POLISH ARMED FORCES

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Abstract:

The article attempts to analyse the practical examples of closer political, economic and military relations between Germany and Soviet Russia, and then the Soviet Union, in the years 1921-1926. The paper lays out the thesis that the closer German-Soviet political, economic and military relations, in the years 1921-1926, posed a significant threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic. To justify the above thesis both the literature and source materials were examined, including first of all the materials held in the Central Military Archives (Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe) in Warszawa-Rembertów. The materials gathered in the groups of records of the Second Department of the Polish Army High Command and the Collections of Russian records were found out to be of key importance. The collected archival materials made it possible to identify different planes of cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets in the discussed period and to establish to what extent the Polish military intelligence was aware of the feasibility and effects of such closer relations, resulting in a direct threat to the security of the Polish state. On the basis of the presented information it can be stated that the Polish military intelligence provided an accurate diagnosis of the examples of German-Soviet cooperation, often anti-Polish in its form and character. In the years 1921-1926, this cooperation was particularly intensified, posing a threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic and leading to negotiations regarding both the western and the eastern borders of Poland established after the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Riga.

Keywords:

security, Germans, Soviets, military cooperation, the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the article is to prove, on the basis of the acquired source materials and the literature of the subject, that the closer German-Soviet political, economic and military relations, in the years 1921-1926, posed a threat to the Polish security. This period was not selected at random, because as a result of the preliminary research it turned out that these years witnessed the most intense German-Soviet relations in the whole interwar period. In addition, in this period the legal and factual bases for mutual cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets were prepared, such as the Treaty of Rapallo, agreement on trade and economic cooperation or the Treaty of Berlin. It should be also added that the correspondence between the strong German-Soviet cooperation and the process of formation of the bases for the national and internal security of the Second Polish Republic could be most clearly observed in the years 1921-1926. This period was characterised by determined efforts on the part of the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces to find allies, under the conditions of a growing threat posed by Germany and Russia, and then, from 1922, the Soviet Union.

The paper advances the thesis that the closer German-Soviet political, economic and military relations, observed in the years 1921-1926, posed a significant threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic. The crucial issue at stake was the possibility of challenging by both these states the borders with Poland, determined after the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Riga, and also the possibility of guaranteeing mutual neutrality by the Soviet Union and Germany in case of armed operations against a third state. Furthermore, in the described period Poland was a natural direction for expansion for both the Germans and the Soviets, and the German-Soviet political, economic and military agreement could become an important tool for strengthening the expansionist tendencies of both these countries.

1. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET COOPERATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1920S, BEFORE THE TREATY OF RAPALLO

It would be difficult to challenge the statement that one of the main axes in developing closer relations between Germany and Bolshevik Russia, and then the Soviet Union, was the convergence of interests of both these states, resulting, among others, from the similar feeling of being wronged by the peace settlements after the Great War. The Germans and the Soviets treated the postwar peace settlements as unfair and the leaders of both states were trying to establish this belief in their respective societies since the beginning of the 1920s. Moreover, in these societies the thesis was propagated that after 1918, foreign superpowers were enforcing the isolation of their states on the international arena, which was to hinder the realisation of national interests of both Germany and the Soviet Union¹.

Already during the Polish-Bolshevik war Germany and Russia worked out together a plan of action in case Warsaw was occupied by the Red Army. According to the opera-

¹ A. Peptoński, *Wywiad a dyplomacja II Rzeczypospolitej*, Mado, Toruń 2004, p. 284.

tional plans of the German and the Russian military staffs, the possible capture of the Polish capital by the Bolsheviks was to be the trigger for the German Freikorps troops to cross the western borders of Poland². The potential execution of this plan was possible because of the earlier arrangements made at the meeting of the General Staffs of the Reichswehr and the Red Army, which was held on 17 February 1919. As a result of this meeting both sides adopted a military convention which was overtly anti-Polish in nature. During the Polish-Bolshevik war the Germans would sell to the Red Army their military equipment left over after the Great War³.

