

# THE RIBBENTROP-MOLOTOV PACT AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON LITHUANIA

(Generalising Conclusions)

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## 1. HISTORIOGRAPHIC ASPECT

The fate of the three Baltic countries Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the eve and at the outset of World War II merited significant attention in historiography. Many Western historians note, that the disappearance of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia from the political map of Europe in summer 1940, i.e. their occupation, annexation and incorporation into the USSR, was sealed by the agreements concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union on 23 August and 28 September 1939 and the secret protocols annexed to them on the division of zones of influence in Eastern Europe, which in historiography are commonly referred to as the secret protocols of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact.<sup>1</sup> Western historians arrived at such conclusions on the basis of references to the secret Soviet-German agreements during the Nuremberg process of 1946, and public release of documents giving evidence to Nazi-Soviet diplomatic relations, including the notorious Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocols in 1948 and 1956, in the United States of America and in later years in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the post-war Western historiography essentially does not challenge the existence of Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocols and their political repercussions which led to the suppression of statehood of the Baltic States. In addition, to a certain extent it was these documents, perfectly known to historians and politicians of the West, which influenced the determination of the US government to never recognised as lawful the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR.<sup>3</sup> Similar policy on the so-called Baltic issue in the post-war international relations was pursued by Great Britain, France, Canada and certain other Western democracies.

However, different developments were taking place behind the so-called “Iron Curtain”. In the period up to the consolidation of “perestroika” policies, historians of

the Soviet Union and its satellites either denied or ignored the existence of the Ribbentrop-Molotov- secret protocols and their consequences which led to the occupation, annexation and forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR<sup>4</sup>. Documents publicised in the Soviet Union before 1990 were subjected to very careful screening. We will not come across neither the Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocols in them, nor even documents containing references to or mention of them.<sup>5</sup> Historians who worked under the conditions of totalitarian regime maintained that in the fall of 1939 the Baltic countries of their own free will entered into the Mutual Assistance Agreements with the USSR and allowed Soviet military bases to be deployed on their territories, while in the summer of 1940 Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia went through almost simultaneous “people’s revolutions” which led to the “volunteer” accession of the Baltic States to the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> Historians of the Sovietised Lithuania were also forced to advocate such standpoint.<sup>7</sup>

Changes came only with the collapse of Soviet totalitarian system and dissolution of the Soviet Union itself. In 1988-1989 historians of Lithuania<sup>8</sup> and other Baltic countries began writing about the of Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocols and their consequences, relying on the works of Western history researchers. In December 1989 the existence of the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov protocols was acknowledged by the supreme Soviet Union authority - the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies. The Resolution on Political and Legal Evaluation of the 1939 USSR-Germany Non-Aggression Treaty on 24 December 1989 was signed by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>9</sup> In the resolution, the USSR-Germany secret protocols are assessed as “a deviation from the Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy” and as acts in legal conflict “with sovereignty and independence of a number of third countries”.<sup>10</sup> In 1990 Moscow for the first time publicised the official collections of documents approved by the authorities, which, among other until-then classified documents kept in the USSR archives, contained the secret protocols of Ribbentrop-Molotov.<sup>11</sup> Collapse of the Soviet totalitarianism brought gradual changes in the attitude of Russian historians towards the international state of affairs in Europe on the eve of World War II and role of the USSR in it.

## 2. SEARCH FOR SECURITY GUARANTEES IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

Contemporary Lithuanian and foreign historiography agrees, that restoration (creation) of the Baltic States and Poland at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the outcome of global political changes in Europe.<sup>12</sup> The crisis of imperialism in Central and Eastern Europe (dissolution of Austro-Hungary, loss of Germany in the Great War, revolution and Bolshevik coup in Russia bringing collapse of the Tsarist empire) created the preconditions for the new states to come into existence de facto. Flourishing of democracy and liberalisation of the international law in the West after the Great War - the principle of free self-determination of nations was put into practice and a universal international body, the League of Nations, was created - were influential factors in the recognition of the new states de jure. However, the new states which came into being as a result of global ideological conflict, changes of borders and geopolitical transformations in Europe, and which often relied on the ideology of radical nationalism, were immediately faced with serious trials of their independence. Their internal policies often lacked rational consistency, stability, democracy and liberalism towards ethnic minorities, while their foreign affairs policy frequently failed to achieve cohabitation with neighbours and international guarantees of security. Therefore, their integration into the political body of democratic Europe was slow and although they did achieve certain progress in this field by late 1930's, on the eve of a new global conflict, the finish still was within a considerable distance.

Such difficulties of political development in the inter-war period were also characteristic to the First Republic of Lithuania (1918-1940). Due to subjective and objective reasons, throughout the entire inter-war period the First Republic existed practically without any serious guarantees of international security. Although on 22 September 1921 Lithuania was accepted into the League of Nations and took part in its activities since that moment, on 21 January 1929 it acceded to the pacifist Briand-Kellog Pact, which prohibited war as a of national policy measure, and on 12 September 1934 concluded the Baltic Concord Agreement with Latvia and Estonia, it nevertheless failed to build up reliable collective security or a system of international security guarantees. The League of Nations frequently lacked efficiency and did not have the mechanisms necessary for the realisation in practice of its pacifist

intentions.<sup>13</sup> The Briand-Kellog Pact turned out to be a very promising declaration which was impossible to implement in practice.<sup>14</sup> The Baltic Concord, which was spawned by the complicated international constellation, and which in essence provided only for the political-diplomatic consultations of contracting parties, was, too, incapable of addressing the security problems of the region that were making a strong appearance from the mid-1930's.<sup>15</sup>

Withdrawal of the United States from the League of Nations and their disengagement from the political affairs of Europe also was to the disadvantage of the Baltic countries. Isolationist policies of the United States, which took shape in the early 1920's, brought little contribution to the building up of security guarantees and safeguarding of peace in Europe. On the other hand, as it became evident after the Locarno Conference of 1925 and in the light of the idea to build up the Eastern Locarno, the great Western democracies did not have vested interests in the north-eastern Baltic region, and thus, limited themselves to theoretical initiatives there, and in practice pursued conservative or even passive policies with respect to the region.<sup>16</sup> From the middle of the 1930's, with the authority and influence of the League of Nations significantly declining and the Versailles Peace system in Europe falling apart, the international security and political future of the small Baltic states, including Lithuania, was growing complicated and was difficult to forecast. It appeared that the search for collective security or the guarantees of the great powers did not produce the expected results. Western Europe came out unprepared to extend security guarantees to the Baltic countries, who did not find themselves in a position to organise their security independently without such protection.

