

**Efforts of the Lithuanian Society of 1989-1990 to have the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact  
Recognised as Null and Void**

**By Prof. V.Kašauskienė**

The limits of the top-down policy of restructuring (*perestroika*) by Gorbachev that was based on the slogans: “more democracy”, “more Soviet power”, “more Socialism” were tried on 23 August 1987 in the meeting at the monument to Adam Mickiewicz in Vilnius where the Lithuanian dissidents, including Antanas Terleckas, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Vytautas Bogušis, etc. publicly condemned the disastrous consequences for the sovereignty of Lithuania of the pacts of the secret protocols of August - September 1939. The repressive structures persecuted the organisers of the meeting which was a public lesson of history for the Lithuanian people, and, instructed by the Communist party, mass media spread the message that the meeting was the “work of Western bourgeoisie centres” aimed at instigating the Lithuanian people. The values of a democratic society, including those of transparency, freedoms of press and speech, were still hardly attainable for the Lithuanian people under the circumstances of those days.

However, the *perestroika* and a fresh gulp of publicity naturally aroused the interest of the public in history, based on the wish to open the pages which were previously marked with the sign of classified and perceive the reality appropriately. The Lithuanian people’s reaction to the horrific crimes of the Stalinist era was particularly sensitive. Moreover, as we are aware of, the Lithuanian history of more than 50 years of oppression was brutally politicised with forced dogmas of “Marxism-Leninism” and application of the concepts of history study developed with the help of Moscow ideologists as well as assessment of individual periods in history. The official party critics constantly fought with so-called objective assessment of historical phenomena.

Therefore, with a thaw of the party censorship, the attention of the public, first of all that of humanitarian intelligentsia, was naturally focused on the major events in 20<sup>th</sup> century history in Lithuania: reestablishment of the Lithuanian state in 1918 and the loss of

independence in 1940, the Lithuanian occupation and forced incorporation into the USSR, the consequences of the Nazi and Soviet regimes, etc. Even under the circumstances of relative openness (*glasnost*), the Lithuanian people were not satisfied with the scheme of modern history as provided by “senior brother”. The article “Akla praeities nostalgija” (“Blind nostalgia of the past”) by economist Saulius Pečiulis was the bell calling to a public lesson of history in spring 1988. The author invited historians to “make efforts to return the authority of the study of history that had pitfalls in the eyes of people due to constant conjuncture”. This should also refer not only to the grey areas” as he noted, “but also to overall objective evaluation of historical facts”<sup>1</sup>. Juozas Jarmalavičius was first to react to this civic call with his article in neo-Stalinist style “Unilaterally and without responsibility”<sup>2</sup>. The author of the said article straightforwardly declared in Bolshevik traditions that: “there is no discussion with slander, it is rejected”<sup>3</sup>. The paradox was that this contradiction in particular served a big stimulus to revive historic consciousness. Publications stormed the press and their authors unilaterally supported the thoughts by Pečiulis and condemned the attack by Jarmalavičius. The majority understood that it was high time we talked not only about the “grey areas” in history, but also revealed the crimes committed against the Lithuanian people during the Stalin era and following years.

The *Sajūdis* soon furnished this public lesson of history with more trust, courage and civic responsibility. The truth about the past, respect for the history and cultural heritage gave incentives to people for moral and national revival. The understanding that the nation that had lost its sovereignty was in captivity of the Soviet power and the scope resulting from the foreign oppression with respect to the nation’s existence in its own turn singled out the main issues for the study of history: 1) the publication and analysis of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols of 23 August and 28 September 1939; 2) revealing the crimes committed against the Lithuanian people during the era of Stalin. The issues of restoration and loss of sovereignty, almost half-a-century occupation when

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<sup>1</sup> Daily *Komjaunimo tiesa*. 23 April 1988, Pečiulis S. “Dievo karalystės beieškant”. Vilnius, 1993, p. 9-14.

<sup>2</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 30 April 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

the name of Lithuania was not only eliminated from the map of the world and the community of nations made the history of Lithuanian current in its own way. Apart from the loss of their State, the Lithuanian people suffered a huge moral and physical loss, its freedom and independence fighters were subject to trials of the Soviet gulags and deportations, and the nation's traditional mode of life was brutally deformed through forced collectivisation and sovietisation. All the problems interwove into a knot that historians find hard to untie.

