

# EQUILIBRIUM IN THE BALTIC: THE POLISH BALTIC INSTITUTE'S VIEW ON NORDIC AND BALTIC SEA COOPERATION IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Marta Grzechnik

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ABSTRACT

As a result of the First World War, Poland regained independence and access to the Baltic Sea, which caused increased interest in maritime matters among Polish scholars. One of the manifestations of this interest was the founding of the Baltic Institute in 1925, the goals of which were to promote the vision of the Baltic Sea as an important part of the Polish nation's life, construct a maritime identity in society, and argue for Polish access to the sea against German revisionist arguments. As was typical in Poland, the Baltic Sea and related issues were most often discussed from the point of view of Polish foreign policy and security, as well as the country's place in the Baltic Sea region and in Europe. In the last years of the interwar period, the Institute also became more interested in cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and in Poland's Scandinavian/Nordic neighbours. Scandinavian neutrality and Nordic unity were discussed and analyzed in relation to Polish interests and foreign policy. One of the results of this analysis was a proposal to transform Scandinavian neutrality into a Scandinavian-Baltic version, thanks to which it would be possible to secure peace in Europe.

*Keywords:* Baltic Sea region, interwar period, Baltic Institute, Poland

In Poland, the interwar period was a time of increased interest in the sea. The access to the Baltic granted by the Versailles Treaty was limited – a short coast connected with the rest of the country by the so-called Danzig or Polish Corridor, and no major port – but enough to inspire a certain fascination with maritime matters in parts of society. This was manifested

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by grand gestures such as Poland's Wedding to the Sea performed in 1920 in Puck, as well as intellectual programmes calling for popularising matters related to the sea, and its strategic and economic role. This intellectual activity was the foundation for establishing a research institution called the Baltic Institute (*Instytut Bałtycki*). Its programme was ambitious: to promote the vision of the Baltic Sea as playing an extremely important role in the political, social and economic life of the Polish nation, and conversely: the Polish nation playing an important role in the Baltic Sea. The aim of this article is to present the Institute's point of view on one particular aspect of maritime issues: Scandinavia and its relation to the other Baltic Sea countries, especially Poland, which can simultaneously be seen as an alternative to the already established Nordic unity by ways of redefining it into a wider, Baltic-Nordic shape.

### *The Baltic Institute and its activities*

The Baltic Institute was founded on 31 August 1925 in Toruń.<sup>1</sup> The initiative came from circles associated with *Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich* (Association for the Defence of the Western Borderlands), which had existed in Poznań since 1921, and whose programme promoted the view that for a strong and independent Poland, the districts of Pomerania, Greater Poland and Silesia (i.e. the Western Borderlands) had to be developed and closely integrated with the rest of the country.<sup>2</sup> The Institute's main organizer and first director was Stanisław Srokowski, a diplomat, professor of geography at the University of Warsaw, and an activist of the Association. The Institute's statute was passed at its founding meeting, underlining the importance of the study of history and the current situation of the north-western Polish territories, as well as the significance of the so-called Danzig Corridor for the Polish *raison d'état*.

The Institute set out with ambitious aims of initiating, conducting and disseminating research on the Baltic Sea; however, for most of its existence it had to work with limited financial and human resources, only actually formally employing one, and since March 1931 two researchers. One of them was Józef Borowik, its long-time director (after Srokowski resigned in 1926

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed account of the Baltic Institute, its ideas and activities, see: Marta Grzechnik, *Regional histories and historical regions: the concept of the Baltic Sea region in Polish and Swedish historiographies* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012), 37–75.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu: Instytut Bałtycki w latach 1925–1939* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1991), 32.

and his successor, Teodor Tyc, died shortly after assuming the post).<sup>3</sup> The Institute mostly relied on collaborators, acting as the coordinator and initiator of research on Baltic Sea matters, encouraging cooperation between different scholars from the whole country. According to some estimates, by 1931 the Institute cooperated with 337 authors in Poland and 163 abroad.<sup>4</sup> It can therefore be considered a representative voice on the research of the Baltic Sea in interwar Poland.

In 1936, a report of the Baltic Institute's activities to that date was published under a title which summarizes its main areas of interest: *Dostęp do morza, zagadnienie pomorskie, wspólnota bałtycka* – access to the sea, the Pomeranian question, and the Baltic Sea community. According to Józef Borowik, these keywords represent, in this order, the Institute's evolution from a local to an international institution, with a wide network of contacts and cooperation.<sup>5</sup> The keywords' sequence also reveals the Institute's priorities, among which the question of Polish access to the Baltic Sea and generally the country's position on its shores was undoubtedly paramount. Traditionally, since the end of the nineteenth century, maritime issues in Polish research have been perceived from the point of view of Polish interests, in particular Polish access to the sea, and in relation to questions of security and independence.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, for most of the twentieth century they were also inseparably linked to the question of Polish-German

<sup>3</sup> Józef Borowik (1891–1968) was a biologist and ichthyologist by education. Before his association with the Baltic Institute, he worked, among others, in ichthyological laboratories in the Russian Empire (e.g. Uralsk, today in Kazakhstan), thereafter, in independent Poland, as an inspector of deep-sea fisheries for the Ministry of Agriculture, and as head of the Department of Economy and Organisation of Fisheries of the State Research Institute of Rural Husbandry (PINGW). During the Second World War, after his release in 1942 (he was arrested on 13 September 1939 and placed first in a labour camp and then in Stutthof concentration camp), he started renewing his scholarly contacts with the aim of re-establishing the Baltic Institute immediately after the end of the war. Even after the dissolution of the Institute in 1950, he remained active as a scholar and an expert on Baltic Sea and Pomeranian matters. For a detailed account on Józef Borowik's life and work, see: Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa, *Życie jak płomień: o życiu i pracach Józefa Borowika* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Czesław Ciesielski, "Z dziejów Instytutu Bałtyckiego," *Osiemdziesiąt lat Instytutu Bałtyckiego: materiały z konferencji naukowej 29 listopada 2005 r.*, ed. by Czesław Ciesielski (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwa Instytutu Bałtyckiego, 2006), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Józef Borowik, "Przedmowa," *Dostęp do morza, zagadnienie pomorskie, wspólnota bałtycka*, IV sprawozdanie dyrekcji I. B. przedłożone Komisjom Naukowym i Walnemu Zgromadzeniu w dniach 21–22 czerwca 1935 r., ed. by Józef Borowik (Toruń: Wydawnictwa Instytutu Bałtyckiego, 1936), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Jörg Hackmann, "Zugang zum Meer: die Ostsee in der polnischen Historiografie," *Nordeuropaforum*, 2 (2004) <<http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/nordeuropaforum/2004-2/hackmann--joerg-43/XML>> [accessed on 17 October 2012].