At the beginning of the 1920s, the fostering of closer contacts within the area of the Free City of Danzig was another example of the German-Soviet cooperation. Citizens of different nationalities could freely enter and leave this area because of its territorial status, which was conducive to information and intelligence activities directed against Poland, carried out by the Germans and the Soviets. For example, within the area of the Free City of Danzig there was cooperation between officers of the German and the Soviet intelligence services, who conducted canvassing to recruit agents spying on Poland and disseminated anti-Polish proclamations among the local population⁴. Operations of the Bolshevik undercover espionage organisation, whose agents resided at the "Deutsches Haus", a German hotel at Pfefferstadt street 79, were also conducted in the Free City of Danzig. Members of this organisation were involved in espionage against Poland and Bolshevik propaganda, and Hermann Segal, an agent, was in addi-

² A. Peptoński, *Wojna o tajemnice. W tajnej służbie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918-1944*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2011, p. 211. According to Captain of Horse Karol Dubicz, Head of the Agency of the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces in Gdańsk, the Germans were able to provide an army to support the Red Army in its warfare with Poland. The size of this army was estimated at 75 thousand. In addition, at the Świnoujście (German *Swinemünde*) port, the Germans managed to prepare two torpedo boats of the SM 51 and SM 58 types, ready to support the Red Army from the north-western part of Poland, in case of any operations conducted in the Baltic Sea. The condition for rendering such assistance was the provision of the soldier's pay for the German soldiers by the Bolsheviks. Pismo rtm. Karola Dubicza z dnia 23 czerwca 1920 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.73.3.

³ I. Jędrzejewska, *Współpraca Armii Czerwonej i Reichswehry w latach 1917-1933. Wybrane problemy*, Europejskie Centrum Informacyjne, Toruń 2005, p. 17.

⁴ In one of these proclamations the Soviet officers included the following propaganda statements, which could indicate the closer German-Soviet relations in the Free City of Danzig: "We do not ask foreign states for anything; we can see and feel the hardship of the German nation. Our only wish is that every German could see and feel as we do – so that he could have the conviction that we, Russians, are friends and allies with Germany in achieving our common objective: preparing the day of revenge and fighting for the freedom of our countries, to revive our homelands". Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie do Ministerstwa Spraw Wojskowych Nr 12535/II z dnia 24 listopada 1921 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23. It can be concluded that the presented statements were anti-Polish in their character and called both cooperating nations for preparing the retaliation, which, from the point of view of the Second Polish Republic, had to result in a threat to its security at that time.

tion responsible for espionage for the benefit of Germany and for putting forged Polish mark banknotes into circulation⁵.

Furthermore, the cooperation of the Germans and the Soviets in the area of the Free City of Danzig included also sea operations. One of its important manifestations were the joint naval manoeuvres and exercises, prepared in case of a German-French war or a conflict of each of the above states with Poland. The conditions for building ships for the Red Army Navy at German shipyards were also agreed as well as the participation in joint tests on the new equipment at the Baltic Sea, near the Free City of Danzig. After the Treaty of Rapallo had been drawn up, the Germans and the Soviets started to share the information about naval schools and creation of naval ciphers, which were not known to Poles yet, during the manoeuvres at the Baltic Sea in 1923 and 1924⁶.

At the turn of the year 1920/1921, the Germans cooperated with the Soviets also to foster the recruitment to the Red Army of volunteers from abroad. In Berlin a special recruitment office was created, headed by the agent Kopp, a Soviet representative, which recruited volunteers to fight against Poland during the newly planned Bolshevik offensive. The recruitment was carried out owing to the intense propaganda within communist organisations operating abroad and supported by pan-German and military groups. In addition, the Germans facilitated for the Soviets the deposition of funds with the banks backed by the German capital, designed to support the Red Army formed by volunteers from abroad⁷.

In 1921, the central agency of the Polish military intelligence received reports about extremely hostile attitude of Germany towards Poland and attempts at cooperation with the Soviets in order to harm Poland. One of the anti-Polish activities was the establishment and financing of a school for about 50 canvassers from Bolshevik Russia in Düsseldorf, whose task was to organise a large-scale action to propagate communism in the industrial regions of Poland. Furthermore, German military groups considered the possibility of conducting an armed operation from the area of East Prussia, with the cooperation of the Soviet, Lithuanian and Byelorussian troops. Also the intelligence

⁵ Pismo Oficera Łącznikowego Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego przy Polskiej Misji Wojskowej w Gdańsku Nr 2722/II do Naczelnego Dowództwa WP z dnia 31 stycznia 1921 roku, CAW, Oddział II ND WP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.460.