Lithuania's bilateral relations with its big neighbours in the inter-war period also followed a complicated course. A territorial conflict of Lithuania and Poland over Vilnius, sparked off in the process of these states coming into being in 1918-1920, despite the great efforts of the League of Nations and mediation of Western states, remained unresolved until the very start of World War II. The countries did not maintain any formal diplomatic relations till 31 March 1938. And even when they were forged after Poland issued an ultimatum-type request (Poland's note of 17 March 1938 to Lithuania), the Lithuanian-Polish conflict still flickered, because its causes

had not yet been removed by that time. As of 31 March 1938, Lithuanian-Polish relations on the official level were flawless, albeit in essence remained cold and without any clearer perspective. With Europe plunging into a political catastrophe, the two neighbouring states practically were not considering a natural geopolitical partnership or creation of a common security and defence system. An abyss still separated Lithuania and Poland. Ethnically and culturally Polonised south-eastern territories of Lithuania and its historical capital Vilnius were still in the hands of Poland. On the other hand, the problem of Vilnius in the inter-war period had a significant impact on Lithuania's relations with Germany and the USSR.

The Soviet Union (Soviet Russia prior to December 1922) and Germany were the principle sources of political destruction and military threat between the two world wars in Europe. These two states were in principle unsatisfied with political system created in Europe by Versailles Peace Conference and sought to destroy it. They pursued revanchist policies and revisionist goals with respect to Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, and treated the coming into existence and existence of Lithuania and other small Baltic states only as a sign and manifestation of their temporary military and political weakness and unfavourable for them international balance of power.<sup>17</sup> The Rappall Agreement of 16 April 1922 created a political, economic and clandestine military tandem of Russia and Germany, which in the mid-1930's was reinforced twice (by Moscow Agreement of 12 October 1925 and Neutrality and Non-Aggression Pact of 26 April 1926)<sup>18</sup>, and which exhibited a rather consistent orientation to change the international status of the Baltic countries. To that end, co-operation of Russian and German diplomatic services was smooth and productive.<sup>19</sup> The both sides frequently consulted each other on the co-ordination of policies towards the Baltic countries and Poland, co-ordinated their anti-Baltic and anti-Polish politico-diplomatic campaigns, discussed in great detail changes taking place in the international situation of these countries as well as the possible ways and scenarios to achieve their goals.<sup>20</sup> Soviet and German diplomats opened discussions on the issue of division of the spheres of influence in Poland and the Baltic States as early as in the mid-1920's.<sup>21</sup>

The problem of Vilnius was a factor largely favourable for the development of revisionist policies of the USSR and Germany in the Baltic region. Territorial Polish-Lithuanian dispute went far beyond the bilateral relations of Lithuania and Poland: it hindered closer integration of the three Baltic countries and obstructed their military and political consolidation with Poland. Therefore, Berlin and, in particular, Moscow sought to preserve the Vilnius problem and prevent resolution of the Lithuanian-Polish conflict.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, Lithuania's relations with Russia and with Germany were developing quite smoothly on an official level. In 1918 Germany was the first to recognise the statehood of Lithuania.<sup>23</sup> On 29 January 1928 Lithuania and Germany signed a Border Treaty, according to which, Weimar Germany essentially recognised that Klaipėda region was a part of Lithuania.<sup>24</sup> Economic relations between the countries followed a successful course until Hitler's coming to the power. For a considerable period Germany remained the leading country in Lithuania's foreign trade.<sup>25</sup> Although it should be admitted that certain episodes did put a strain on German-Lithuanian relationship. Fostering the plans to recover the lost Klaipėda region in future, Germany nurtured revanchist forces here,<sup>26</sup> and on many occasions complained against the authorities of Lithuania on actual or alleged violations of Klaipėda Convention<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, despite such disagreements, until 1933-1934 Lithuania's foreign policy displayed a rather strong orientation towards Germany, because the majority of Lithuania's politicians and diplomats supported the opinion that such orientation will help Lithuania to recover Vilnius from Poland in future.

On 12 July 1920, Lithuania and the Soviet Russia concluded the Peace Treaty, according to which, Russia, referring to the right of nations to self-determination, "by good will forever" refused its sovereign rights to Lithuania ever possessed and recognised the Republic of Lithuania de facto and de jure<sup>28</sup>. On the other hand, it should be stressed that already the first Lithuania's and Soviet Russia's political treaty was to a large extent directed against Poland. The Peace Treaty signed between Lithuania and the Soviet Russia on 12 July 1920 in Moscow contained a secret annex, which, in case of war between Poland and Russia, allowed the latter to use the territory of Lithuania for its strategic purposes. Thus, already in the summer of 1920,

Lithuania failed to retain its officially declared policy of neutrality and jeopardised itself by taking side with Bolshevik Russia. On 28 September 1926, the two countries signed another political treaty which, judging on its contents, can be titled as that on non-aggression and neutrality. Later this treaty was renewed by two special protocols: of 6 May 1931 and 4 April 1934. Its validity was foreseen until 31 December 1945.<sup>29</sup>

On 5 July 1933, Lithuania and the USSR signed a Convention on the Definition of Aggression. The Convention outlined that “all states are equally entitled to independence, security, protection of their own territories and free development of their institutions (bodies)”. In addition, the document contained an explicit definition of an aggressor, elements of aggression and its types. It also indicated that aggression could not be justified by any political, strategic, social or economic arguments, or by the reasons of internal political or social instability of the country.<sup>30</sup>

Alas, it must be admitted on the other hand, that throughout the entire inter-war period Lithuanian-Soviet Union relations were markedly anti-Polish. By signing a bilateral political treaty with Lithuania in September 1926, Moscow in the first place sought to block Poland’s efforts to build up “Eastern Locarno” and complicate its international standing in general. Moreover, the anti-Polish nature of Lithuanian-Soviet Union relationship is evident from the fact that in September 1926, alongside with the Treaty on Neutrality and Non-Aggression, the two countries concluded a secret “Gentlemen’s Agreement”, under which agreed to exchange all the intelligence data they possessed and co-ordinate their foreign policies with respect to Poland.<sup>31</sup> On 25 May 1931 Lithuania and the USSR approved a new, “improved” version of the “Gentlemen’s Agreement”. Thereby, the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” between the Republic of Lithuania and the USSR functioned in practice until the very occupation of Lithuania carried out on 15 June 1940. No matter how paradoxical and sad this is, but on the eve of Lithuania’s occupation, 11 June 1940, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Juozas Urbšys, in an effort to refute the ill-founded accusations of the USSR against Lithuania and to convince the Foreign Affairs People’s Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov of Lithuania’s good-will intentions, tried to appeal to mutual assistance between countries and the “Gentlemen’s Agreement”, which, according to Urbšys, “has been in existence between us since the old times”, and whose “results

have not been visible lately". We dare say that the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs was not correct. On the contrary, results of the "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the Soviet Union were very rapidly surfacing in Lithuania at that time.