relations. And so it was during the interwar period: the partition of German (previously Prussian) territory granted Poland its access to the sea, and German appeals for revision of the Versailles Treaty continued to threaten this access. In face of this threat, the limited access to the sea and still strong sense of insecurity shortly after regaining independence, this view was even more appealing.<sup>7</sup> From this idea followed an interpretation of Polish history as presented in historical publications of the Baltic Institute, according to which there was a direct relation between the country's times of greatness and its active maritime policy, as well as, on the other hand, between its downfall and its neglect of such policy. For example, as Franciszek Bujak argued, turning to the south-east had distracted Poland's leaders from the crucial issue of maintaining a strong presence on the Baltic Sea coast and curbing the various German states' eastward expansion.<sup>8</sup>

The Baltic Institute attempted to promote its own vision of Poland and its place on the shores of the Baltic Sea. The core element of this vision was creating the so-called maritime outlook (*światopogląd morski*) in society and among its leaders. A consistent, active maritime policy was to be the result of the successful emergence of such an outlook. Furthermore, the activities of the Institute were supposed to provide arguments to support Polish rights to access to the sea, answering analogous projects of German researchers – first of all their arguments about Poles not being a maritime nation and not needing direct access to the sea, and about the “unnatural” status of the so-called Danzig corridor, which should be remedied by incorporating it into Germany.<sup>9</sup> Only thereafter did the Institute aim to foster an interest in other Baltic Sea countries, including Scandinavia.

This promotional effort was carried out primarily through numerous publications, including monographs, edited volumes, reports, journals – including an English-language one, *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*,

<sup>7</sup> This way of thinking had been most pronounced among the political thinkers of national democracy, concentrated around Roman Dmowski (see e.g. Grzegorz Radomski, “Morze i problematyka morska w myśli politycznej Narodowej Demokracji (do 1939 roku),” *Morze i problematyka morska w polskiej myśli politycznej (XIX–XXI wiek): studia i rozprawy*, ed. by Tomasz Sikorski and Adam Wątor (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego US Minerwa, 2014), 59–60), although it was not limited to them, and the Baltic Institute's researchers had various political backgrounds.

<sup>8</sup> Franciszek Bujak, “Kultury morskie i lądowe,” *Światopogląd morski*, ed. by Józef Borowik (Toruń: Wydawnictwa Instytutu Bałtyckiego, 1934), 1–19. See also e.g. Wacław Sobieski, *Walka o Pomorze* (Poznań: Nakład Księgarni Św. Wojciecha, 1928).

<sup>9</sup> E.g.: *Przeciw propagandzie korytarzowej*, ed. by Józef Borowik (Toruń: Wydawnictwa Instytutu Bałtyckiego, 1930); Kazimierz Smogorzewski, *Poland's access to the sea* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1934); Sobieski, *Walka o Pomorze*; see also Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 276–277.

which will be discussed below – and brochures. The latter were sent free of charge to press agencies, and research and trade institutions in order to inform them about maritime matters in general and the activities of the Baltic Institute. The Institute granted permission to reprint these brochures even without naming their source in the hope of raising awareness and interest in the subject among journalists. By 1936, the number of the Institute's publications exceeded 300 titles, according to Józef Borowik's estimate.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Institute organized lectures on the topics of, among others, history, economics and geography. An example was a series of lectures organized between 1931 and 1933 in Gdynia, which were later published as a book *Światopogląd morski*, a volume referring in its title to the Institute's main task – developing the society's "maritime outlook" – and giving an overview of its activities and views. Some effort was also invested in publications in Western European languages, as it was recognized that, due to language constraints, the German arguments were better known in Western Europe. It was considered important that not only the German side of the argument was heard abroad.<sup>11</sup> However, because of limited resources and problems arising from the fact that Baltic Sea research in Poland had to be organized from scratch after regaining independence, this proved to be a difficult task.

Despite the Institute's activities, and despite the fascination for the sea in parts of the country's intellectual elite in the interwar period,<sup>12</sup> the impact of these and other actions was not as great as the Institute's collaborators might have wished. The northern direction was rarely of great interest to scholars in Poland; Polish scholarship traditionally concentrated on the east-west axis, the country's relations to its neighbours in these directions, and its place in East Central Europe. Also, the fact that most major Polish cities and industrial centres were situated inland – with the exception of the new port and city in Gdynia, the construction of which was an

<sup>10</sup> Józef Borowik, "The work and publications of the 10 Baltic Institute", *Baltic and Scandinavian countries: a survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography and economics*, 2 (1934), 265.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Smogorzewski *Poland's access to the sea*, 433–447; Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 44, 276–277.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Stefan Troebst, "'Intermarium' and 'Wedding to the sea': politics of history and mental mapping in East Central Europe," *European Review of History*, 10 (2003), 293–321; Marta Grzechnik, "Intermarium: the Baltic and the Black Seas on the Polish mental maps in the interwar period," *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, 6 (2014), 81–96. On maritime topics in literature, music and film, see: Grzegorz Radomski, "Morze i problematyka morska w myśli politycznej Narodowej Demokracji (do 1939 roku)," *Morze i problematyka morska*, 70.

important element of interwar national propaganda – turned the nation’s attention away from the coast.

As far as the Institute’s influence abroad is concerned, the most important point of reference was Germany. This was the main opponent against which scientific arguments were put forward. In fact, being aware of its much smaller resources, the Baltic Institute considered itself a lonely but morally superior outpost against the German institutes of Eastern and Baltic Studies, first of all the ones in Königsberg (which was familiar to Srokowski since he had acted as the Consul General there between 1920 and 1921), Danzig and Breslau.<sup>13</sup> In their own eyes, the Institute’s scholars were the defenders of the Polish coast, and thereby their country’s vital interests, against the vicious attacks of their greedy and aggressive neighbours.<sup>14</sup> Reactions in Germany to the Institute’s research were carefully followed, and in the mid-1930s, Borowik noted: “Our effort and our capabilities have stopped being disregarded. But unfortunately, we have not noticed that the idea of the revision of borders has been given up – even in the time of the [Polish-German non-aggression] pact – it has only been modified and the apparatus of revisionist action has been refined according to the new political situation. [...] It has to be openly said that this new, refined version of revisionism is more dangerous than the old one and requires from our side a much stronger and more developed research apparatus if we want our counteraction to be efficient.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 44.