⁶ A. Jendrzewski, *Współpraca niemiecko-radziecka w rejonie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska i Morza Bałtyckiego w latach 1920-1933 w świetle dokumentów polskiego wywiadu wojskowego*, [in:] *Za kulisami wywiadu i dyplomacji. Polski wywiad wojskowy 1918-1945. Materiały*, ed. P. Kołakowski, A. Peptoński, Kraków 2014, pp. 38-39. The scale of the German-Soviet cooperation against Poland within the area of the Free City of Danzig can be demonstrated by the following quotation, preserved in the documents, of the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in this city, of November 1921: "At present, in Gdańsk all German efforts are aimed to strengthen Soviet Russia by supporting the Polish communists and the Bolsheviks, providing assistance to fugitives and deserters (...) inflicting damage anywhere and to all Polish interests. Pismo Komisarza Generalnego RP w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku do Departamentu Spraw Morskich M.S. Wojsk. Nr 4318/II z dnia 19 listopada 1921 roku, CAW, Oddział II NDWP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.439.

⁷ Raport Poselstwa Polskiego w Bernie Nr 167/T/21. R.P. 31 z dnia 10 marca 1921 roku do Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych, CAW, Oddział II NDWP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.464.

service actions against Poland were expanded, "making use of Russian agents, acting in-between"⁸.

In the second half of November 1921, the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in the Free City of Danzig informed the Department of Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Military Affairs about the final failure of German hopes for cooperation with Great Britain concerning the potential revision of the German eastern border. In connection with that, the submitted opinion contained the following statement: "The Germans, disbelieving the Englishmen's sincerity, focused their policy exclusively on Russia. I have the information about the close cooperation between the Germans and the Bolsheviks/today 100 ships with military equipment as cargo left the Stettin port, heading to Petrograd, with <<locomotives>> in the invoice"⁹. In the same document the author expressed his conviction that the Germans were seeking "with the absolute determination to provoke a Polish-Bolshevik conflict and, relying on the experience of the war of 1920, were willing to help the Bolsheviks to crush the Polish state"¹⁰. The above statements indicate the cooperation between the Germans and Soviet Russia regarding the supplies of weapons and military equipment, to be used in the Polish-Bolshevik conflict. Already in this period there was a significant potential threat that Germany could become permanently involved in the attempts to lead to a subsequent war between the Poles and the Bolsheviks.

Another manifestation of the German-Soviet cooperation, still before the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo, was the sale of the ships from the military Baltic Fleet, forming a part of the Soviet Russia Navy. The transaction was made in Kronstadt, despite the fact that the German commission visiting the port stated that the Soviet ships could be bought only as "a piece of junk", while three of them were classified by the commission as a potential buy, though in need of overhaul¹¹. In January 1922, Lieutenant Colonel Romuald Wolikowski, the Polish military attaché in Moscow, submitted the information about large-scale German transactions effected in gold for the benefit of

⁸ The Polish military intelligence succeeded in exposing several dynamically operating Russian spies, working for Germany. The uncovered espionage scandals included, among others, the one related to the agent Aleksiej Asikiemewicz Belhardt in the Free City of Danzig and those related to Karcew and General Kurło. Raport pt. Stosunek Niemiec do Polski. Wojenne plany Niemiec. Szpiegostwo [brak autora i daty dziennej, 1921], CAW, Oddział II NDWP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.464.

⁹ Pismo Komisarza Generalnego RP w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku do Departamentu Spraw Morskich M.S. Wojsk. Nr 4318/II z dnia 19 listopada 1921 roku, CAW, Oddział II NDWP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.439.

¹⁰ Ibidem. What is more, the Germans assisted Russian officers in their mass return from emigration to join the Red Army, transporting them from Germany, via the Free City of Danzig, and also from Constantinople, to Russia. Cf. Ibidem.

¹¹ Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie do Sztabu Generalnego Oddziału II z dnia 17 stycznia 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

the Soviets, among others through Scheel's Bank in Reval and banks in Stockholm, in the period from 24 December 1921 to 1 January 1922¹².

In January 1922, the Polish military attaché in Moscow informed the central agency of the Polish military intelligence about the undercover German military mission operating in Moscow, which did not have any contacts with the German legation in this city. The Polish side managed to uncover two officers of this mission, Neumann and Stoeckel, who maintained permanent contacts with Leon Trotsky and the German military intelligence in Berlin, and also less frequent contacts with the Soviet Military Staff. Officers of the said military mission worked on two operational plans. The first one concerned the assistance in preparing the Red Army in case of an armed intervention of another state. The other one provided for a joint German-Soviet action against their neighbours¹³. It was the latter which was more significant from the point of view of the security of the Second Polish Republic, as it assumed the possibility of cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets in preparing the armed intervention against Poland. In February 1922, the Polish military attaché in Moscow informed the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces about the positive verification by the Polish military intelligence of the speculation concerning the German transports of weapons to Soviet Russia¹⁴. Just before the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo the closer German-Soviet cooperation was also manifested by maintaining intense contacts between communists from Soviet Russia and the German communist party, with the approval of the political centres in both these countries¹⁵. This information together with the pieces of information presented earlier evidence that the German-Soviet cooperation posing a threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic was well developed still before the formal conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo.