Similarly as in the case of Lithuanian-German relationship, the contents of Lithuania's relations with the Soviet Union was determined by the Vilnius problem, more specifically, USSR's speculative position and statements on this problem. The anti-Polish nature of Lithuanian-USSR relationship led Kaunas to consider the possibility of utilising the Russian (USSR) factor in search for the opportunities to recover Vilnius, and Moscow - to consolidate its political influence in the region and project the invasion to the Baltic countries.

In essence, such was the load of political problems and projections that Lithuania met World War II. It should be pointed out, however, that Lithuania's confidence in the USSR and, in particular, Germany declined very significantly since the late 1930's. Lithuanian authorities with President Antanas Smetona in the lead were opposed to internal and foreign policies pursued by Nazi Germany. In the beginning of 1935 Lithuania organised a public trial against the activities of Nazis in Kaipėda who were backed by Hitlerite Germany. Notwithstanding Germany's strong political and diplomatic pressure on Lithuania, menacing statements by Hitler and demonstration of military power at Lithuania's frontier, Kaipėda Nazis were punished. Decline in the Lithuanian-German relationship is evident from another fact: from June 1934 to February 1936 German military and civil aircraft violated Lithuanian airspace as many as 26 times. In response to these violations, the Government of Lithuania submitted to Germany 12 notes expressing protest. After the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938 and occupation of Czechoslovakia in the middle of March 1939, Kaipėda was to be the next in line. On 22 March 1939, with signatories of Kaipėda Convention (the Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan) discreetly silent, Germany tore away Kaipėda region from Lithuania.<sup>32</sup>

Simultaneously, aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union in the Baltics were noticeably coming into sight. Certain indications evidenced that in the international affairs the Soviets were inclined to treat the Baltic States as an object rather than a

subject. Practically, behind the backs of the Baltic states, in the mid-1930's the USSR tried to hold discussions with Poland and Germany on the future and security prospects of Lithuania-Latvia-Estonia. Furthermore, on 28 March 1939 the USSR handed in to Latvia and Estonia notes, which in a threatening fashion conveyed its intentions to protect its state interests in the Baltics. Under such circumstances, on the eve of World War II, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia adopted the Laws on Neutrality.<sup>33</sup> This was a testimony to the fact, that against the background of pending political catastrophe in Europe, without international security guarantees and their own collective security system, the Baltic countries aspired to find salvation out in the policy of neutrality. The extent to which such hopes [for salvation] relied on the real political calculations and analysis of the international situation was disclosed by later event.

### **3. SECRET DIPLOMACY OF THE USSR AND GERMANY ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II**

In the spring of 1939 Europe was quickly approaching a new big war. Seizure of the part of Czechoslovakia, remaining after the Munich Conspiracy, on 15 March 1939 indicated, that Nazi Germany led by Hitler had no intentions to play by the international rules of the game and respect the agreements with democratic Western countries. This evidenced the crash of policy of conformity to Germany patiently fostered by Great Britain and France since the failure of Locarno Pact in the summer of 1936. Nazi Germany was aiming for much more than the leaders of democratic countries could offer. Therefore, when in late March 1939 came rumours that Romania and Poland are the next in line, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain lost his patience: on 31 March 1939 he announced the famous Guarantee of Poland's Sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> Although this guarantee, extended to the state sovereignty of Poland, did not contain any references to the territorial integrity of Poland, it still meant that Germany's eventual aggression against its eastern neighbour will be interpreted as a challenge to the security of the great democratic powers and that countervailing measures will be launched in response. However, after this unilateral declaration of guarantees by the British, it was completely obscure to Poland how it could be invoked in case of need, since it was not binding on any of Poland's big neighbours.

According to the German historian Joachim Tauber, this step by Chamberlaine "represented a risky manoeuvre"<sup>35</sup>. Without questioning the extent of risk which the determination by the Prime Minister entailed, it should nevertheless be noted that this risk must be divided into two parts at least, since in the beginning Chamberlain fostered an idea of a Quadripartite Declaration by Great Britain, France, Poland and the Soviet Union to bring to a halt Germany's aggression, however, in the face of Warsaw's resistance\* and against the background of uncertain position by Paris, such idea was rejected.<sup>36</sup>

We must agree with the opinion of German historians Karl Heinz Ruffmann and J. Tauber, that the unilateral guarantees extended by the British to Poland, rather than serving its security, created a broad scope for action and freedom of manoeuvres to Josif Stalin and the Soviet Union. After Chamberlain's declaration Moscow did not only retain the possibility to join the Western powers, which London and Paris were so fervently looking forward to and hoping for. It also played into Moscow's hands an iron argument to open negotiations with Berlin which could be concluded with a contract satisfactory for both parties.<sup>37</sup> In the other words, the path leading to the rapprochement of the USSR and Germany, to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and its secret protocols, was open. The combination of political powers on the European scene was especially sophisticated: in order to reach his ultimate goal - the Soviet Union (sic!) - Hitler in the first place had to wipe from the surface of the earth Poland which stood in his way, however, only a conspiracy with Stalin could spare him the