<sup>14</sup> Probably the best example can be found in: Sobieski, *Walka o Pomorze*, but also e.g. Józef Widajewicz, “Słowianie zachodni na Bałtyku,” *Światopogląd morski*, 46–47; Zygmunt Wojciechowski, “Rozwój terytorjalny Prus w stosunku do ziem macierzystych Polski,” *Światopogląd morski*, 93–94, and others. This way of thinking was, again, common with that of Roman Dmowski’s national democracy movement, which consistently considered Germany to be the main opponent of the independent Poland. War with Germany over control of the Baltic Sea coast was often seen as inevitable; see: Arkadiusz Meller, “Bałtyk, Powiśle i Prusy Wschodnie w myśli politycznej obozu narodowego (1918–1939),” *Morze i problematyka morska*, 96–97. On the other hand, anti-German views with regard to Polish access to the sea were also expressed, for example in the propaganda of the Maritime and River League (*Liga Morska i Rzeczna*) and its successor Maritime and Colonial League (*Liga Morska i Kolonialna*), a popular organisation promoting in Polish society maritime issues, maritime education of young people, and later also colonial expansion, which was connected with the government circles of the opposing political option, *Sanacja*. See: Tadeusz Białas, *Liga Morska i Kolonialna 1930–1939* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1983), 59–66.

<sup>15</sup> Józef Borowik, “Sprawozdanie Zarządu Instytutu Bałtyckiego w dniu 22 czerwca 1935 r.,” *Dostęp do morza*, 116–117.

### *The Baltic Institute and Scandinavia*

Countries around the Baltic Sea, including Scandinavia, were only included as a research topic in the last of the three themes of the Baltic Institute's interest: the Baltic Sea community. As visible from Borowik's summary, this theme was not a priority for the Institute, especially in the first period of its existence. Although the first director, Stanisław Srokowski, had looked for contacts and cooperation in research and political centres around the Baltic Sea, at the same time he did not think that the Scandinavian countries should be the main area of the Institute's research, since he did not consider them to have any major influence on the Polish culture and economy. He himself favoured cooperation with the Baltic states and Finland.<sup>16</sup> His network of contacts, however, disappeared after he resigned from his post as director. Knowledge about the Scandinavian countries was limited in Poland, and Scandinavian studies as a research field almost did not exist.

This situation changed to some extent in the second half of the 1930s. After the signing of the Polish-German non-aggression pact in 1934, the Baltic Institute found itself under pressure from the government – its main source of financing – to tone down the anti-German rhetoric of its publications and pay more attention to Scandinavia and the Baltic states. Additionally, the government's foreign policy started turning to the north more often. For example, in the years 1937 and 1938 mutual visits of the Foreign Minister of Sweden Rickard Sandler to Warsaw and the Foreign Minister of Poland Józef Beck to Stockholm took place. During these visits, the need for increased economic and cultural cooperation between the two countries was underlined, and declarations were made that in case of conflict the two countries would not find themselves on opposing sides.<sup>17</sup> Additional factors were the increasing trade connections (especially the growing export of coal from Poland to Scandinavia, mainly Sweden), which generated an interest in the region's economy. The government assigned additional funds for the Institute's activities, e.g. for publications in Western European languages and for renewing efforts to establish or restore cooperation with research institutes in the Baltic states, as well as universities in Gothenburg, Lund and Uppsala.<sup>18</sup>

One of the manifestations of this increased interest in the Scandinavian countries in this time was the scientific journal *Baltic Countries: a*

<sup>16</sup> Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 44–45.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>18</sup> Bolesław Hajduk, "Problematyka skandynawska w działalności Instytutu Bałtyckiego," *Osiemdziesiąt lat Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 34.

*survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography and economics*, published by the Baltic Institute since 1935. Józef Borowik described its founding as an important step on the way to the intensification of scientific and cultural cooperation with the countries of the Baltic Sea region, and interest in the new journal was evidenced, for example, by articles and reviews received from that region.<sup>19</sup> The publication's language, as well as the fact that the authors and editors came from different countries of the Baltic Sea region and beyond (Great Britain, USA) are an indication not only of the Institute's plans to promote its vision abroad, but also of opening up to international research and discourse. Among the editors from Scandinavia were Nils Ahnlund, Halvdan Koht and Gunnar Myrdal<sup>20</sup> (all three were listed, among others, as members of the editorial board since 1938).

The aim of *Baltic Countries* was to deal with the countries of the Baltic Sea region and their relations, with special regard to "the history, geography and economics of the Baltic region," but also without neglecting "its cultural and political, social, racial and religious structure;" in particular, the cultural, economic and geographical unity of the region was underlined.<sup>21</sup> The interest in Scandinavia was expressed even more strongly in 1937, when the journal's title was changed to *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*. Borowik estimated the number of researchers dealing with Baltic and Scandinavian issues that were reached by the journal at three thousand.<sup>22</sup>

Because of shortage of funding and staff, it was difficult to concentrate on more than one country; attention was therefore mainly directed at the biggest country with the most economic connections with Poland: Sweden. Only at the end of the 1930s did more lively political and scientific contacts with other countries of the region begin developing.<sup>23</sup> Also, initiatives for cooperation, especially cultural, with Poland appeared in Scandinavia (e.g. the Baltic Institute began operating in Stockholm in 1931 and a committee

<sup>19</sup> Borowik, *Sprawozdanie Zarządu Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 117.

<sup>20</sup> Nils Ahnlund (1889–1957): Swedish historian, professor at Stockholm University College (today Stockholm University) in 1928–55, since 1941 a member of the Swedish Academy. Halvdan Koht (1873–1965): Norwegian historian and politician, professor at the University of Oslo (1910–40), in the years 1935–40 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway (Labour Party). Gunnar Myrdal (1898–1987): Swedish economist, sociologist and politician, winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1974.

<sup>21</sup> "Editorial Policy," *Baltic countries: a survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography and economics*, 1 (1935).

<sup>22</sup> Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 242.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 266–268.



for cultural cooperation between Poland and Sweden in 1935<sup>24</sup>), however it has to be said that the opposite side of the Baltic Sea did not play a prominent role in the policies and research of the Scandinavian countries in the interwar period.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the Baltic Institute's ideas did not meet with much of a response on the other side of the sea. Its founding was reported as a positive development, for example in the historical journal *Historisk tidskrift*, and some of its publications were reviewed there.<sup>26</sup> The founding of the journal *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries* was also commented on in positive terms and, as mentioned above, some Swedish and other Scandinavian authors and editors were involved in its publication.<sup>27</sup> However, at the same time Polish historical research was most often regarded as filled with nationalistic propaganda, and the country itself criticized for its treatment of minorities and its excessively nationalistic attitude towards its neighbours. Aside from this, Poland, with its short Baltic Sea coastline, and centres of political and economic power and cultural life situated inland (Warsaw, Cracow), was never considered a truly Baltic country, but rather a Central European one – contrary to the Baltic Institute's vision but, as mentioned above, not completely contrary to the Polish nation's own self-image.<sup>28</sup> Also, politically speaking, Poland was not a desirable ally, as it could implicate neutral Sweden into the European system of alliances: it was an ally of one of Europe's major powers, France, and had recently been at war with both the Soviet Union and Lithuania.<sup>29</sup>

If ideas of widening cooperation beyond the Nordic framework ever appeared in Sweden, they included the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and possibly Lithuania – with which some cultural and historical links could be found in the time of the Swedish Great Power Era – but not other Baltic Sea region countries. Also in this case, however, there could be no talk

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>25</sup> Grzechnik, *Regional histories and historical regions*, 77–82.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. “Underrättelser,” *Historisk tidskrift*, 54 (1934), 203–204; David Norrman, “Nyare polsk historisk litteratur,” *Historisk tidskrift*, 55 (1935), 77; “Underrättelser,” *Historisk tidskrift*, 55 (1935), 393.