2. EXAMPLES OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET COOPERATION AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY OF RAPALLO

On 16 April 1922, the international agreement, called also the Treaty of Rapallo, was concluded, which was an event of crucial importance for the further intensification of cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets. The agreement was accompanied by a secret military convention, the provisions of which threatened the peace condi-

¹² Cf. Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie pt. Transakcje złotem przez misję bolszewicką w Rewlu [styczeń, brak daty dziennej, 1922], CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

¹³ Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie do Sztabu Generalnego Oddziału II z dnia 17 stycznia 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

¹⁴ Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie do Sztabu Generalnego Oddziału II Nr 27 z dnia 2 lutego 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23 and Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie do Sztabu Generalnego Oddziału II Nr 2873/II/Inf.II.Ref. "A" z dnia 7 lutego 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

¹⁵ The issue of the alliance with Soviet Russia was a standing item on the agenda during the meetings of the central committee of the communist party of Germany. Cf. Dokument Naczelnego Dowództwa WP pt. Sytuacja polityczna w Niemczech z dnia 23 marca 1921 roku, CAW, Oddział II NDWP, catalogue ref. I.301.8.437.

tions agreed pursuant to the Treaty of Versailles¹⁶. The Polish side received from a person from the Soviet military circles the information about the main provisions of the said secret military convention, however its details were kept in strict secrecy and were known only to few people from the Soviet government and military circles. According to the information acquired by the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces "The Germans undertook to revive and organise in Russia, namely in the Perm-Samara-Ural area, a huge war industry centre and to help the Soviet government in the reconstruction of the railway system and organisation of transport and maritime navigation. (...) In case of war complications a plan for a joint action should be agreed"¹⁷.

Furthermore, the secret convention attached to the Treaty of Rapallo included a general plan of warfare operations and cooperation between Germany and Soviet Russia. The plan assumed that the Soviets would make the first attack on Poland and "Germany would join these activities and provide assistance only after the Red Army had invaded Poland, and (...) a part of the German army would refuse to obey the German government and would act on its own, cutting off the Gdańsk Corridor and operating in the rear of the Polish army, from the north and heading to Warsaw"¹⁸. In the same document it was emphasised that the whole plan for German-Soviet cooperation depended on the rapidity of actions so that Poland could not rely on any potential help from Romania and France¹⁹. The genuineness of the above information sent to the central agency of the Polish military intelligence was confirmed by the military attaché at the Polish Legation in Moscow in the letter of 26 May 1922²⁰. It demonstrates that

¹⁶ It is of interest that according to the staff of the Polish Legation in Berlin the position of the German government that the agreement with the Soviets was not accompanied by any secret military convention clearly departed from the truth. In the letter of 8 May 1922, sent to the Ministry of Military Affairs, three employees of the Polish Legation in Berlin, headed by Jerzy Madeyski, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Germany, expressed their opinion that "The conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo indicates that it has just initiated further agreements that both governments will undoubtedly seek, provided the political direction disclosed in Rapallo is maintained". Pismo Poselstwa Polskiego w Berlinie nr 403/Tajne do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych z dnia 8 maja 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

¹⁷ Pismo Poselstwa Polskiego we Francji Nr 380/Ścisłe tajne z dnia 11 maja 1922 roku do Wydziału Wywiadowczego Oddziału II SG M.S.Wojsk., CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ On the basis of the described letter from the Polish Legation in France the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces obtained a very interesting piece of information suggesting that, allegedly, the Soviets were granted guarantees by Hungary that in the case Romania would help Poland, the Hungarians would provoke a rebellion in the rear of the Romanian army, in Transylvania, which was the most hostile territory in relation to the Romanian government. Cf. Ibidem. This kind of information may suggest that the Soviets had far-reaching plans regarding the anti-Polish action and it thus confirms that the threat to the Second Polish Republic arising from the signing of the secret military convention between the Germans and the Soviets after the Treaty of Rapallo was high.