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\* In response to the proposal by the British Minister of Foreign Affairs Lord Edward F. Halifax to open immediate consultations on the quadripartite declaration, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Colonel Jozef Beck said it would be a better idea to draft "in the same spirit" a bilateral declaration of Poland and Great Britain (See: J. von Tauber, *Der weg zum Hitler-Stalin Pact and Seine Folgen*. In: *Secret Soviet-German Agreements of 1939 and their Repercussions to the Central and East European States.*- Vilnius, 1999. P. 44). Polish Ambassador in Paris Juliusz Lukasiewicz explained such position of his country to the French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier partly by Poland's geopolitical situation and the Non-Aggression Pacts concluded by Poland with Germany and the Soviet Union. According to the Polish diplomat, "we cannot afford any premature and hasty restoration of friendly relations with any of these countries" (See: /Ed.by W.Jadrzejewicz/, *Diplomat in Berlin....* P.525.) It seems that despite the evident re-division of power in Europe, in the spring of 1939 the Polish politicians were still following the foreign policy strategy devised by Jozef Pilsudsky in 1926-1927, whose essential doctrine was not to violate the balance of German and USSR interests in Poland, since this could form a pretext for one of the countries to accuse Poland of bias and stimulate aggression. (See:/Ed.by W.Jadrzejewicz/, *Diplomat in Paris 1936-1939. Memoirs of Juliusz Lukasiewicz, Ambassador of Poland.* - Columbia University Press, New York, London, 1970. P.178)

fight on two front lines and enable him to defeat Poland after Chamberlain's declaration of 31 March.

It is probable that Stalin, who pursued pragmatic politics, realised the possibility of such perspective. Therefore, in the spring of 1939 he agreed to open negotiations with Great Britain and France on the creation of an alliance against the potential aggressor. In these negotiations the Soviets were in an especially advantageous position. And not for the sole reason that the venue of negotiations was Moscow, and the West did not send a delegation of supreme level representatives. It must have been quite easy for the Russian diplomats to realise that each day of prolonged stay of British and French negotiators in Moscow was driving Hitler into despair, and the war machine of Nazi Germany - closer to bankruptcy. This particular circumstance in the negotiations with British and French entitled the Soviets to require for at least the role of a caretaker and custodian in Eastern Europe. Under the pretext of efficient fight with the aggressor, Moscow asked for the right of intervention for the Red Army into the independent Baltic States, Poland and Romania.<sup>38</sup> In essence, this evidenced that the Soviet Union perceived its security only in association with expansion to neighbouring countries. There is no need in trying to prove that Moscow's position infringed upon the sovereignty of independent states and was in contravention to the international law. In fact, the negotiations were protracted for this reason and finally the British-French delegation was forced to leave Moscow with empty hands.

On the other hand, it would be imprecise to maintain that both parties suffered similar failure in these negotiations. Rather, the opposite was true. Bearing in mind the strategic goals of the Soviets\* and later events, the Soviet Union must have expected a

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\* If we were to trust the memoirs of a famous American diplomat, the specialist of Russian affairs George F. Kennan, long before the year 1939 Stalin already fostered plans to restore the borders of the Tsarist Empire for the Soviet Union: Finland, Western Belarus and Western Ukraine (eastern part of Poland), Northern Bukovina and Besarabia, and thereby, to fulfil the unsuccessful aspiration of tsarist diplomacy in the World War I to access the Baltic Sea via the Eastern Prussia. (See: Minutes of the sitting of 15 August 1939 of Military missions of the Soviet Union, the Great Britain and France on the conclusion of a military convention// Documents and Materials on the History of Soviet-Polish Relationship.- Moscow, 1973. Vol. 7. P. 137-138.). The rest of Poland was envisioned as the USSR's protectorate.

Stalin's imperialistic intentions - to broaden USSR territory and impose the communist regime on the neighbouring countries - are also highlighted by the Russian historian Mikhail Semiriga in the

great victory on the front of diplomatic negotiations. Russian historian Semiriaga quoted by me earlier, in his analysis of the international situation in summer 1939 points out, that at that time Moscow needed negotiations with Great Britain and France only to check once again the positions of these countries and conceal and justify its projected political rapprochement with Nazi Germany.

It is not accidental that in the beginning of May 1939, a famous Russian Bolshevik Maxim Litvinov, holding the office of the Foreign Affairs People's Commissar of the USSR, was replaced by a younger and more cynical Vyacheslav Molotov. Such reshuffling of personalities in the Bolshevik Government aimed to achieve two goals. First, Litvinov's name in Europe was associated with his pro-British and pro-French orientation and the idea of collective security arduously advocated by Moscow in the mid-1930's. Given the "new conditions" - Chamberlain's unilateral guarantees extended to Poland - such policy and its architect were no longer to the point.

Second, Litvinov was Jewish. Bearing in mind a pathological anti-Semitism of Nazis, this could become a serious obstacle for Moscow's new policy. Being an excellent psychologist, Stalin understood this and, most probably, consciously made a courtesy to the Nazis and appointed a Russian to the office of the Foreign Affairs People's Commissar. Thereby, one of the most pertinent ideological and psychological barriers to Nazi-Soviet negotiations and their successful conclusion was removed.

Results were not to be waited for long. On 20 May already Molotov met with German Ambassador, Count Friedrich Werner von Schulenburg and, in what was a long

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publication issued in Moscow in 1992 "Soviet Internal Policies in 1917-1945. A Search for the New Approach" (P.197).

Partly such intentions are corroborated in the Molotov's statement to the Estonian delegation on 24-25 September 1939, issued in Moscow during the Estonian-Russian negotiations on the conclusion of the Mutual Assistance Pact. Requesting for the military bases, on that occasion Molotov stated among other things "Twenty years ago we were thrown into that Finnish quagmire and the Soviet Union was forced to put up with a small patch of the Finnish Bay. Do you really believe that such state of affairs can last forever? At that time the Soviet Union was powerless, and now it has grown from an economic, military and cultural aspect. Soviet Union is a great power now, whose interests must be taken into account. I will tell you this: Soviet Union must expand its security system, and to that end it needs access to the Baltic Sea. (...) I am asking you, please, do not make us use force against Estonia" (See: G.F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*. - Boston, 1967. P. 519-520). We believe that such words by Molotov confirm the idea expressed above that the USSR saw its security only in combination with expansion to the independent neighbouring states.

conversation, among other things made a reference to the laying down of “new foundations” for the mutual relations between countries.<sup>39</sup> In a few days, commenting on the ideas expressed by Molotov, Schulenburg pointed out to the State Secretary of German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Baron Ernst von Weizsacker, that Russia is not satisfied with negotiations pertaining to economic matters only with Germany, and that it practically is seeking a political dialogue.

