

# Search for Partnership: German-Soviet Political Relations on the Eve of the Second World War

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The aim of the essay is to analyse the most important circumstances which could affected the final Stalin's decision leading to the ratification of Soviet-German political relations at the end of the thirties. Among others to verify the affirmation that it was a calculated deal with exact objectives in the case of Ribbentrop-Molotov's Pact. To prove that both regimes shielded the ideological differences by common national interests, which based for example in the separation of Poland. A part of the research is also the analysis of importance and direct consequences of the German-Soviet Pact.

## PURSUIT OF THE POLITICAL RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION

In the second half of the thirties Stalin had several possibilities of foreign-political orientation. Firstly to cooperate with Great Britain and France. Secondly he could assert the isolationistic policy, thirdly intensify the very limited economical-political relations with the Third Reich in that time period.<sup>1</sup> In last two prewar years the Soviet governance asserted all the three variations. The collateral negotiations were preceded. In June 1938 F. von Schulenburg positively commented the statement of Soviet commissioner M. Litvinov who presented the possibility including even the orientation on Germany.<sup>2</sup> M. Litvinov didn't exclude neither a deeper cooperation with Great Britain and mainly with France in that time.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1938 it was evident that increasing rate of German armament expenses is sustainable only just in the short-term time period. Nazi armament ex-

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1 S. TUMIS, *The Soviet Search for Partnership: Some Remarks on Soviet Foreign Policy on the Eve of the Second World War*, in: Prague Papers on History of International Relations, No. 1, 2010, p. 117.

2 See Botschafter am AA von 27. 6. 1938, in: *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945 (further only ADAP): Von Neurath zu Ribbentrop: September 1937 bis September 1938*, Serie D (1937–1945), Bd. 1, Baden-Baden 1950, Dok. Nr. 627.

3 TUMIS, p. 117.

penses more than tripled since the half of the thirties.<sup>4</sup> Second four-year plan established the programme of extensive import substitution in the form of domestic projects of synthetic production of key materials and raw-materials through which helped enlarge the industrial production. It placed high demands on resources which were due to high military costs in shortage anyhow. The projects of synthetic production of petrol and caoutchouc, coal, iron ore and industrial chemicals were started, there were invested into manufacturing of ships and increasing of power supplies. Autarchic arrangement of Nazi government in the field of agricultural production didn't achieve a self-sufficiency at a majority of chosen foodstuff, even if in comparison to the twenties, there was an increase in volume of corn, potatoes, meat, or sugar.<sup>5</sup> There wasn't ensured the sufficient stock of strategical raw materials; particularly chromium for production of armoured steel, nickel for production of ammunition, copper for electrotechnical equipment or caoutchouc used in transport. Although the Nazi economy was dependent on import, there didn't exist a functioning institutional framework which would effectively coordinate the import of strategic raw materials and their dividing between particular economic groups.<sup>6</sup>

One of the ways how to increase German resources and minimize consequences of nearly zero trade exchange with the Soviet Union at that time, was conquering and over-running of other areas. The effective way was shown by annexation of Austria which even in the previous year provided the necessary qualified labour force, raw materials, foreign exchange including the production capacities. In the half of March 1939 Germany strengthened economic positions even by economic complex of Bohemia and Moravia.

Hitler could utilize the Polish areas and attack the Soviet Union after the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. Although it is very probable that none of the participants of Soviet-British-French negotiation wasn't willing to guarantee a help to the Czechoslovak, the Munich Pact and its consequences enforced Stalin's distrust in the principles of both collective security and credibility of the British-French bloc as the potential ally.<sup>7</sup> It confirmed the reluctance of Western world powers to take strong action against Hitler's aggression. The reluctance was enhanced by mutual suspicion. Soviet politicians perceived the Great Britain and France as the hostile capitalist countries; on the other hand Western European agents criticized the Soviet economic system, military purges and ideology.<sup>8</sup> The Soviet position of world power

4 The total expenses on armament including Mefo-drafts increased from 5.5 billion of Imperial Marks (IM) to 17.3 billion of IM. See W. A. BOELCKE, *Die Finanzpolitik des Dritten Reiches: Eine Darstellung in Grundzügen*, in: K. H. BRACHER — M. FUNKE — H. A. JACOBSEN (hrsg.), *Deutschland 1933–1945: Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, Bonn 1992, p. 103.