²⁰ The attachment to this document included the information about the first German economic projects within the territory of Soviet Russia. The company Altegemeine Elektrische Gesellschaft started to organise in Moscow, with the permission of the government, a central electrical energy cooperative. On the basis of the cooperation of both countries the establishment of a company with mixed

the Polish side was aware of the threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic arising from the conclusion of the secret German-Soviet convention attached to the Treaty of Rapallo.

The attachment of the secret military convention to the official Treaty of Rapallo had significant implications for intensifying the German-Soviet cooperation, which could be described as clearly anti-Polish in its character. From the military point of view, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo, the cooperation between the military staffs of Germany and the Soviet Union was of particular importance. The meetings of the military staff officers became the valuable source for exchanging information about potential hostile states. In the years 1924-1925, such meetings were held quite frequently, including, for example²¹:

- visit of the Soviet officers to the capital of Germany in April 1924; they took part in a series of brief conferences with the officers of the German General Staff. The meetings, according to the reliable data acquired by the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, focused mainly on mobilisation and operational plans of both these states in case of the outbreak of a war;
- conference meetings of the representatives of the military staffs held in Moscow in October 1924;
- visit of the German military delegation in Moscow in December 1925, during which about 15 officers of the German General Staff took part in the talks with the representatives of the Soviet Revolutionary Military Council (*Rewwojensowietu*), although the topics discussed during the meeting were kept in strict secrecy;
- visit of Komandarm (Army Commander) Ijeronim Pietrowicz Uborewicz in Berlin in February 1926; he was a Soviet high-rank commander, responsible for holding staff conferences with the German military circles.

The cooperation between the staffs was accompanied by the close economic cooperation, focusing on the war industry planning. Such cooperation represented a special support particularly for the Soviets, as the Germans would help their partner in the development of the Soviet war industry, which was possible owing to a credit of 300 million German marks, given by the national government to the German companies exporting to the Soviet Union. It was also advantageous for Germany, as they could

capital was started, which was to organise deliveries of chemical, medicinal and technical products of different kinds from Germany to Soviet Russia. Moreover, German engineers visiting Moscow were considering the establishment of a direct air transport between Berlin and Moscow through the Gdańsk Corridor. Cf. Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie Nr 14940/II/Inf./II.A. z dnia 26 maja 1922 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.23.

²¹ Pismo polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie pt. Współdziałanie niemiecko-rosyjskie [brak daty dziennej, 1926], CAW, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.24.

use the possibility of manufacturing the war equipment in Russia for their own needs, thus dismissing any official accusations of violating the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles concerning the armament production. The document describing the German-Soviet cooperation, drawn up by the Polish military attaché at the Polish Legation in Moscow in 1926, included specific examples of economic cooperation between these two states in the discussed period when their close relations were fostered. The document described mainly the following²²:

- development of the Soviet aircraft industry with the assistance provided by the Germans, including the opening of branches of the Junkers plants at Fili near Moscow, in Samara and in Saratov. Furthermore, the Germans rented for the needs of their own production airplane factories in Moscow and Kazan and airplane workshops in Petrograd;
- delivering to the Soviets arms and ammunition by the Krupp Concern, owing to the opening, during the discussed period, of three armament factories of this concern in the Soviet Union, in Moscow, Samara and Yekaterinburg, and three factories producing ammunition, the location of which could not have been established by the Polish side;
- bringing to the Soviet Union numerous German specialists in shipbuilding for the army needs, including engineers from Vulcan-Werke, who came to the shipyards and docks in Kronstadt. On the other hand, the German shipyard in Stettin carried out systematic repairs of Soviet ships, with the participation of the Soviet Navy officers and engineers;
- utilising the Soviet industrial facilities by the Germans to carry out research and development works in the chemical industry for the military purposes. Already in 1922, such plants employed about 260 German officers and chemists and in 1925, a large number of workers were also brought there, mainly from Saxony. The Germans were experimenting in the Soviet plants with chemical warfare substances and war gases.

The German-Soviet cooperation under the conditions of the Treaty of Rapallo included also military training. According to the information available to the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, the Soviets could count on instruction support provided by about 600 active officers of the German army already in 1922. In the following years the German government withdrew from the training of the Red Army, but it did not prohibit various military science specialists from accepting private employment offers. In the years 1925-1926, the Polish military intelligence had reliable information that the tasks related to training in the use of special weapons in the Red Army were performed by eight staff officers, 73 line officers and also 102 non-commissioned officers. Another area of the Polish reconnaissance was the participa-

²² Ibidem, and also taking account of the materials published by P. Kołakowski. Vide: P. Kołakowski, *Manewry floty niemieckiej i sowieckiej we wrześniu 1924 roku na Morzu Bałtyckim w świetle informacji polskiego wywiadu*, „Przegląd Zachodniopomorski” 2003, No. 2, p. 233-240.

tion of German instructors in the training for the Soviet Navy and the joint German-Soviet fleet manoeuvres in the Baltic Sea²³.