Around the same time Moscow also began acting in Berlin. On 15 June a Bulgarian envoy in Berlin Draganov, acting as a mediator for the USSR Charge d’Affaires Georgij Astachov, met with Vice Secretary of German MFA Ernst Woermann. During the conversation it became apparent that Moscow is scrupulously observing the international situation and has not yet made up its mind on the prospects of foreign policy: it was choosing between the pact with Britain and France, and further development of relations and forging of closer contacts with Germany. According to the Bulgarian diplomat, despite the ideological differences between the Nazi and Soviet regimes, the second option was more acceptable to Moscow. At the same time, everything was spelt out more explicitly: “If Germans state that they will not attack the Soviet Union, or conclude a Non-Aggression Pact with it, the Soviet Union will most probably choose not to enter into agreement with Great Britain”<sup>40</sup>. Most probably, it was not an accident that Dragavon also mentioned to F.W. von Schulenberg that the USSR “(...) does not recognise Romanian rule in Besarabia”. The Baltic States came up in this conversation only in the discussion of the possibility of German attack via one of them on the Soviet Union.

At the end of June, with Britain and France rejecting USSR’s insistent ambition to treat its north-eastern neighbours only as an object of international relations\*, the contents of secret Russian-German negotiations took more specific shape. After Molotov’s conversation with F.W. von Schulenburg it became clear, that the Non-

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\* Moscow’s position to treat the Baltic States only as an object of international relations is evident from the article in *Pravda* daily issue of 13 June 1939 on The Issue of Protection of the Three Baltic States against the Aggression. In addition, according to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Georges Bonnet, during the negotiations between the USSR and France and Britain in the summer of 1939, Russians expressed repeated surprise over the unwillingness of Western countries to infringe on the sovereignty of the Baltic States and their right to the policy of neutrality, and were asking “(...) why are

Aggression and Neutrality Pact between the USSR and Germany, concluded on 26 April 1926, could not serve as the basis for new agreements between Russia and Germany, since the scope of interests of both countries was much broader now. The outline of Moscow's position began to take shape on the night from 26 to 27 July. In a long dialogue between Astachov and Advisor of German MFA Julius Karl Schnurre, which extended long into the night, the interlocutors discussed not only the economic affairs of the countries. They also exchanged opinions on the political division of the "spheres of influence" in Eastern Europe<sup>41</sup>. Although specific decisions were not taken on that night, an agreement was reached that the latter issue could be decided on the supreme level. During the last days of July, with Moscow delaying, and Berlin fearful over the eventual agreement between the Soviet Union and the West, the latter took another step. Weizsacker instructed Ambassador Schulenburg in Moscow to make it clear to Molotov, that the Reich was ready to assure all the USSR's interests in Poland and take into account "(...) the vital interests of Soviets in the Baltics"<sup>42</sup>.

In mid August, several especially important developments in Russian-German diplomacy took place. In the 14 August instruction to R.W. von Schulenberg, German Minister of Foreign Affairs Joachim von Ribbentrop pointed out that German-Soviet relations had reached an evolutionary stage when adopted decisions, including resolution of territorial issues in Eastern Europe, could have long-term repercussions. The ambassador was commissioned to explain to the Foreign Affairs People Commissar that Hitler agreed to satisfy all the requirements set by the USSR concerning territories in the region between the Baltic and Black seas<sup>43</sup>. He also informed that for the sake of regulating relations between Germany and the Soviet Union J. von Ribbentrop was ready to go to Moscow. The proposals of Berlin generated great interest in Moscow. On 16 August Germany presented the programme of the envisaged agreement to Moscow: Non-aggression Act shall be concluded between the countries for the period of 25 years; both states shall guarantee the security of the Baltic countries; Germany shall assume an obligation to assist the normalisation of USSR-Japanese relations<sup>44</sup>.

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we still arguing about the Baltic States instead of throwing them overboard (...)" (See: L. Truska, V. Kancevičius, Op. Cit. P.21).

Two days later, on 19 August, F.W. von Schulenberg sent Moscow's position concerning the Non-aggression Act to Berlin. The Soviet draft set out that the Non-Aggression Treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union "(...) shall come into effect only provided a special protocol on foreign issues interesting to the High Parties to the Treaty is signed at the same time"<sup>45</sup>. On 20 August Adolf Hitler gave his consent to the idea of the additional protocol and expressed a hope that in the nearest future, when German Minister of Foreign Affairs arrived in Moscow, the draft protocol could be worked out "in a short time". Moscow did not make Hitler wait long. On 21 August Molotov informed the German Ambassador that Stalin agreed to have von Ribbentrop arrive in Moscow on 23 August<sup>46</sup>.

J. von Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow lasted hardly 24 hours. On the night from 23 to 24 August, the USSR-Germany Non-Aggression Pact and its secret additional protocol were signed in Moscow. It divided Eastern Europe into Soviet and German spheres of influence. The secret protocol laid down that "In case some territorial or political transformations take place in the regions belonging to the Baltic states (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Northern border of Lithuania shall become the border between the German and Soviet spheres of interest. At the same time, both Parties to the Pact shall recognise Lithuania's interests in Vilnius region"<sup>47</sup>. Thus, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Eastern territories of Poland (the border between the Parties' spheres of influence in Poland was to run along the rivers of Narev, Vysla and San) fell to the Soviet Union, while Lithuania and Western part of Poland belonged to Germany. In addition to that, the secret protocol stated the absence of Germany's interests in South Eastern Europe and recognised the interests of the USSR in Besarabia<sup>48</sup>.

In fact, the 23 August 1939 Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact and its secret protocol enabled Germany to open aggression against Poland and, at the same time, served as one of the main causes of World War II. Although Moscow made every effort to conceal its true role. On 25 August, the USSR envoy to Poland Nikolay Sharovon called on J. Beck and said that Soviet-German Pact "(...) did not change the relationship between Moscow and Warsaw"<sup>49</sup>.

European politicians and press gave an absolutely opposite evaluation of these developments. Though no information about the secret protocol was available at that time, and the secret Russian-German agreements could only be presumed after logical considerations, in practice nobody doubted that it was owing to the USSR that the political crisis in Europe reached the climax, and from that time on, Hitler could be expected to launch aggression against Poland any moment. It was not accidental that on 25 August, Great Britain and Poland entered into agreements of mutual assistance, and on 28 August, London once again endorsed security guarantees to Poland<sup>50</sup>. Most Western politicians and diplomats had absolutely justified suspicions that alongside the Soviet Union-Germany Non-Aggression Pact open to the public, there were some secret Russian-German agreements on the division of Eastern Europe. In his comments on the visit of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow, USSR envoy to Great Britain Ivan Mayski mentioned that the visit evoked great surprise and agitation in London.