5 D. PETZINA, *Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich: Der nationalsozialistische Vierjahresplan*, Stuttgart 1968, p. 95.

6 See K. FABIANKOVÁ, *Sovětské surovinové dodávky a jejich význam pro německou válečnou ekonomiku v letech 1939–1941*, in: P. CHALUPECKÝ (Ed.), *Mezinárodní hospodářské vztahy zemí střední Evropy v první polovině 20. století*, Praha 2015, pp. 87–93.

7 TUMIS, pp. 118–119.

8 Z. STEINER, *The Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the Czechoslovakian Crisis in 1938: New Material from the Soviet Archives*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1999, pp. 752–753.

was negated, and an exit to isolation was caused from which the Soviet Union broke out successfully of in the half of the thirties.<sup>9</sup>

According to Sergej Sluc, Stalin returned to the strategy of utilizing disputes between particular Western European countries and enforcing his own interests and objectives.<sup>10</sup> According to Thierry Wolton the Munich Pact served to Soviet propaganda as a pretence for apology for participation at the pact, however, it doesn't explain a speed with which both dictators come to the cooperation. He assumes that Stalin was motivated to cooperate with Germany not thanks to French-British compromises towards Hitler's Munich requirements, but thanks to the will pointed against peace which was asserted co-operatively.<sup>11</sup> The result of Munich crisis was also the fact that Soviet government started to look for alternatives to the system of collective security and its foreign policy started to become unpredictable and unstable. The Kremlin representatives become aware of the fact that isolationism strategy without reliable associate is very disadvantageous.<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Roberts mentions in connection with a Munich Pact the interview between Soviet deputy of Foreign Affairs' Commissioner and French ambassador in Moscow, in which V. Potemkin claims shortly after the document's signature: "I cannot see else way than fourth dividing of Poland."<sup>13</sup>

The revision in a Soviet approach appeared at the celebration of the New Year's Day 1939 when Hitler talked publicly to the Soviet ambassador Alexej Mereklovov firstly since the half of the thirties; he even had a lunch with him two months later. Diplomacy agents in Moscow couldn't overlook such gesture and the London journal called "News Chronicle" printed an article of Moscow correspondent V. Bartlett and a close friend, the Soviet ambassador I. Majsky at the end of January 1939 in which he drafted the possible deal between the Soviet Union and Germany.<sup>14</sup> Stalin let the whole non-commented translation published in the official party's journal, however Hitler didn't respond. He probably didn't want to call attention to the possible German-soviet deal in the period when negotiation with Poland was proceeded. J. von Ribbentrop dealt with Polish representatives about handover of Danzing, rights of passage through the Polish Corridor and connecting Poland to the anti-Comintern Pact, whose failure led Hitler to prepare an attack on Poland.<sup>15</sup>

Historians aren't able to agree on the interpretation of reasons of the Stalin's turn and accurate timing. The object of discussion is a question since when the Soviet

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9 W. BENECKE, *Die Entfesselung des Krieges: Von München zum Hitler-Stalin-Pakt*, in: Osteuropa, Bd. 59, Nr. 7-8, 2009, pp. 33-36.

10 S. SLUC, *Der Weg in die Sackgasse: Die UdSSR und der Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pakt*, in: Osteuropa, Bd. 59, Nr. 7-8, 2009, pp. 75-76.

11 T. WOLTON, *Rudohnědá nemoc 20. století*, Praha 2003, p. 21.

12 TUMIS, p. 119.

13 G. ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision for a Pact with Nazi Germany*, in: Soviet Studies, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1992, pp. 58-59.

14 See D. C. WATT, *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War: 1938-1939*, New York 1989, pp. 122-123.

15 See H. KISSINGER, *Diplomacy*, New York 1994, p. 338; Y. SANTAMARIA, *1939: Německo-sovětský pakt*, Praha 2001, p. 21; J. ZARUSKY, *Hitler bedeutet Krieg: Der deutsche Weg zum Hitler-Stalin-Pakt*, in: Osteuropa, Bd. 59, Nr. 7-8, 2009, pp. 106-107; A. ZUBOV, *Dějiny Ruska 20. století: 1939-2007*, Vol. 2, Praha 2015, p. 3.