<sup>27</sup> “Underrättelser,” *Historisk tidskrift*, 57 (1937), 81–82.

<sup>28</sup> Norrman, *Nyare polsk historisk litteratur*, 77; Jan Szymański, “Sverige i polsk utrikespolitik 1918–1939,” *Polen & Sverige 1919–1999*, ed. by Harald Runblom and Andrzej Nils Uggla (Uppsala: Centrum för multietnisk forskning, 2005), 106; Kristian Gerner, “Sverige, Polen och den nya politiska ordningen vid Östersjön efter första världskriget,” *Polen & Sverige 1919–1999*, 63–82.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 70–71; Wilhelm M. Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum: från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår: en översikt* (Stockholm: Publica), 19–20.

of forging too strong connections, which could potentially expose Sweden (and other Scandinavian countries) to the threat of Soviet aggression. The Baltic states were, regardless of their historical Nordic connections, perceived as potential sources of instability, and as the most vulnerable to a possible attack from the Soviet Union. The idea of *rysskräck* – fear of the Russians – can be mentioned in this context as arguably one of the main ideas dictating the direction of Swedish foreign policy throughout the twentieth century. This attitude resulted, for example, in the Scandinavian lack of enthusiasm towards the Baltic states' attempts to build a Baltic League – a form of a regional alliance – at the end of the 1910s and beginning of the 1920s. This lack of interest from the north was one of the main reasons (apart from the disagreements between the alliance's possible members, first of all the conflict between Poland and Lithuania) why the formation of the Baltic League failed in the end.<sup>30</sup> It followed from a combination of geopolitical, historical and cultural factors; among them was not only the already mentioned policy of neutrality and avoiding involvement in any potentially risky cooperation, but also a strong feeling of Nordic unity, which, besides the positive dimension of cooperation between the Nordic states also had a negative one: of sharpening the border between the Nordic region and the rest of Europe. Finally, cultural trends stemming from nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism were not to be ignored, with their ideas of cultural differences between the Germanic and the Slavic peoples of Europe, imported, along with many other intellectual trends, from the German intellectual tradition.<sup>31</sup>

### *The concept of neutrality*

One of the themes discussed by the Baltic Institute was that of Scandinavian neutrality, often in connection to the related subject of Scandinavian unity. Examples include two texts by Józef Borowik: a brochure *Neutralność Skandynawii* (Neutrality of Scandinavia) and an article in *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, “The Equilibrium in the Baltic”.<sup>32</sup> In a very similar ver-

<sup>30</sup> See: Marko Lehti, *A Baltic League as a construct of the new Europe* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 518.

<sup>31</sup> See: Marta Grzechnik, “From moat to connecting link: Sweden and the Baltic Sea in the twentieth century,” *Beyond the sea: reviewing the manifold dimensions of water as barrier and bridge*, ed. by Marta Grzechnik and Heta Hurskainen (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 130–139.

<sup>32</sup> Józef Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii* (Warszawa: Spółka Wydawnicza Czasopism, 1937); Józef Borowik, “The equilibrium in the Baltic,” *Baltic and Scandinavian Coun-*

sion the ideas expressed in these texts were also presented in an essay in the volume *Contemporary World Politics* published in 1939 in New York.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned above, Borowik was not only the Institute's director, but also formally its only employee until 1931, and the most prolific author throughout the interwar period. Also taking into consideration the nature of the Institute's loose organisation, coordinating research rather than conducting it as such, Borowik's voice can be considered as representative of the views of the Baltic Institute at the time.

In his publications Borowik analyses the concept of neutrality, distinguishing its two aspects: theoretical (that is, the doctrine and norms of international law) and practical (the practice of policies and international relations). Both these aspects have common goals: impartiality in disputes and keeping peace. The author presents their development over time, from their origin in the doctrine of the freedom of the seas (*mare liberum*) of Hugo Grotius, their further development through – not wholly successful – attempts to regulate the question in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century (The Paris Declaration Respecting Maritime Law of 1856, the Hague Convention of 1907 and the London Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War of 1909), right up to the challenge to the doctrine of neutrality that was the First World War.

To these aspects, Borowik adds a third one: the psychological attitude of the whole of society. It is, according to him, at least as important – if not more – as the other two as the basis for the functioning of neutrality in practice. He quotes a speech given in Paris by Rickard Sandler from 1937: "Personally, and from the standpoint of my country, I prefer to speak of a 'neutral attitude,' which can be defined thus: Sweden is opposed to a policy of alliances and is not prepared to let herself be drawn into combinations which would paralyse her freedom of action just when she might most need it. Instead of neutral countries, we should therefore speak of countries without alliances."<sup>34</sup>

Borowik himself mentions three factors determining this neutral attitude: historical experience with traditions shaped by it, the country's geographical location, and its current economic situation.

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*tries: a survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography and economics*, 5 (1939), 95–100.

<sup>33</sup> Józef Borowik, "The Baltic region," *Contemporary world politics: an introduction to the problems of international relations*, ed. by Francis James Brown, Charles Hodges and Joseph Slabey Roucek (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1939), 298–315.

<sup>34</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 3–4; Borowik, *The equilibrium in the Baltic*, 96. Sandler is quoted by Borowik after *Le Temps*, 20 March 1937.