Lithuania and the Baltic states were concerned by the news about the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian politicians and diplomats feared “whether the two partners were not going to divide all the Baltic region into the spheres of influence”<sup>51</sup>. Rumours about the division of zones of influence between the USSR and Germany were so widespread in Latvia, that Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Wilhelm Munters appealed to the USSR envoy to Riga Zolotov to have the rumours officially denied<sup>52</sup>. Certainly, Munters’ action was not primarily aimed at the alleviation of the public concern or strained climate in Latvia, but probably he made every effort to find out the real position of the USSR with respect to his country. The USSR envoy to Estonia K.N. Nikitin mentioned in his diplomatic diary that “It has to be stated straightforwardly that the Non-Aggression Pact between the USSR and Germany brought up lots of suspicious questions in each of the Baltic countries. One of them was “whether the two great states were not going to divide the weaker countries between themselves now” (...)”<sup>53</sup>.

It is interesting to note that Lithuanian politicians were rather precise in defining the situation of their country following the secret protocol of 23 August. There were suspicions that Latvia and Estonia could be transferred to Russia, and Lithuania given

over to German zone of influence. Describing the fears prevailing among Lithuanians, the USSR Charge d’Affaires to Lithuania V.S.Semionov sent a telegram to the Collegium of the Foreign Affairs People’s Commissars on 25 August indicating that “Lithuanians are afraid that the USSR will completely lose its interest in Lithuania (...). They are afraid that German-Polish clash will effect Lithuania, and the USSR will not respond to that”<sup>54</sup>. A letter of another diplomat sent to Moscow revealed the concern of Lithuanians about their situation yet more distinctly and specifically. A letter of Nikolai Pozdniakov, the USSR Charge d’Affaires a.i. to Lithuania, written to V. Molotov, said that the visit of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow and the conclusion of the Non-Aggression Treaty invoked a huge wave of anxiety among the general public in Lithuania. N. Pozdniakov wrote that Lithuanians inquire “(...) what was the price that Germany paid for the Pact beneficial to it?; does the pact conceal the partners’ division of the spheres of influence including the Baltic region, as well?; is the USSR going to give up Lithuania and sacrifice it to Germany in future, in order to preserve Estonia, Latvia and Poland?”<sup>55</sup>. Naturally, when looking back upon these days, these thought and concerns of Lithuanians give rise certain sad associations and, to some extent, irony. We should not, however, forget that retrospection is our privilege.

The presentiment of the approaching war overwhelmed not only politicians and diplomats, but also the general public. Many people in the Baltic states apprehended that Moscow drove Europe to the catastrophe intentionally. According to Soviet diplomat Zotov, Riga Jews were frightened, they reproached Russia for the Pact with Nazi Germany. “We thought that only the USSR could bring the aggression to a halt, and it turned out, that it organised a conspiracy with the aggressor”<sup>56</sup>, Riga Jews kept rebuking Russian diplomats. Nonetheless, if Zotov was true, not all the population of the Latvian capital city were sceptical in assessing Moscow’s diplomacy. Zotov said that Latvian workers were on the side of the USSR supporters: (...) workers take these rumours [about the divisions of spheres of influence] for granted, they seek Latvia to become Soviet and accede to the USSR as the twelfth republic”<sup>57</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Lithuanian nationalist party newspaper “*Vairas*” published in Kaunas wrote on the last day of peace before the World War II: “(...) German-Russian Non-

Aggression Pact (...) in itself encouraged Germany to take the initiative in its dispute with Poland (...). The text of the Non-Aggression Pact raised no doubts that Moscow provided Berlin with absolute freedom of action with respect to Poland”<sup>58</sup>.

#### **4. THE RIBBENTROP-MOLOTOV PACT OF 28 SEPTEMBER 1939 AND ITS REALISATION IN LITHUANIA**

On 1 September, Germany mounted an attack on Poland and thus opened World War II. On the same day, Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona and Prime Minister General Jonas Černius, on the basis of the 25 January 1939 Law on the Neutrality, announced “The Act on Lithuania’s Neutrality in the War”<sup>59</sup>. A special notice should be taken of the fact on the eve of the war, on 29-31 August, Poland and Germany pledged to respect Lithuania’s neutrality. Latvia and Estonia declared their neutral position in the war, too. So, the belligerent states had no real ground to act against the independent Baltic countries strictly adhering to the status of neutrality.

Military actions on the Polish-German front\* proceeded with lightning speed. The allies rendering no effective assistance, the situation of the Polish state was critical. As early as in the second week of the war, German army occupied most of the country and besieged its capital Warsaw. With a view to creating more favourable conditions for the enforcement of the 23 August Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocol, i.e. making Lithuania its protectorate, Germany made every effort to involve Lithuania to war on Germany’s side from the very first moment of attacks against Poland. Several times from 1 to 14 September German envoy to Lithuania Erich Wilhelm Zechlin and military attaché Colonel Emil Just encouraged Lithuanian Government to strike Poland, which kept losing its forces, and to recover Vilnius and Vilnius region<sup>60</sup>. Germans offered their assistance to Lithuania’s march to Vilnius not only with intelligence operative knowledge about the deployment of Polish armed forces, but also with air force strikes and technology. Lithuania’s march to Vilnius and involvement in the war on the side of Germany was actively supported by Lithuania’s

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\* On 3 September, Great Britain and France, acting in accordance with their ally obligations vis-a-vis Poland, declared a war on Germany. Besides that, the allies were supported by Australia, India, New Zealand, and later Canada, all of which stepped up the war. Nevertheless, despite the sizeable coalition, the true military actions against Germany were not commenced in 1939.

envoy to Germany Colonel Kazys Škirpa<sup>61</sup>. President and the Government of Lithuania as well as the absolute majority of Lithuanian diplomats, however, took a different stanza - Lithuania did not agree to break its neutrality. More to that, Lithuania was warned of the outcome of such a step by Western countries: Great Britain and France<sup>62</sup>.