However, the historic consciousness of the Lithuanian people has not been eliminated. It was refreshed with recollections, although rather timid at the beginning, the word of truth on the years that had been lived through "behind the Iron Curtain" and being excluded from the democratic world was passed. Mass meeting devoted to commemorate the victims of Hitlerism and Stalinism and held on 23 August 1988 in the Park of Vingis in the capital became the moment of telling the truth and real internal self-reflection as well as disclosure of the non-aggression treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany and its secret protocols. The people who took part in this meeting were astonished by the courage and novelty of thoughts. The meeting expressed the position openly and based it on arguments that Lithuanian lost its independence due to the division in the zones of interest of the territories of independent states, which was carried out by USSR and Germany<sup>4</sup>. Further consequences of the secret protocols of the 1939 treaty between Molotov and Ribbentrop to Lithuania were particularly underlined. Special meaning was attached to the following words by poet Justinas Marcinkevičius: "Long live the nation that freely communicates with its history"<sup>5</sup>. The consciousness of the nation was enrolled in to the process of waking up and people became freer. More and more of them assented to the aspirations of the *Sąjūdis*, supported its policy of democratisation and sovereignty, which led to the restoration of the independent State.

However, the then leaders of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the Soviet administration hardly imagined the *perestroika* of Gorbachev implemented, leaving aside

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<sup>4</sup> Budrys A. "Trys valandos Vingio parke". Daily *Tiesa*. 25 August 1988.

the aspirations of the *Sajūdis*. When the leaders of the Lithuanian Freedom League decided to hold a meeting in Gedimino square in Vilnius on 28 September to disclose the other secret protocol between USSR and Germany signed on 28 September 1939, they were not allowed to conduct it. The people who gathered to the meeting were dispersed from the square with militia truncheons. 25 people were detained and several of them were brought to criminal liability. Some of those who determined themselves for hunger strike were taken from the square by force<sup>6</sup>. The statement by the Government of the Lithuanian SSR of 29 September threatened that non-sanctioned meetings, gatherings and other similar events which “fail to comply with the interests of the Socialist State and society” would no longer be tolerated in the future<sup>7</sup>.

Having revolted against their own indifference and viewing their history with quite different eyes, the Lithuanian people stepped over the threshold of the new 1989 year. The realisation that Lithuania had been an independent state and a member of the international community and different organisations before 1940, suggested another vision of the future. All people of good will became aware that the downfalls of the states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were predetermined by the secret protocols of the USSR-German treaties of August - September 1939, and the leadership of the *Sajūdis*, supported by the majority of people, made efforts to liquidate disastrous consequences of the aforesaid deal of Stalinism and Hitlerism. Common efforts of politicians, historians, archivists and lawyers were first of all directed at proving to the high ranking officials and politicians of Moscow who negated the very fact of existence of secret protocols that the existence of the treaty and the protocols had been authenticated with documents; secondly, to reveal a direct relation between the secret protocols and the synchronous “revolutions” of 1940 in the Baltic states, after which Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia found themselves within the USSR. Only with the recognition of the fact of existence, which contradicts international law and declaring them null and void from the date of their

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<sup>5</sup> Daily *Komjaunimo tiesa*. 25 August 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Kniukšta G. “Provokacinių išpuolių neturi būti”. Daily *Tiesa*. 1 October 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Statement of the Government of the Lithuanian SSR. *Tiesa*. 30 September 1988.

signing, a possibility for developing further strategy of restoring the independence will appear.

Several episodes will be singled out of a number of initiatives related to the efforts of restoring historical truth. In April 1989, historians Č. Bauža, A. Eidintas, V. Žalys and V. Kašauskienė, were commissioned by the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to present their version on the incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into the USSR<sup>8</sup>. Although the Moscow functionaries of medium rank did not dare to repeat the hackneyed “theories” on the Socialist revolutions of the Baltic states openly, they still talked indefinitely and tried to avoid logical answers to direct questions. It was clear for everybody in Lithuania that the synchronous revolutions of 1940 were just a myth that left no deeper trace in the consciousness of the nation.