The discussion about Scandinavian neutrality could not be complete without relating it to the question of Scandinavian unity – or solidarity, as Borowik calls it – as the two are closely related. As the Baltic Institute’s director argues, this unity could emerge and consolidate thanks to advancement in technology during the nineteenth century, the economic development and increased welfare of Scandinavian societies following from that, and democratization, as well as religious and ideological tolerance, widespread in the Scandinavian countries.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the basis for this unity was the outlook of society, the components of which were: respect for law, strong attachment to the democratic system, welfare – not only higher than in other countries, but also more evenly distributed – and, finally, the civic attitude resulting from all these factors. The citizen of the Scandinavian countries, Borowik writes, considers himself as the subject, not an object of the state’s actions.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, when it comes to the concept of Scandinavian unity and neutrality in the understanding of the Baltic Institute, the most important elements related to society and its political culture: they were perceived first of all as a psychological attitude built on the basis of historical traditions and a democratic political system. At the same time, the ethnic and linguistic aspects of Scandinavian unity were underplayed: “Scandinavians,” Borowik writes, “are more attached to their political system than to their Scandinavian origins.”<sup>37</sup> To support this statement he reminds his readers about the failure of the German attempts to build a Germanic community based on ethnic affiliation, which was supposed to include, among others, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden, and which would lead to “all the Germanic tribes being absorbed by the German sea.”<sup>38</sup> The Germans playing the ethnic card, Borowik remarks, turned out to be short-sighted, and their tactics with regard to the Scandinavian countries unsuccessful: he sums it up with an anecdote about the German geographer and geopolitician Karl Haushofer, who “[...] gave a number of public lectures in Scandinavia in which he depicted the communist danger in glaring colours; but the unexpected result was that he succeeded in alarming all about the danger of help from Germany. Public opinion in Scandinavia reacted very energetically against these unofficial offers of help and made no secret of its distrust.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Borowik, *The equilibrium in the Baltic*, 98.

By writing this, Borowik also aims to discredit the racist ideology promoted at the time by Nazi Germany, with its idea of the superiority of the Nordic race, in which the Scandinavian nations were included. The dispute with this ideology was a part of the Baltic Institute's programme. For example in an essay "Zagadnienie rasy nordycznej w nauce i polityce" ("The question of the Nordic race in science and politics"), published in the volume *Światopogląd morski*, the anthropologist Kazimierz Stołyhwo analyzes the history and content of the theory of the superiority of the Nordic race, and refutes it as unscientific.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, from the very beginning the Institute's research disputed the idea, promoted in the German historiography, of a "German sea:" the Baltic Sea as the area in which the Germans (for instance in the form of the Hanseatic League, Medieval urban settlement, the Teutonic Knights) had been the harbingers of European civilization, and which was the German sphere of influence.<sup>41</sup> All the more critical was the view of the Institute's researchers on any project for increasing German influence in the countries of the Baltic Sea region.

Thus, putting the spotlight on its cultural and social aspects, and especially underplaying the ethnic one, Józef Borowik connects Scandinavian unity to the main theme of the Baltic Institute's activities since its nascence: the threat that Germany posed to the balance of power and peace in the Baltic Sea region. Dealing with Baltic, including Scandinavian, matters, the Institute never lost sight of this problem – or that of Polish interests in the region. However, this focus in the analysis of the concept of neutrality also had other functions, to which I will return in the further course of this article.

### *Neutrality and the League of Nations*

At this point, it is worth considering the international context of the second half of the 1930s, when the Baltic Institute took an interest in the topic of Scandinavian neutrality. It was during this period that the failings of the international security system based on the Versailles Treaty, and the weakness of the League of Nations, became clearly visible. This was manifested

<sup>40</sup> Kazimierz Stołyhwo, "Zagadnienie rasy nordycznej w nauce i polityce," *Światopogląd morski*, 163–176; see also: Hajduk, *Problematyka skandynawska w działalności Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 36. It is, furthermore, the most probable reason why in the Institute's publications from this time the term "Scandinavian unity" (instead of "Nordic unity") is used, despite the fact that Finland was often included: the term "Nordic" awoke associations with the Nazi Nordic ideology.

<sup>41</sup> See e.g. Sobieski, *Walka o Pomorze*; Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 261.

for example during the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and the Spanish civil war. The flaws of the system became all the more visible as the two European powers – Germany and the USSR – which had for some time been weakened as an outcome of the First World War, were regaining strength. Looking from this perspective Józef Borowik does not find many warm words for the system that turned out to be ineffective: he calls the enthusiasm for the League of Nations of the 1920s “blindness.” He also reminds people that the Versailles Treaty condemned the policy of neutrality as prolonging conflicts: according to the Treaty, instead of distancing themselves from conflicts, all countries should mobilize their forces in order to isolate the aggressor. With this in mind, Borowik expresses his amazement that even Sweden, which had been following a consistent policy of neutrality ever since 1809 (when after losing its war with Russia, it had been forced to give up Finland, and with it a large portion of its territory and population), let itself be blinded in this way as well.<sup>42</sup>

Despite this reproof, it has to be said that there was no universal support for the League of Nations either in Swedish society or among the country’s political elites in the interwar period. Neutrality had, after all, proved to be the best solution during the First World War, enabling all three Scandinavian countries to avoid the conflict. This also made the question of Sweden’s engagement in the League of Nations complicated. Immediately after the war there were, roughly speaking, two schools of thought in Sweden about the new international order and security. The conservative opposition perceived the League as an elite club of the victorious powers acting in the interest of those powers, and would rather see Sweden maintain strict neutrality and base its security on a strong army. On the other hand, there were those who put trust in the effectiveness of the League and international disarmament as a means of keeping world peace. Swedish Social Democracy, led by politicians of cosmopolitan outlook and open to international cooperation, like Hjalmar Branting and Rickard Sandler, subscribed to this second view. The optimism of the Left was additionally strengthened by the post-First World War situation in Europe, especially the fall of several European empires.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Ingemar Ottosson, *Krig i fredens intresse eller neutralitet till varje pris? Sverige, NF och frågan om kollektiv säkerhet 1935–1936* (Malmö: LiberFörlag/Gleerup, 1986), 32; Bo Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa: ett historiskt perspektiv på 90-talet* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993), 190.

This made the disappointment with the weakness of the League of Nations, which became obvious in the 1930s, and especially after the invasion of Abyssinia, even greater. With time, Swedish Social Democracy withdrew from its earlier internationalist attitude into a more isolationist one. The change was reinforced with the *folkhem* (home of the people) ideology, which had an anti-European dimension, setting the modern, social democratic, Protestant Sweden (and the Nordic region in general) against the conservative, capitalist, Catholic continental Europe. According to Bo Stråth's interpretation, continental Europe was transformed in this way into the Other, and the threat in the immediate vicinity – the growing power of Germany and especially the USSR – was dealt with without being named explicitly.<sup>44</sup>

Józef Borowik observed this disappointment during his visit to Sweden at the time of the Abyssinian crisis. He had his own interpretation of the subsequent change of attitude towards the League of Nations, the country's own neutrality and Scandinavia's neighbours: the doctrine of strict neutrality, "betrayed" (using emotional language typical of the Baltic Institute's publications) by joining the League, gained favour again, and simultaneously Scandinavian cooperation started becoming more intensive. At the same time, it became clear that, in order to be effective, neutrality required an active stance and close cooperation between the countries practicing it.<sup>45</sup>

### *Isolationism*

One of the basic features of the attitude of neutrality in the Baltic Institute's understanding, which at the same time was closely connected to Scandinavian unity, was the right geopolitical position. This was because the indifference of society towards "the issue being the object of dispute, quarrel and finally war between the two opponents – whether the dispute is ideological or material" was put forward as the necessary condition for maintaining neutrality and impartiality in the face of conflicts. This was easiest to achieve if one was geographically distant from those conflicts.<sup>46</sup> Scandinavia's geopolitical position was, therefore, especially favourable for the policy of neutrality: the sea served as a barrier – geographically, but also psychologically – separating Scandinavia from the rest of Europe and

<sup>44</sup> Bo Stråth, "The Swedish image of Europe as the other," *Europe and the other and Europe as the other* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000), 366–367.