As the German army was approaching the border between the spheres of influence of Germany and Soviet Union established in the secret protocol of 23 August 1939, the USSR launched open aggression against Poland on 17 September: the Red Army invaded Poland. Fighting a difficult war with Germans in the West, having suffered huge losses, the Polish army was incapable to resist the new aggressor in the East effectively. As a result, already on 19 September the Red Army occupied Vilnius, and later, other parts of the collapsing Polish state “belonging” to Russia. On 27 September, when separate units of the Polish army were still fighting back, J.von Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow to “conclude” the issue of the Polish state and to define further relations between Germany and the USSR<sup>63</sup>. Berlin intended to retain the remaining part of the state of Poland, the considerably trimmed territory of which was controlled by Germany and ruled by a puppet government, however, Moscow opposed this. V. Molotov suggested that the state of Poland be divided between Germany and the USSR along the lines of the rivers Pissa-Narev-Vysla-San. Besides that, territorial exchange was offered: Liublin voivod district and a part of Warsaw voivod district, which according to the 23 August secret protocol had to belong to the USSR, however, were occupied in the course of the German military campaign against Poland, now were to be handed over to Germany, and the latter, on its turn, was to give Lithuania over to the Soviet Union as a compensation<sup>64</sup>. In principle, Berlin had nothing against such wishes of Moscow, it made only one request: for the sake of “convenience” and “neutrality” of the anew projected USSR-German borders, to have the South-Eastern part of Lithuania, the Suvalkija, incorporated into the German Reich.

On 28 September, the USSR-Germany Agreement on Border and Friendship was signed in Moscow. The secret additional protocol attached to it laid down that in exchange for Liublin voivod district and a part of Warsaw voivod district, Lithuania had to be passed over to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence<sup>65</sup>. The secret protocol stipulated that "for the sake of natural and simple delineation of the border" between the USSR and Germany, the South Eastern territory of Lithuania, Suvalkija, "shall belong to Germany".

Having normalised the relations with Germany, the Soviet Union started bringing the provisions of the Ribbentrop-Molotov secret protocols of 23 August and 28 September into practice. On 28 September, the USSR made Estonia sign the Mutual Assistance Agreement, and on 5 October, a similar agreement was concluded between the Soviet Union and Latvia. The agreements entitled the Soviet Union to establish its military bases in Estonia and Latvia<sup>66</sup>. This meant that these states had to abandon the policy of neutrality declared earlier and, in fact, they became a protectorate of the USSR<sup>67</sup>. Soviet-Estonian and Soviet-Latvian negotiation documents indicate that Moscow exerted tremendous political and psychological pressure on their partners to the agreements, therefore, the governments of the Baltic states practically did not coordinate their actions among themselves, they had no joint political consultations and did not conceive any collective resistance: they acted all by themselves, considering only their own individual interests<sup>68</sup>.

Similar circumstances underlay Lithuania's negotiations with the Soviet Union in Moscow 3-10 October 1939. It should be noted that in the Lithuanian-Soviet negotiations, the Soviets possessed two extra arguments or, to be more precise, means of pressure against Lithuania. First, the USSR had occupied Vilnius and Vilnius region which had been the object of Lithuania's unsuccessful fighting with Poland throughout the entire period between the two world wars. During the negotiations with Lithuanians, the Soviets said openly that given the parties failed to reach any agreement, Vilnius city and region would be Sovietised and annexed to the Belorussian SSR. Therefore, the state of Lithuania had to face a dilemma: either to accept the Soviet proposal and have the capital city and a part of South Eastern territories returned, or to allow these territories to be annexed to Soviet Belorussia<sup>69</sup>.

Second, the Northern neighbours, Estonians and Latvians, having already concluded Mutual Assistance Pacts with the USSR and given their consent to have Soviet military bases on their land, in practice, the Soviet Union had strategically besieged Lithuania, thus, any actual resistance to the Soviets had little prospects. Moreover, nobody expected to receive any support from Western Europe under war.

Thus, on 10 October 1939, in the climate of tremendous political and psychological pressure and blackmail, the “Agreement on the Transfer of Vilnius and Vilnius region to the Republic of Lithuania and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and Lithuania” was signed in Moscow. According to the agreement, Lithuania recovered its capital city Vilnius and a part of South Eastern lands, however, in return for that, it had to allow the USSR to deploy its military bases on the Lithuanian territory. On 27 October 1939, the additional protocol delineating state border between Lithuania and the USSR was signed, and on 28 October, a confidential agreement between the commission of the Lithuanian government and the military commission of the USSR fixed the number of Soviet troops to be deployed in Lithuania (Red Army of 20 000 people) and the locations of their stationing<sup>70</sup>. This meant that the Republic of Lithuania as well as its Northern neighbours lost their neutrality and were made protectorates of the USSR.

After the Mutual Assistance Agreements were concluded between the Baltic states and the USSR, and Soviet military bases were stationed in the Baltic region, Western politicians and diplomats no longer considered Baltic states fully independent. At the end of 1939, this approach of the West towards Lithuania led to the fact that Lithuania was not elected to the Council of the League of Nations<sup>71</sup>. The dependence of the Baltic states on the Soviet Union became especially obvious at the end of November 1939, when the Soviets opened their aggression against Finland. As the League of Nations voted for the cancelling of the USSR membership in this international organisation, the Baltic states did not dare to oppose, therefore, they abstained<sup>72</sup>. Besides that, the crisis of the Baltic states became obvious when during the Winter military campaign against Finland, the USSR made efficient use of its military bases in Latvia and Estonia.

Up to the end of May 1940, the USSR respected the mutual assistance agreements with the Baltic states: practically, its troops deployed in the countries did not interfere with the internal developments. The situation took a different course in May 1940, when Germany, having occupied Denmark, Norway, Holland, Luxembourg, and Belgium, invaded Northern France. At the end of May, as Germans were carrying out their successful operations in France, the USSR began putting forward various claims to the Baltic states: on 25 May Molotov presented a note to Lithuanian envoy to Moscow Ladas Natkevičius accusing Lithuania of plundering Red Army soldiers; in the last days of May, the newspaper “*Pravda*” published an article blaming Estonian authorities of hostility towards the USSR and Germany<sup>73</sup>. In the 30 May issue of the newspaper “*Izvestii*” the Soviet Government published a communiqué alleging Lithuania of provocations against the USSR<sup>74</sup>. As in the first half of June 1940 the German troops were advancing to Paris, the scope of Soviet claims to Lithuania and other Baltic states was rapidly extending. At the beginning of June, the Soviet Union accused Lithuania of breaking the 10 October 1939 agreement, and on 14 June, the USSR submitted an ultimatum to Lithuania requesting to set up a pro-soviet government in Lithuania, to allow an unlimited contingent of Russian troops to enter Lithuania, and to satisfy other requirements manifestly infringing the sovereignty of Lithuania<sup>75</sup>. The negotiations of the Lithuanian delegation with the Soviets did not yield positive results, and on 15 June, Lithuania, having no other way out, accepted the terms of the ultimatum. On the same day, the Soviet Red Army completed the occupation of Lithuania and mounted its Sovietisation. On 16 June, similar ultimatums<sup>76</sup> of the USSR were handed in to Estonia and Latvia, and on 17 June the two countries were fully occupied, as well.