On 20 May 1989, having gathered in the meeting held by the *Sąjūdis* in Kalnų Park, the people of Vilnius demanded that the People’s Deputy Congress of the USSR clearly and unilaterally condemned foreign policy of the Stalinist Government of the USSR.<sup>9</sup> The representatives of the Lithuanian SSR - the People’s Deputies in Moscow - could rest not only upon the mandate by the Lithuanian people but also on the official document, which was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR. That was the statement-appeal to the Congress of People’s Deputies and the Government of the USSR, which stated that “for the sake of historical justice,” the secret protocols of the 1939 treaties between the USSR and Germany should be recognised and announced as “unlawful since the moment of their signing”<sup>10</sup>. On 30 May in Vilnius, the participant of the international conference “The Issues of Domestic and Foreign Policies of the Baltic States on the Eve and at the outbreak of World War II” addressed the Congress of People’s Deputies of the

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<sup>8</sup> Kašauskienė V. *Sąjūdis - tautos istorinės atminties versmė. Lietuvos Sąjūdis ir valstybės idealų įgyvendinimas*. Vilnius, 1998, p. 248.

<sup>9</sup> Will, determination and wisdom - for the future of Lithuania. *Tiesa*. 21 May 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 20 May 1989.

USSR demanding to recognise the secret protocols of the USSR - German Non-Aggression Treaty unlawful and invalid since their signing<sup>11</sup>.

Certainly, the most significant change was that the issue of disclosing the secret protocols and announcing them invalid was included into the agenda of the Congress of the USSR People's Deputies following the demand of the USSR people's deputies from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. On 1 June, Deputy Endel Lipma, Director of the Institute of Chemistry and Biological Physics of the Estonian Academy of Science, proposed that the plenary session should set up a commission of deputies, which would give political and legal appraisal of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaties and their additional secret protocols. Another ten deputies passed comments on this motion. The reaction of political opponents was hostile and angrily disposed. However the stance of the Baltic representatives was strong and consistent (V. Beriozovas spoke on behalf of the Lithuanian delegation, Igor Griazin once again grounded the point of view of the Estonians, analogous position of the Latvians was reaffirmed by Ivars Kezberis). The Baltic representatives were supported on this issue by some Russian deputies who shared democratic views, including V. Ivanov, Head of the Sector in the Slavic and Balkan Institute of the USSR Academy of Science, and Rojus Medvedev, writer and historian. In his expressive speech, V. Landsbergis defined the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as a black and bloody spot in the history of the USSR. He noted that the existence of the secret pacts was proved not only by their copies in the Nuremberg Trials, but also with the scenario of the USSR actions against the Baltic states, realised consistently with the contents<sup>12</sup> of the secret protocols. Finally, a favourable decision was adopted.

The Congress of USSR People's Deputies formed a commission on political and legal appraisal of the non-aggression of the treaty of 23 August 1939 and Aleksandr Yakovlev became the Chairman of the Commission constituted of 25 USSR people's deputies, including Lithuanian representatives Vytautas Landsbergis, Justinas Marcinkevičius, Kazimieras Motieka and Zita Šličytė. Considering the political importance and

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<sup>11</sup> "Kas lémė Pabaltijo likimą?". Daily *Tiesa*, 2 April 1989.

complexity of the task, a panel of experts of different sectors was also formed on the level of republics. Although high-ranking politicians of Moscow and M. Gorbachev himself stubbornly refused to recognise the authenticity of the secret protocols, historians and staff of the archives collected materials available locally on the course of the development of 1939-1940 events as prescribed by the secret protocols. This was also important considering the fact that the documents made public in the West and the materials on the aggression<sup>13</sup> of the US Congress Committee headed by Ch.J. Chersten in 1953-1954 was not a sufficient proof for the politicians of the Soviet Union, but merely the “bourgeoisie propaganda”.

The Lithuanian deputies to the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies persistently and patiently and also indirectly drew near the moment of the restoration of the Independence of Lithuania: they raised and supported radical demands for change, joined forces with the advocates of democracy, determinedly made efforts for announcing the secret protocols of the USSR-German Pact as invalid. In his address to the expert panel, USSR People’s Deputy K. Motieka said openly that “with the recognition of the secret pacts, we would gradually make steps towards the declaration of the Independence of Lithuania”<sup>14</sup>. The Lithuanian press and media channels published unabridged materials and provided commentaries on facts of the consequences of the secret protocols on the future of the Baltic states. At that time the photocopied publications “TSRS-Vokietija 1939” and “TSRS-Vokietija 1939-1941” were compiled and published in the Russian language (with the introductions in the Lithuanian and Russian languages written by A. Eidintas and V. Kašauskienė)<sup>15</sup>. The publications also made public the documentary materials on the relations between the USSR and Germany in 1939-1941, which had been passed over in silence or had been renamed with historical forgery and, having appeared in the hands of

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<sup>12</sup> Speech by Deputy V. Landsbergis. Daily *Tiesa*, 3 June 1989.