<sup>45</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 11.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

its problems. At the same time, it was also a uniting factor for the Scandinavian societies. However, in the face of the new international situation, the Scandinavian understanding of neutrality underwent an evolution, according to Borowik, from: “We are far removed from your interests and disputes. *Leave us in peace,*” to: “*We do not want to become involved in matters which do not concern us. We will not allow ourselves to be drawn into others’ disputes and conflicts.*”<sup>47</sup> But even taking geographical isolation into consideration, this attitude required of Scandinavian politicians knowledge of European politics, because only in this way would they be able to recognize which matters indeed did not concern them, and – again – an active stance, in order to not be drawn into them.

That is why Borowik predicted that the constant changes in the international arena would force Scandinavian neutrality to evolve even further. These changes included not only the already mentioned weakening of the League of Nations and the international security system represented by it, but also the development of communication, effectively decreasing distances and hence Scandinavia’s geographical isolation, as well as the increasing threat from neighbouring powers, especially Germany – the development which the Baltic Institute’s researchers never lost sight of. The direction of this further evolution was determined, according to Borowik, by the increasingly visible convergence of the Scandinavian countries’ policy of neutrality on the one hand, and the international and maritime policies of Poland on the other. Since it did not enjoy Scandinavia’s advantageous geopolitical position, Poland could not realistically base its international policy on the same foundations as the Scandinavian countries – however, Borowik argued, in the face of the changes taking place in the world and in Europe, these Scandinavian foundations would soon lose importance. As a result, relations with the Baltic states and Poland would become progressively more important for Scandinavia, especially Sweden: “Scandinavia, in spite of its more advantageous geographical situation, is already not in a position to maintain and carry out the orthodox principles of neutrality; therefore it will be obliged, step by step and increasingly often, to adhere to Poland’s formulation of the essence of her foreign policy.”<sup>48</sup>

This formulation can be summarized with the words “Nothing about us without us,” taken from the *Nihil Novi* constitution of 1505, and used

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>48</sup> Borowik, *The equilibrium in the Baltic*, 99.



by Foreign Minister Józef Beck as the guiding principle of Polish foreign policy since 1934.<sup>49</sup>

Borowik repeated this argument, presented for the first time in the brochure *Neutralność Skandynawii*, in the article “Equilibrium in the Baltic” published in the last issue of *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, in April 1939.<sup>50</sup> Because of both the time of publication and the article’s audience (not only from Poland, but also from Scandinavian and English-speaking countries), he placed special emphasis on questions of security policy and connections between countries and blocks. Borowik’s aim was to show the importance of the Baltic Sea region on the global scale, pointing out its economic potential, as well as that of the Oslo group.<sup>51</sup> Poland was presented in the article practically as a regional power, the factor stopping Germany and the USSR from open and direct war. The same role was given further north to the Baltic states and Finland. For the Scandinavian countries, relations in the region were also extremely important.<sup>52</sup>

The analysis of the foreign policy and neutrality of Scandinavian countries presented by Borowik has a clear aim: to show that the Scandinavian countries should become involved in cooperation with the Baltic states and Poland, and redefine their neutrality and solidarity in a way that allows for the inclusion of these countries on the other side of the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, combining Scandinavian and Polish (and possibly the Baltic states’) ideas of international policy in this way was argued to be not only possible, but also in the interest of all of these countries. “There seems to be no reason,” Borowik writes, “why Scandinavian neutrality should not develop into Scandinavian-Baltic neutrality;” with time it could be expanded even further, beyond the Baltic Sea region, and include other neutral countries of Europe: Belgium and the Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> It is in the

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Marek Kornat, *Polityka równowagi 1934–1939: Polska między Wschodem a Zachodem* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Arcana, 2007), 56; Marek Kornat, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1938–1939: cztery decyzje Józefa Becka* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Oskar, 2012), 9.

<sup>50</sup> The following issue was printed, but the war broke out before it could be distributed, and the copies were destroyed by the Germans. See Zbigniew Machaliński, “Problematyka morska w czasopiśmiennictwie Instytutu Bałtyckiego w latach 1929–1939,” *Osiemdziesiąt lat Instytutu Bałtyckiego*, 19.

<sup>51</sup> The Oslo group was a group founded in 1930 with an initial aim of economic cooperation, and later also cooperation in foreign policy. It included the neutral countries of Europe: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

<sup>52</sup> Borowik, *The equilibrium in the Baltic*, 95.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

success of this cooperation that Borowik sees the possibility of maintaining the equilibrium in the Baltic Sea region mentioned in the title of his article – and by that, peace.

With this, we return to Borowik's understanding of the concept of neutrality, and the importance he ascribes to its different elements. With them, he constructs a convenient framework, within which the proposed redefinition could be achieved: by using firstly the geopolitical argument (and showing that the geopolitical context undergoes constant changes); secondly, the cultural-social argument (the fundamental role of the attitude, which can also be modified); and thirdly, the ethnic argument (the one that cannot be changed and could stand in the way of the presented idea of expanding cooperation – therefore it is downplayed). The psychological attitude and common interests of the societies under consideration are presented as more important for constructing a community than any ethnic and linguistic affinity.<sup>54</sup>

These views build up to an ambiguous assessment of the Scandinavian countries: on the one hand, admiration for the principles of neutrality and achievements of the Scandinavian societies is visible, for example for their civil society and the high level of evenly distributed welfare. On the other hand, they are encouraged to modify their foreign policies and take Poland as the example to follow, and to accept Poland as the key partner in cooperation.

### *Tasks of the Baltic Institute*

In the presented vision of the Baltic Sea region, the Baltic Institute saw an important role for itself. It was necessary to make societies on both sides of the sea aware of how convergent their interests and policy aims were, and to form in Polish society a psychological attitude similar to the one that was the basis of Scandinavian unity. The Baltic Institute was ready to take up this task in Poland, as the promotion of maritime historical traditions, and the analysis of geopolitical and economic conditions were among its aims. At the same time Borowik was critical of the fact that the importance of historical traditions was often not appreciated in Poland, as if it was assumed that social attitudes and political concepts based on them could be formed “from nothing,” without paying attention to tendencies and traditions already existing in a society.