On 12 October 1925, Germany and the Soviet Union decided to enter into a trade agreement, which took place exactly four days before Germany concluded the Locarno Treaties with the states of Western Europe. As emphasised in the literature of the subject, in the trade agreement the parties thereto confirmed the need to continue the existing direction of economic cooperation and accompanying political cooperation. This agreement was of utmost importance for the Soviet Union, as it gave rise to fundamental infrastructural changes in the Soviet industry and its shift to armament production. The production of arms was directed to a considerable extent against Poland and the Baltic states. Having effected the trade agreement both parties started negotiations on a treaty on non-aggression and neutrality²⁴.

All the above manifestations of the German-Soviet relations, clearly closer after the Treaty of Rapallo, caused that the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces became even more interested in intensifying the activities aimed at investigating the cooperation between these two countries, focusing in particular on the military area and accompanying economic aspects. It should be added that on 26 May 1925, the management of the Polish military intelligence decided to send to Major Tadeusz Kobylański, the Polish military attaché, a special instruction on the basis of which he was to monitor various military and economic aspects of the German-Soviet cooperation. In the opinion of the management of the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces the Germans and the Soviets were intensifying their cooperation on the basis of not only the provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo and additional secret contractual provisions, but also the trade agreement, which was used to prepare the industry for war purposes²⁵.

The geopolitical situation resulting from the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo for more than one year after its conclusion, as judged by the central agency of the Polish intelligence service, was adverse to Poland. The information provided by, among others, the Polish Legation in London suggested that the preservation of the Polish borders in their existing form could be difficult in the face of growing militarism of the German and Soviet policies. Also the British military intelligence circles doubted the stability of Poland's security and the integrity of its borders. The German-Soviet cooperation, intensified after 1922, was meant to contribute to undermining the arrangements of the Treaty of Versailles, mainly to the disadvantage of Poland and the Baltic states²⁶. Both the Germans and the Soviets objected predominantly to the

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Ł. Miłka, *Niemiecko-sowieckie negocjacje w sprawie traktatu o nieagresji i neutralności z 24 kwietnia 1926 r.*, „Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica” 2013, No. 90, pp. 119-121.

²⁵ A. Peplowski, *Wywiad polski na ZSRR 1921-1939*, Bellona-Gryf, Warszawa 1996, p. 313.

²⁶ In the opinion of the Polish Legation in London, which was submitted to the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces in the middle of February 1924, it was emphasised that the situation of Poland was judged by officers of the British intelligence and military journals as “highly uncertain”. Raport prasowy Poselstwa Polskiego w Londynie z dnia 13 lutego 1924 r., AAN,

delimitation of their borders with Poland and requested their revision, although – as emphasised in the literature – they could not expect that such requirement would be fulfilled quickly, on the basis of their independent activities, just after the end of the Polish-Bolshevik war²⁷.

3. PRACTICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CLOSER GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS PURSUANT TO THE PROVISION OF THE TREATY OF BERLIN OF 1926

In 1926, an important stage of the German-Soviet relations during the interwar period was aptly summarised or concluded. On 24 April 1926, Germany and the Soviet Union entered into an agreement referred to as the Treaty of Berlin. This agreement was perceived in Poland as significant and posing an additional threat to security. Such perception was also strengthened as a result of the three major events, namely:

- commencement of the Polish-German economic war, including the customs war, in June 1925 – the customs war represented a threat to both economic and social security of the Second Polish Republic, since in the middle of the 1920s, Germany's share in the Polish export and import was at the level of 40% and 30%, respectively. Such additional strengthening of the cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union pursuant to the Treaty of Berlin increased the perceived threat in the face of growing economic problems of the Polish state²⁸;
- conclusion of the Locarno Treaties in October 1925 – as a result of these Treaties Germany obtained final guarantees regarding the integrity of its western borders, whereas the Treaties contained no provisions – which was approved by the international community – regarding the issue of its eastern borders, i.e. mainly the border with Poland. The provisions of the Locarno Treaties were perceived as a potential threat that Germany would seek the revision of its borders with Poland²⁹;
- signing of the Soviet-Lithuanian Non-Aggression Pact in September 1926 – as a result of this Pact both states not only guaranteed their neutrality in case of the attack of a third state, but the Soviet Union declared also its support for Lithuanians in their attempts to regain the Vilnius Region. It should be pointed up that the Soviets thus violated the provisions of the Treaty of Riga,