<sup>13</sup> *Baltijos valstybių užgrobimo byla. JAV Kongreso C.H. Chersten komiteto dokumentai, 1953-1954 metai*, Vilnius, 1997 p. 862.

<sup>14</sup> Kašauskienė V. “Lietuvos valstybingumo tapsmas XX amžiuje: istorinės paralelės ir skirtingumai.” *Penkeri Lietuvos valstybingumo atkūrimo metai*. Conference materials. Vilnius, 1997, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> *TSRS-Vokietija 1939. TSRR ir Vokietijos santykių dokumentinė medžiaga 1939 m. balandžio - spalio mėn.* Vilnius, 1989, p. 127; *TSRS-Vokietija 1939-1941. Vokietijos santykių dokumentinė medžiaga, 1939 m. rugsėjo - 1941 m. birželio mėn.* Vilnius, 1989, p. 191 p.

the USSR deputies, took them by surprise. During the realisation of the plundering deal of Stalinism and Hitlerism, a lot of undeniable documentary material was compiled.

The efforts of the Baltic representatives of the USSR people's deputies in Moscow had influence even on the composition of Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) of the stagnation era. It could no longer block important political decisions. When the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop deal approached, there was a good possibility of assessing the USSR aggression, which was carried out in summer 1940 and the decisions of so-called People's Seimas that were imposed on the people. On 5 July 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR adopted the resolution "On the Investigation of the 1939 Treaties between the USSR and Germany and their Consequences" and set up a corresponding Commission of the Supreme Soviet, which was assisted by the group of historians, archivists and lawyers<sup>16</sup>. On 22 August, mass media announced the conclusions of the said Commission. They stated that the Commission investigated the main issues related to the non-aggression treaty of 23 August 1939 and its secret protocol, 28 September 1939 treaty between the USSR and Germany on friendship and borders as well as additional secret protocol as well as conclusion and executing of another secret protocol on 10 January 1941, and the Commission established that in historical and legal points of view these treaties and their protocols as well as the mutual agreements signed between Lithuania and USSR and between Lithuania and Germany did not fall within international norms of law. Namely Stalinism and Hitlerism exterminated the independent states with their secret deals and aggressive actions. The independence of the majority of the states was restored, however, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia failed to regain their independence back. The essential conclusion of the Commission was that "the 21 July 1940 Declaration of the People's Seimas on the Accession of Lithuania to the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and 3 August 1940 Law of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the Accession of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics are

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<sup>16</sup> Daily *Tiesa*, 11 July 1989.



unlawful”<sup>17</sup>. Namely the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR had to approve these conclusions and political recommendations of the Commission in the near future.

On 23 August 1989, the joint action of solidarity of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian people the “Baltic Way” was held as a sign of protest against the tragic past. That appealed to the consciousness and morals of the world, which witnessed the total insight of the Baltic peoples, the search for historical truth and maturity of national consciousness. The “Baltic Way” - the human chain extending for 650 km from the castle of Vilnius to the old tower of Herman in Tallinn - was joined by hundreds of thousands people. Standing in the “Baltic Way”, the people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia once again said the determined “no” to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and demonstrated to the world that they would exert every effort to eliminate the consequences of the Soviet aggression. There were huge meetings of the Baltic peoples held at the borders between Lithuania and Latvia as well as Latvia and Estonia. The living “Baltic Way” which joined Vilnius-Riga-Tallinn became the way of consolidation, unity and determination of the three nations. The “Baltic Way” and more than 1.5 million signatures<sup>18</sup> following the demand to make public the secret protocols of the criminal deal revealed the consciousness of the majority of Lithuania’s people and their determination and unity.