government started to think whether to continue in negotiation about alliance with Western world powers, or to settle with Nazi Germany. Different opinions could be noticed even in a question whether it was really the turn in foreign policy, or only the use of different means for enforcement of the same objectives.<sup>16</sup> While R. C. Raack asserts the opinion that Stalin tried to get to the war conflict other countries, including Western Europe and then extract the maximum of such situation, G. Roberts says that Stalin was forced to cooperate with Hitler and defines the opinion streams dealing with a question since when Moscow started the negotiation leading to the signature of German-Soviet political pact.<sup>17</sup> According to his opinion, it could be considered as the one of possible signals about similar decision making also the Stalin's speech from March 1939<sup>18</sup> at the party's congress and mainly his words "not to burn fingers"<sup>19</sup> connected with a criticism of British-French appeasement policy, when advised not to rush, maintain vigilance and not to draw the country into war before being defeated by Western European democracy.<sup>20</sup> To the Stalin's words responded most quickly a German foreign minister J. von Ribbentrop who found in it an indirect encouragement for improvement of Soviet-German cooperation.

Both speeches give evidence of uncertainty prevailing in the world in this time period. The Soviet leader negated still more common fears about the destiny of Zakarpatska Ukraine<sup>21</sup> and preferred a counter-western Pact conception against Comintern, in fact. According to E. H. Carr that was exceedingly ingenious rhetorical exercise whereof wasn't possible to deduce any reliable conclusions because only one sixth of the speech was devoted to foreign-political topics.<sup>22</sup> However, this could be deduced that a new Soviet foreign policy stopped to make differences between countries; it didn't feel to be restricted formally by any obligations. It didn't really oppose any possibility. F. von Schulenburg preferred the Stalin's easement of attack rhetoric against totalitarian countries and effort for stronger criticism of the foreign policy of democratic countries, at an assessment of the speeches.<sup>23</sup>

16 ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, pp. 58–77; G. ROBERTS, *The Soviet union and the Origins of the Second World War: Russo-German Relations and the Road to War: 1933–1941*, New York 1995; R. C. RAACK, *Stalin's Drive to the West: 1938–1945: The Origins of the Cold War*, Stanford 1995.

17 ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, pp. 58–59.

18 The text of Stalin's speech from XVIII. Congress see in: J. V. STALIN, *Otázky leninismu*, Praha 1950, pp. 560–570; ADAP: *Die letzten Monate vor Kriegsausbruch: 9. August bis 3. September 1939*, Serie D (1937–1945), Bd. VII, Baden-Baden 1956, Dok. Nr. 213, pp. 189–191.

19 This collocation is often translated "not to pick hot chestnuts from the fire instead of others" which could be evidently considered as an allusion to the former accusation of the United States of America towards Great Britain.

20 ZUBOV, p. 4.

21 At the beginning of 1939 the Soviet leadership was afraid of that Hitler want to capture Zakarpatska Ukraine in order to gain preferable position for the war conflict with the Soviet Union. In the half of March, however, Hitler dispensed publicly with these territorial requirements.

22 E. H. CARR, *Berlin-Moskau: Deutschland und Russland zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, Stuttgart 1954, pp. 162–164.

23 ADAP: *Die letzten Monate vor Kriegsausbruch: März bis August 1939*, Serie D (1937–1945), Bd. VI, Baden-Baden 1956, Dok. Nr. 1, pp. 1–3.

Although most of German historians<sup>24</sup> consider the March speech to be a Soviet step towards the future political cooperation with Germany, it doesn't mean that Stalin would decide in favour of such policy just now. Soviet leader himself had intended to choose the time and conditions under which the entry into the war. Negotiations with the Western powers used as a means of exerting pressure on Hitler.<sup>25</sup> He was rather sceptical, careful and didn't be rash needlessly, after the repeated unsuccessful attempts at negotiations with Great Britain and France. The Moscow authorities waited probably for any proposal. It depended on who will suggest more. According to W. Maser, Hitler was much more prudent and indulgent to the deductions declared by Ribbentrop, although still regarded the possible deal with Great Britain.<sup>26</sup>