Ambasada RP w Londynie, portfolio 102. Moreover, it was considered highly unlikely that Poland would maintain the integrity of its borders during a period of the following ten years. The increasing pressure on the part of the Germans and the Soviets, who started to strengthen their cooperation from 1922 on, among others openly anti-Polish in its character, posed a threat to the integrity of the borders determined pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles on the one hand, and the Treaty of Riga on the other hand. Cf. Ibidem.

²⁷ M. Kłusek, *Polityka Gustawa Stresemanna wobec ZSRR w latach 1923-1929*, Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007, p. 64.

²⁸ W. Morawski, *Dylematy konserwatywnej modernizacji. Polityka gospodarcza Polski międzywojennej*, „Acta Oeconomica Pragensia” 2007, r. 15, No. 7, p. 293-294.

²⁹ J. Lubelski, *Związek Bałtycki i Trzecia Europa. Koncepcje reorganizacji Europy Środkowej w polityce zagranicznej II Rzeczypospolitej*, „Nowa Europa” 2010, No. 1/9, p. 198.

concluded with Poland in 1921, in which they guaranteed their neutrality regarding the delimitation of borders between Poland and Lithuania³⁰. The fact of including such provisions in the Soviet-Lithuanian agreement was anti-Polish in character, representing a menace to the security and territorial integrity of the Second Polish Republic.

In the face of the three above events the overtone of the Treaty of Berlin was even more hostile from the point of view of the Polish security. In 1926, the relations between the three most dangerous neighbouring states of Poland were established. Concurrently, each of these states conducted intensified espionage and intelligence activities directed against Poland. Already on 27 April 1926, the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces could report that the Treaty of Berlin was enthusiastically welcomed by the Soviets. The Polish military attaché at the Polish Legation in Berlin wrote "The so far-reaching Soviet-German cooperation represents the unquestionable victory of the Soviet external policy over the policy implemented by the British and the League of Nations. (...) The Soviets' intentions rely on the long-term developments, i.e. on the actual closer relations between the Germans and the Soviets and their common direction of external policy"³¹. The assessment of the situation available to the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces several days after the signing of the Treaty of Berlin was based on the conviction that the Treaty was anti-English in its character and intended to destabilise the foundations of the League of Nations. For Poland the English policy of balancing powers after the Great War and the international activity of the League of Nations were, apart from the political and military alliances with France and Romania, the two important bases and potential security guarantees. The Treaty of Berlin was a direct means of undermining such guarantees.

The document submitted by the Polish military attaché in Moscow, referred to hereinabove, contained also the information significant from the perspective of the Polish national security, which was included in the exposé of Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. He commented on the idea of the Treaty of Berlin as the important guarantee for developing the German-Soviet relations and also formulated the assumptions for the common foreign policy of both these states. With regard to Poland the attitude was hostile, including threats, whereas with regard to France, being the main ally of Poland, the Soviets' attitude, as judged by the Polish military attaché in Moscow, was indifferent or unfavourable at times. The closer relations between the Soviets and the Germans enabled the former to express more definite accusations against Poland in connection with the policy of the Second Polish Republic in the Baltic states, which, in the opinion of Litvinov, was hostile and aggressive

³⁰ S. Sierpowski, *Litewsko-radziecki pakt o nieagresji z 1926 r. w świetle Paktu Ligi Narodów*, [w:] *Studia historyczne nad polityką, gospodarką i kulturą*, red. B. Halczak, Oficyna Wydawnicza Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Zielona Góra 2002, p. 118-122.

³¹ Odpis raportu L. 437 polskiego attaché wojskowego przy Poselstwie Polskim w Moskwie, mjr. Tadeusza Kobyłańskiego z dnia 27 kwietnia 1926 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.24.

to the Soviet Union. The assessment submitted by the Polish military attaché in Moscow to the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces included a statement that the Treaty of Berlin, from the point of view of the Soviets, was to contribute to “the weakening of England’s influences in Central and Western Europe, thus subjecting Poland and the Baltic states to the German-Soviet dominance”³². This kind of dominance was obviously perceived by the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces as overtly threatening the possibility of realising national interests of the Second Polish Republic, including the security of the restored Polish state.