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<sup>54</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 22.

Furthermore, knowledge about Scandinavia was foreseen to be more and more necessary in Poland – the author regretted that it was still very low, which perpetuated stereotypes about Scandinavian countries as not playing an important role in the international arena, and their interests being very different from Polish interests. Borowik described the Baltic Institute's and his own efforts in promoting knowledge about Scandinavia so far: contacts with Scandinavian researchers and activists, the journals *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries* and *Jantar* (Amber – a Polish language journal published since 1937, whose focus was similar to that of *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, and which often in fact published selected articles from there in Polish translations<sup>55</sup>), as well as other publications, e.g. a historical monograph *Polska a Szwecja* (Poland and Sweden) from 1935, in which the historian Władysław Konopczyński analysed the historical relations between the two countries and argued that they were “similar enough to understand each other and to cooperate, and different enough to need each other.”<sup>56</sup> On a positive note, Borowik was of the opinion that the maritime awareness of Polish society was currently on the increase, which made him look with optimism to the future and see Poland as one of the guarantors of equilibrium in the Baltic Sea region.<sup>57</sup>

An advantageous circumstance for the realisation of the Baltic Institute's postulates was the fact that, as mentioned above, at the end of the 1930s the political climate for research on the Baltic Sea region became more favourable than before, and gradually the scope of Scandinavian studies in Poland was expanding. Soon, however, this development was interrupted by the outbreak of war.

What is striking in Borowik's argumentation is his disregard for the deep cultural and social differences between the countries that he envisages cooperating in one Scandinavian-Baltic region. The accusation of not appreciating historical and religious traditions, which he directs at the Polish observers of Scandinavian political and social life, also applies to his own idea of regional neutrality. The psychological attitude of Scandinavian societies, comprising, in his own words, of “respect for law, true democratism, a high and evenly distributed level of material culture,”<sup>58</sup> as well as the civil society built upon them, was, after all, a derivative of these historical and religious foundations, which were lacking in Polish

<sup>55</sup> Piotrowski, *W służbie nauki i narodu*, 243–244.

<sup>56</sup> Władysław Konopczyński, *Polska a Szwecja* (Toruń: Instytut Bałtycki, 1935), 41.

<sup>57</sup> Borowik, *The equilibrium in the Baltic*, 100.

<sup>58</sup> Borowik, *Neutralność Skandynawii*, 22.

society. This could not be changed even by the most intensive actions of the Baltic Institute. By the end of the interwar period, the Scandinavian societies turned their attention to the tasks of building the welfare state, the “home of the people,” and were drifting further away from, rather than towards, the culturally, socially and politically different countries of continental Europe.

### *Conclusions*

The Baltic Institute’s view on Scandinavian neutrality, being a political programme constructed as a response to a growing threat, should be considered, as almost all issues the Institute dealt with, in relation to Poland’s interests and its access to the Baltic Sea. Preventing any of the regional powers from becoming dominant was, according to the Institute, of great importance to the whole continent, and it could only be achieved through cooperation among all the other countries of the region. The crucial factors were on the one hand the position of Poland, the buffer between the powers, and on the other, the attitude of the Scandinavian countries. This attitude, although praised equally with the countries’ social and political achievements on which it was based, was at the same time also criticized: strict neutrality and lack of interest in the affairs of the whole continent were no longer, according to the Institute, guarantees of lasting peace for Scandinavia. Rejecting arguments about the importance of ethnic and linguistic affinity of the Scandinavian countries (and even more so – Germanic ones), the Baltic Institute in the 1930s postulated the construction of a new community of Baltic Sea region countries on the basis of the common interests of foreign policy and psychological attitude of the societies, which was supposed to guarantee not only equilibrium in the Baltic Sea, but also peace in Europe.

The question remains as to what degree the arguments presented here were realistic. Later events showed, as Borowik had predicted, that neither geographical isolation nor declarations of neutrality were enough to remain uninvolved in the conflict. However, in its basic premises and postulates, his programme was not very viable, especially in the political dimension, that is the actual possibility of remaining neutral in the geopolitical situation Poland found itself in. Also the psychological aspect, underlined by Borowik, was a hindrance, as the differences in this respect were in reality much greater and more difficult (if not impossible) to overcome than the Baltic Institute’s director seemed to believe. Furthermore, the concerns

of security and foreign policy were pulling the countries of the Baltic Sea region in very different directions, with Scandinavia steering towards neutrality and isolationism, and certainly not towards any alliances with countries directly threatened by a possible Soviet aggression (the Baltic states) and implicated in the system of alliances with the European powers (Poland). As mentioned above, Scandinavian enthusiasm for any form of a Baltic alliance or cooperation was minimal, even at the beginning of the interwar period, when the situation in the region was less threatening. It is therefore not surprising that the Baltic Institute's ideas for Scandinavian-Baltic cooperation did not arouse any interest in Scandinavia – if they were even noticed at all.

What is more, they did not arouse interest even in the Institute's native Poland, where – outside of the maritime-oriented circles such as those connected to the Baltic Institute – the northern direction was not the priority in any visions of consistent international and security policies. It is symptomatic that after the changes brought about by the next decades – the change of borders after the Second World War, and the new security brought about by NATO and EU membership at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – when Poland enjoys a wide and undisputed access to the sea, Baltic Sea topics have been neglected. The maritime outlook envisaged by the Baltic Institute in the interwar period, and an active maritime policy following from it have never emerged.<sup>59</sup> It can be said that the ideas of the Baltic Institute have not had a lasting impact, and the Institute itself, although reactivated after the Second World War,<sup>60</sup> after the end of communism has faced serious financial problems.

However, it is precisely here that the interesting aspect of the idea lies: it proposes a double alternative. Firstly, it is an alternative to the traditional ways of thinking about Poland's place in Europe, its east-west orientation and projects of systems of alliances in Central and Eastern Europe, which in fact often failed because of the hegemonic attitude that was inherent in this tradition, inherited from the pre-partitions times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Even though Borowik also to some extent assumed this hegemonic attitude by presenting Poland as a regional power, the Baltic Institute had since its beginning prioritized Baltic Sea cooperation over imperialistic claims,<sup>61</sup> and postulated

<sup>59</sup> See e.g.: *Wspólna europejska a polska polityka morska*, ed. by Jerzy Kujawa, Hanna Klimek and Tomasz Gutowski (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Reactivated after the end of the war, the Baltic Institute was then dissolved in 1950. In 1958 it was reactivated again, however, in a different form.