Therefore, a statement may be made that the provisions of the 23 August and 28 September 1939 secret protocols to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact were enforced in the Baltic states in two stages:

- 1) 10 October - 28 September 1939, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were forced by the USSR to conclude Mutual Assistance Pacts which officially entitled the USSR to station its military bases on the territories of these countries (for their partial

occupation) and practically determined that these countries became protectorates of the USSR;

- 2) 15-17 June 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia completely by making use of the complicated international situation in Western Europe, its military bases in the Baltic states and brutal political-military blackmail.

The Soviet Union by occupying Lithuania in June 1940 violated the international law, its international obligations as well as the following bilateral agreements with Lithuania:

- a) 12 July 1920 Lithuanian-Russian Peace Treaty;
- b) 28 September 1926 Lithuanian-Soviet Union Agreement on Non-Aggression and Neutrality, which was to be in force until 31 December 1945;
- c) 5 July 1933 Convention on the Definition of Aggression;
- d) 10 October 1939 Agreement on the Transfer of Vilnius and Vilnius Region to the Republic of Lithuania and Mutual Assistance between Lithuania and the Soviet Union. In Art. VII of the agreement, the Soviet Union made the following pledge: “The enforcement of this agreement shall in no way interfere with the sovereign rights of the parties to the agreement, especially, their government regime, economic and social system, military measures and, in general, the principle of non-interference with domestic affairs”<sup>77</sup>. We attach great significance to the fact that the flagrant violations of the international law committed by the Soviet Union are gradually recognised by the historians of the Russian Federation, too. For instance, M. Semiriaga investigating foreign policies pursued by the USSR and the agreements entered into with Germany in 1939 points out that the violation of the international law made by the Soviet Union was not accidental because, in principle, the Soviet Union neglected legal rules recognised in international relations, “the practice of the bodies of state power in the USSR often infringed national and international law”<sup>78</sup>.

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- <sup>52</sup> 23 08 1939 report of the USSR envoy to Estonia K.N. Nikitin to the Foreign Affairs People's Commissar// *Ambassadors Plenipotentiary hereby inform ...* P. 16; 28 08 1939 diplomatic diary of the USSR envoy to Latvia Zotov // *Ibid.* p. 19.
- <sup>53</sup> 02 09 1939 telegram of the USSR envoy to Latvia Zotov to Foreign Affairs People's Commissar // *Ibid.* P. 21; 03 09 1939 diplomatic diary of the USSR envoy to Latvia Zotov // *Ibid.* P. 23.
- <sup>54</sup> 05 09 1939 diplomatic diary of the USSR envoy to Estonia K.N. Nikitin // *Ibid.* P. 43.
- <sup>55</sup> 25 08 1939 telegram of the USSR charge d'affaires a.i. to Lithuania V.S. Semionov to the Foreign Affairs People's Commissar // *Ibid.* P. 18.
- <sup>56</sup> 13 09 1939 report of the USSR charge d'affaires a.i. to Lithuania N.G. Pozdniakov to V.Molotov // *Ibid.* P. 27.
- <sup>57</sup> 06 09 1939 report of the USSR envoy to Lithuania Zotov to Foreign Affairs People's Commissar // *Ibid.* P. 24.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* P. 25.
- <sup>59</sup> /Editorial column/ *Vairas*, 31 08 1939. P. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> Act concerning Lithuania's Neutrality in War // Lithuania's occupation and annexation in 1939-1940. Collection of documents/- Vilnius, 1993. P.61-62.
- <sup>61</sup> R. Žepkaitė, op. cit. P. 21; 13 09 1939 report of the USSR charge d'affaires a.i. to Lithuania N.G. Pozdniakov to V.Molotov // *Ambassadors Plenipotentiary hereby inform ...* p. 29.
- <sup>62</sup> K. Škirpa, *The Twilight of Lithuania's Independence*. Chicago–Vilnius, 1996. P. 187–206.
- <sup>63</sup> R. Žepkaitė, op. cit. P. 22–23.
- <sup>64</sup> 25 09 1939 telegram of German Ambassador to the USSR E.W. von Schulenburg to German MFA// *Nazi–Soviet Relations 1939–1941... P. 102–103.*
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* P. 103.
- <sup>66</sup> 28 09 1939 Germany-USSR Agreement on Border and Friendship. Secret additional protocol // *Ibid.* P. 107; 28 09 1939 Germany-USSR Agreement on Border and Friendship. Secret additional protocol // *Ambassadors Plenipotentiary hereby inform ...* p. 61.
- <sup>67</sup> П. Варес, О Журьяри, На чаше весов. Эстония и СССР, 1940 год и его последствия. – EuroUniversity, Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallin, 1999. С. 54–56, 79–82.
- <sup>68</sup> From Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact to.... P. 151–160, 173–180.
- <sup>69</sup> R. Žepkaitė, op. cit. P. 25–26.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>71</sup> . Vilkelis, Lithuania and the League of Nations in 1939 // *Lituanistica*, 1994. No. 2(18). P. 51–56.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid. P. 54.
- <sup>73</sup> П. Варес, О Журьяри, На чаше весов... с. 171.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ambassadors Plenipotentiary hereby inform ...* P. 334–335.
- <sup>75</sup> 14 06 1940 Ultimatum of the USSR to the Government of Lithuania // *Ambassadors Plenipotentiary hereby inform ...* p. 373.
- <sup>76</sup> П. Варес, О Журьяри, На чаше весов... с. 180–191.
- <sup>77</sup> Agreement on the Transfer of Vilnius and Vilnius Region to the Republic of Lithuania and Mutual Assistance between Lithuania and the Soviet Union.// Lithuania's occupation and annexation in 1939-1940 ... P.98.
- <sup>78</sup> Soviet Foreign Policy in 1917-1945. Search for new approaches. - Moscow, 1992. P.215.