Unwilling to let the states that were annexed in 1940 free from their claws, the leaders of the Soviet Union soon reacted to the action of the “Baltic Way” by announcing 26 August statement “On the Situation in the Soviet Baltic Republics” of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party. By demonstrating the power of the super-state, the leaders of the USSR blamed the organisers of this action accusing them for the “incitement of the peoples of the Baltic Republics to breakout from the Soviet Union”<sup>19</sup>. Reproaches were made that these treaties were declared unlawful and invalid in Lithuania

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<sup>17</sup> “Lietuvos TSR Aukščiausiosios tarybos komisijos 1939 metų Vokietijos - TSRS sutartims ir jų pasekmėms tirti išvados”. Daily *Tiesa*, 22 August 1989.

<sup>18</sup> “Justino Marcinkevičiaus kalba Lietuvos SSR Aukščiausiosios tarybos vienuoliktojo šaukimo tryliktoje sesijoje, aptariant informaciją apie 1939 metų Vokietijos - SSSR sutarčių ir jų pasekmių tyrimo komisijos darbą”. Daily *Tiesa*. 27 September 1989.

<sup>19</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 27 August 1989.

and so were the declarations of the Lithuanian People's Seimas, although the conclusions of the Commission of the USSR People's Deputies had not been issued.

The USSR People's Deputies (including K. Antanavičius, E. Bičkauskas, A. Buračas, V. Čepas, B. Genzelis, R. Gudaitis, J. Kanovičius, S. Kašauskas, E. Klumbys, J. Kupliauskienė, A. Lajus, Just. Marcinkevičius, N. Medvedevas, A. Mickis, K. Motieka, J. Olekas, R. Ozolas, K. Prunskienė, A. Smailys, M. Stakvilevičius, V. Statulevičius, Z. Šličytė, V. Tomkus, K. Uoka and Z. Vaišvila) approved the collective opinion of the Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR and demanded that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR made the conclusions<sup>20</sup> by the Commission for investigation of the said treaties of the USSR People's Deputies public as quickly as possible. It was known that the Commission approved only preliminary conclusions, however, making them public was delayed on the grounds of political intentions.

On 23 September 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR heard to the information of academician Juras Požėla on the work of the Commission on the Investigation of 1939 Treaties between the USSR and Germany and their Consequences. According to the rapporteur, the Commission's "conclusions are essentially aimed at the declaration of historical truth. These conclusions also prove that our road to sovereignty is lawful, and Lithuania used to have its sovereignty and must regain it"<sup>21</sup>. The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR approved the work of the Commission and expressed its concern that the preliminary conclusions of the Commission of the USSR People's Deputies that had been drafted were not made public so far<sup>22</sup>.

On 25 September 1989, Deputy K. Motieka met the historians and archivists who assisted the USSR People's Deputies and discussed on how to use the historical materials of 1939-1940 in the press conferences in Moscow held on the initiative of the Baltic deputies. The first conference was organised by the USSR People's Deputies from

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<sup>20</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 31 August 1989.

<sup>21</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 24 September 1989.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and took place in the premises of the Estonian delegation. The following USSR People's Deputies of Lithuania took part in the conference, including V. Landsbergis and K. Motieka, lawyer V. Vadapalas, historians G. Vaskela, V. Kašauskienė. The Lithuanian as well as other Baltic representatives possessed valid arguments and authentic materials<sup>23</sup> in the conference. An international press conference was also held on the same day where the Baltic representatives shared their views regarding the preliminary conclusions that were drafted and signed by the USSR People's Deputies (21 members) and were not published in the press.

Finally, the next meeting for political and legal appraisal of the 1939 Non-Aggression Treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany was held on 4 November 1989 after a long break, which lasted for three months and a half. A. Yakovlev, Chairman of the Commission, could not explain why making public the conclusions of the Commission had been blocked for such a long time and why the Commission was given a new and basically anonymously prepared draft. The decision was made to return to the preliminary text that had been completed by and signed on 19 July. The final wording stated the following: "the secret protocols and their copies were reliable, the content of the secret protocols complies with the international norms of law and therefore they are announced as invalid since their signing"<sup>24</sup>. On 14 December, the members of the Commission chaired by A. Yakovlev completed the agreement of the conclusions text. They basically corresponded with the hopes of the Lithuanian public and the Lithuanian representatives of the people's deputies, since the documents proved the existence of the secret protocols and announced them invalid from the day of their signing<sup>25</sup>. The fears that the document would not be approved by the Congress of People's Deputies were not groundless. However, even the most conservative deputies of the Congress had a difficulty in stepping back, since the first draft conclusions of the Commission were disseminated

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<sup>23</sup> Kašauskienė V. "Sąjūdis - tautos istorinės atminties versmė". *Lietuvos Sąjūdis ir valstybės idealų įgyvendinimas*, p. 254.