<sup>61</sup> See e.g. Stanisław Srokowski, *Instytut Bałtycki i jego zadania* ([n.p.: n.publ.], 1926), 8–9.

abandoning southeasterly expansion.<sup>62</sup> The idea of the Baltic League, pursued by the Baltic states at the beginning of the interwar period and discussed above, can be recalled here. As Marko Lehti argues, besides the security aspect, it can also be interpreted as the Baltic states attempting to find a new frame of reference for themselves after the fall of the Russian Empire and their own independence. In this way, the Baltic Sea region was to become a means of reconceptualization of one's position in the region apart from the traditional regional powers: Germany and Russia.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, the Baltic Institute's vision of Poland's place in the Baltic Sea, developed in the following decade, can in a way be interpreted as an analogous attempt to redefine one's own place in Europe in the face of growing threats.

Secondly, the project of redefinition of Scandinavian unity to include Poland and the Baltic states is also an alternative to another established structure: *Norden*. In some ways, this idea was similar to the one that appeared in the region several decades later, in the 1990s, as a reaction to the fall of the Iron Curtain. This time it originated on the other shore of the sea, with Nordic scholars proposing a redefinition of Nordic unity into the unity of the Baltic Sea region.<sup>64</sup> Although this time it also ran into obstacles in the form of different traditions and attitudes, and divergent policies since the region continues to be very heterogeneous, on the whole it proved more successful, even if not as much so as to actually redefine Nordic unity. Equilibrium in the Baltic is, it would seem, not a result, but a prerequisite of Baltic Sea regional cooperation.

MARTA GRZECHNIK (b. 1981) is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Scandinavian Studies and Applied Linguistics, University of Gdansk and a Research Fellow at the Department of History, University of Greifswald.\*

<sup>62</sup> E.g. Bujak, *Kultury morskie i lądowe*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> Lehti, *A Baltic League*, 136–137.

<sup>64</sup> E.g.: Olle Wæver, "From Nordism to Baltism," *The Baltic Sea: a region in the making*, ed. by Sverre Jervell (Karlskrona: Baltic Institute, 1992), 26–38.

\* Correspondence: Marta Grzechnik, Institute of Scandinavian Studies and Applied Linguistics, University of Gdansk. Ul. Wita Stwosza 51, 80-308 Gdańsk, Poland. E-mail: marta.grzechnik@eui.eu

KOKKUVÕTE: *Tasakaal Läänemerele: Poola Balti Instituudi vaatenurk koostööle Põhjamaadega ja Läänemere riikidega sõdadevahelisel ajal*

Esimese maailmasõja tulemusena taastati Poola iseseisvus ning ühtlasi juurdepääs Läänemerele, mis suurendas Poola akadeemilistes ringkondades huvi merega seotud küsimuste vastu. Üks taolise huvi väljendusi oli 1925. aastal asutatud Balti Instituut, mille eesmärk oli juurutada arusaama Läänemerest kui tähtsast osast poola rahvuse elus, ehitada üles uue Poola merelist identiteeti ning kaitsta Poola seisukohta mere-juurdepääsu legitiimsuse osas Saksamaa revisjonistlike argumentide vastu. Nagu võiski oodata, käsitleti Läänemerd ja sellega seotud küsimusi reeglina Poola välis- ja julgeolekupoliitika vaatenurgast ning lähtuvalt riigi asukohast Läänemere regioonis ja Euroopas. Sõdadevahelise aja viimastel aastatel tekkis instituudil aga suurem huvi ka Põhjamaade ning teiste Läänemere ruumi riikidega koostöö edendamise vastu. Sellega seoses analüüsiti Skandinaavia neutraliteedipoliitikat ja Põhjamaade ühtsuse küsimust seoses Poola huvide ja välispoliitikaga. Näiteks käsitles Balti Instituudi direktor Józef Borowik nimetatud küsimust oma brošüüris *Neutralność Skandynawii* ("Skandinaavia neutraliteet", 1937) ja artiklis *The Equilibrium in the Baltic* ("Tasakaal Läänemerele"), mis avaldati 1939. aastal instituudi ingliskeelses ajakirjas *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries: a survey of the peoples and states on the Baltic with special regard to their history, geography and economics*.

Borowiki analüüsil Skandinaaviamaade välispoliitikast ja neutraliteedist oli mitu eesmärki. Esiteks väitis ta, et Läänemere regioonil on oma kindel majanduslik ja poliitiline roll, mis muuhulgas väljendub kahe regionaalse suurvõimu – Saksamaa ja Nõukogude Liidu – lahus hoidmises. Teiseks arvas Borowik, et traditsiooniliselt rangest Skandinaavia neutraliteedist ei piisa enam rahu garanteerimiseks. Kolmandaks püüdis ta näidata, et Skandinaaviamaad peaksid üsna pea asuma koostööle Balti riikide ja Poolaga, kuna neil on välispoliitiliselt ühised huvid. Neljandaks väitis ta, et Skandinaavia neutraliteet ja ühtsus ei põhine mitte etnilisel sarnasusel, vaid geopoliitilisel kontekstil (mis oleval sel hetkel muutumas) ning "psühholoogilisel suhtumisel" (mida on samuti võimalik mõjutada). Neist argumentidest tegi Borowik järelduse, et Skandinaavia neutraliteet ja ühtsus tuleb ümber mõtestada Skandinaavia ja Läänemere ruumi neutraliteedi ja ühtsusena (mis ajapikku võib hõlmata ka teisi neutraalseid Euroopa riike: Belgia ja Hollandit). Rõhutades järjepidevalt selliseid neutraliteedi ja ühtsuse elemente, mida oli võimalik muuta ning vähendada nende olulisust,

mida muuta ei olnud võimalik (nt etniline ja keeleline sarnasus), joonistas Borowik välja raamistikku, milles taoline ümbermõtestamine muutus võimalikuks. Ta väitis, et taoline muutus oleks kõikide asjassepuutuvate riikide ühistes huvides, kuna nende omavahelise koostöö edu korral saaks säilitada artikli pealkirjas nimetatud tasakaal ja seega ka rahu Läänemere piirkonnas. Analüüsi teine, vähem selgelt väljendatud lisaeesmärk oli luua vastukaal Saksamaa kasvavale mõjule regioonis ning diskrediteerida Saksa geopoliitikat ja rassistlikul põhjamaaisus-ideoloogial põhinevaid ideid. Ehkki Borowiki mõtete teostumine polnud kuigi realistlik, on need sellegipoolest huvitavad, kuna pakuvad välja alternatiivi nii traditsioonilisele viisile mõtestada Poola asukohta Euroopas (selle ida-lääne orientatsioon ja liidusuhted Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopas) kui ka defineerida Põhjamaid regioonina.