The events that led to the closer relations between the Germans and the Soviets, in the years 1921-1926, had an adverse impact on the situation of Poland. The enhanced possibilities of interacting with the Soviet Union assured the Germans that their potential offensive to the East, against Poland, would not face a counter-attack or any military resistance on the part of the Soviets. It is of interest that in the opinion of the German military officers, submitted to the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces by the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Hamburg in December 1927, both Poland and the Soviet Union were perceived as war enemies. The described period of closer German-Soviet relations was summarised in this opinion as beneficial to the possibilities of the German expansion to the East, mainly to seize back East Prussia with Danzig and Upper Silesia from Poland³³.

After 1926, the intensity of the German-Soviet political, economic and military relations declined noticeably. According to the information available to the Polish military intelligence the cooling of economic relations between the two states occurred, which were auxiliary to the development of their military potential. Numerous instances of friction occurred between the trade associations of Germany and the Soviet Union, and Junkers-Werke, the German company located at Fili near Moscow, which was crucial for the development of the Soviet aircraft industry, ceased to exist already in 1925. Soon afterwards the Krupp concern discontinued agricultural licences and credit support, having found out that such activity was not profitable due to a crop failure in the

³² Ibidem.

³³ German Colonel Immanuel was said to formulate the following opinion on this issue “If Russia wins, Poland will collapse. In this case we have a chance to regain East Prussia with Danzig and Upper Silesia, seized from us. If, on the contrary, Poland wins, it will keep its holdings and will probably regain Lithuania and Byelorussia, thus becoming the strongest enemy of Germany in the East”. Sprawozdanie Konsulatu RP w Hamburgu w sprawie artykułu płk. Immanuela pt. <<Sovietrusland und Polen als Kriegsgegner>> z dnia 20 grudnia 1927 roku, CAW, Kolekcja akt rosyjskich, catalogue ref. VIII.800.61.24. It seems that an unambiguous conclusion can be drawn from this opinion that in the middle of the 1920s, the Soviet victory in a potential conflict with Poland would be far more favourable for Germany than the reverse situation, i.e. the victory of Poland and the strengthening of its holdings, in the case it acquired the whole territory of Lithuania, Byelorussia and Ukraine. Such conclusion supported the need for maintaining by the Germans good relations with the Soviets, as such relations opened up the possibility of regaining by Germany the lost lands at the expense of Poland. In the discussed period the German-Soviet alliance posed a threat to the integrity and security of the Second Polish Republic, reinforcing the German idea of ‘revising’ the borders with Poland, promoted throughout the interwar period.

Soviet agriculture. In connection with that the Soviets showed their dissatisfaction with the insufficient number of long-term credits provided by Germany³⁴. After the year 1926, the German-Soviet relations entered a new phase and the period of the maximum intensification of these relations ended. The second opportunity for such intense relations, threatening the security of the Second Polish Republic, emerged only in 1939.

CONCLUSION

Summarising the content of the article, the following conclusions can be formulated:

- The Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces was in possession of the materials evidencing that the Polish military intelligence was well informed of the scale of the increasing German and Soviet threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic, resulting from the closer relations of its two largest neighbours.
- The results of closer political and, especially, economic and military relations between Germany and Soviet Russia, and then the Soviet Union, in the years 1921-1926, showed that the cooperation of the two states took place in many different areas.
- The said areas of cooperation between the Germans and the Soviets, in the years 1921-1926, were very often clearly anti-Polish in their character, and in the German and Soviet political and military circles the Second Polish Republic was treated as a temporary state, incapable of preserving its borders determined after the Treaty of Versailles, particularly the borders with Germany and the Soviet Union.

The presented arguments corroborate the thesis that the closer German-Soviet political, economic and military relations, in the years 1921-1926, posed a significant threat to the security of the Second Polish Republic. These years were characterised by the particular intensification of relations between the two states in the interwar period. Starting from the support provided to Russia in the period of the Polish-Bolshevik war, through the execution of the secret provisions accompanying the Treaty of Rapallo, and ending with the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, the Germans sought to maintain closer relations with the Soviets, which influenced the perceived by the Poles level of threat to their security. The Soviets, relying on the cooperation with Germany, strove for the possibility of quick reconstruction of their war industry and improvement in the economic situation in the analysed period, wishing also to receive official guarantees of neutrality on the part of Germany in case of the outbreak of another armed conflict, for example with Poland.

³⁴ A. Peptoński, *Wywiad polski...*, op. cit., p. 314-315.

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