<sup>24</sup> "Tiesos" interviu su V. Landsbergiu. Slaptieji protokolai: manevrai komisijoje'. *Daily Tiesa*. 8 November 1989.

<sup>25</sup> Bucelis B. The second congress of the USSR people's deputies. We will wait for the forecasts ... Interview with member of the Commission Just. Marcinkevicius,. *Daily Tiesa*, 16 December 1989.

publicly already in summer. It is likely that considering the transformed political situation and the public opinion of the world both Chairman of the Commission A. Yakovlev and M. Gorbachev were interested in the adoption of the finally drafted document<sup>26</sup>. Eventually, on 24 December 1989, the Congress of the USSR People's Deputies adopted the decision recognising the secret deals legally ungrounded and invalid since the moment of signing them<sup>27</sup>.

Supported by the majority of people, the Lithuanian *Sajūdis* for reforms overcame the first and the main phase on the road to the restoration of Independence. On 10 January 1990, the shameful deal was publicly commemorated in the Cathedral square of Vilnius for the first time in 49 years after Germany transferred to the USSR a part of the territory of Suvalkai for the compensation of 31.5 million marks. The participants of the meeting said: "we came here to declare once again our determination to be free and tell those who do not want to understand us that freedom for the nation is the dearest of all"<sup>28</sup>. On 7 February 1990, having convened in its seventeenth session of the 11<sup>th</sup> convocation and having considered the resolution of the Congress of the USSR People's Deputies which recognised the secret protocols as unlawful and invalid since the moment of signing them, adopted the resolution "On the 1939 Treaties between Germany and USSR and liquidation of their consequences for Lithuania" thereby recognising that the declaration on the accession to the USSR adopted by the People's Seimas on 21 July 1940 as the one which did not manifest the will of the Lithuanian people and was unlawful and invalid and so was the USSR Law of 3 September 1940 on the Accession of the Lithuanian SSR to the USSR and was not legally binding to Lithuania<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, this decision included the proposal to the USSR "to start bilateral negotiations on the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania"<sup>30</sup>. On the 13 February, the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR adopted the decision "On the Statement of the USSR People's Deputies, representing the voters of Lithuania, to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR" which

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 15 February 1990.

<sup>28</sup> Danilevičiūtė V. "Faktas ir įspūdis. Vilties spinduliai virš gimtinės". Daily *Tiesa* 11 January 1990.

<sup>29</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 15 February 1990.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

supported the standpoint “on the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania by the way of negotiations”<sup>31</sup>.

It can be asserted that the efforts of the Lithuanian society to recognise the secret deals of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as invalid laid legal foundations for the restoration and enforcement of the independent state of Lithuania. The *Sajūdis* made efforts so that the newly elected Supreme Council (which at that time was still called Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR) eliminated the Soviet annexation in a parliamentary way and that there would be publicly stated that Lithuania was an independent state and that it would continue the traditions of statehood of the Republic of Lithuania<sup>32</sup>. The deputies of *Sajūdis* won the elections to the supreme body of power. On 11 March 1990, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Act “On the Restoration of the Independent State of Lithuania” by the absolute majority (124 deputies voted in favour and none voted against<sup>33</sup>). The first documents of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government more and more often emphasised the restitution of former rights of the Republic of Lithuania after the recognition of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaties null and void. What remained to be done was to recognise the fact of the independent state of Lithuania and remove the last consequence of this criminal deal - to withdraw the USSR occupational troops from the Independent land of Lithuania. The efforts of the leaders of the Republic of Lithuania on enhancing the position of the Independent Lithuania in the family of the international community of nations and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops was consistently supported by the people of the Republic.

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<sup>31</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 15 February 1989.

<sup>32</sup> “ELTA. Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sajūdžio rinkiminė konferencija”. Daily *Tiesa*, 6 February 1990.

<sup>33</sup> Daily *Tiesa*. 13 March 1990.