Hitler didn't contemplate to respect the possible allies and restrict his expansive plans. At the same time he wanted to avoid the offensive at two fronts. After failure of the last German-Polish negotiation about Gdansk and corridor's exterritoriality from the end of March 1939, the prime minister N. Chamberlain declared the British guarantee of Polish borders which guaranteed that if Germany and Poland enter the war, Great Britain won't stay neutral but take the Poland side. These guarantees crossed the Hitler's intentions and affected even the subsequent international events. Since that time the German leader didn't consider an understanding with the Poles to be realistic and perceived that he won't enforce his requirements other than by the military way. At the same time he trust London till the beginning of August that won't intervene militarily.<sup>27</sup> It's without question that everyone wanted to avoid the repetition of World War I, whereas the United Kingdom hoped that trilateral alliance will disallow Hitler to make a longer-range conflict. The Nazi economy as well as army weren't prepared for the European war yet; moreover it couldn't even count with effective support from abroad. In addition, Western European governments didn't understand that the balance of strengths isn't well-disposed to the advantage of Germany.<sup>28</sup> When considering more further, it emerges that in the first half-year of 1939 *Wehrmacht* reinforced much more than British and French armies together. Whereas in 1938 Western powers could consider the Soviet Union to be a possible ally, Stalin was a Hitler's ally in the following year.

According to the German documentation preserved, the Soviet Ambassador Mercklov discussed with German assistant secretary Ernst von Weizsäcker on 17 April 1939.<sup>29</sup> The official reason of the visit regarded a fulfilment of arranged supplies of war material from Pilsner Skoda to the Soviet Union. However, Mercklov amplified the

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24 This opinion was confirmed by W. Maser, A. Hillgruber, W. Hofer, F. A. Krummbacher, H. Lange, J. W. Brügel. On the contrary D. C. Watt, E. H. Carr or G. Roberts impeach this assumption. See W. MASER, *Der Wortbruch: Hitler, Stalin und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, München 1994, p. 5; CARR, p. 164; ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, p. 59.

25 ZUBOV, p. 4.

26 MASER, p. 5.

27 ZARUSKY, pp. 105-108.

28 N. FERGUSON, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West*, New York 2006, pp. 361-367.

29 The official record made by Weizsäcker see in: see ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 215, pp. 221-222.

possibility of mutual political relations' improvement.<sup>30</sup> The claimed words by Mereklov about a directness of the Soviet foreign policy wasn't faithful because since the half of March there were negotiations proceeded between Soviet and British diplomats in an effort to make longer-range contracts about mutual help in the case of aggression.

M. Litvinov submitted an eight-point proposal for the trilateral pact in the same April day which should in case of an attack guarantee a help to the East European countries lying between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea and neighbouring with the Soviet Union at the same time.<sup>31</sup>

The suggestion resulted from a fear of Leningrad's occupation by German army which in respect of the imperial marine predominance wasn't unrealistic. According to D. C. Watt, E. H. Carr or G. H. Gornig, the Mereklovov's politically motivated speech could be considered as the first seriously meant signal from the Soviet side against Berlin leading to August pact. At the same time it's an evidence of duality of Soviet foreign-political tactics.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of the nineties there were the Soviet official documents declassified,<sup>33</sup> which exemplify somewhat different Mereklovov's written record from the negotiation process. An author otherwise doesn't deny the claimed meeting's business purpose but all the initiative including political notes and comments of the above-mentioned importance attributes to the German side. According to G. Roberts even the third version of a written report survived whose author is G. Astachov who accompanied the Soviet Ambassador.<sup>34</sup> The Soviet side always interpreted the tendentious exaggerated Weizsäcker's German version as vague and improbable; it pointed at Hitler's speech from the end of April 1939<sup>35</sup> about upcoming attack on Poland whereof weren't heard any anti-Soviet hints, nor communism's criticism.

In April 1939 the Japanese weren't prepared to a military cooperation with Germany against Great Britain; however no one from the London diplomacy could rely on that. Hitler, according to N. Ferguson, expected British appeasement in exchange for a postponement of military conflict which considered to be nearly unavoidable since

30 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 215, p. 221.

31 A. J. P. TAYLOR, *The Origins of the Second World War*, London 1964, p. 287.

32 See G. ROBERTS, *Infamous Encounter? The Merekalov Weizsäcker Meeting of 17 April 1939*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 1992, pp. 921-923; ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, pp. 59-60; CARR, p. 166; G. H. GORNIG, *Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt: Eine völkerrechtliche Studie*, Frankfurt am Main 1990, pp. 4-5.

33 L. F. ILJIČEV (red.), *God krizisa 1938-1939: dokumenty i materialy v dvuch tomach* (further only GK): 2 ijunja 1939 g. — 4 sentjabrja 1939 g., Tom II, Moskva 1990, pp. 256-271.

34 ROBERTS, *Infamous Encounter...*, pp. 922-923.

35 The speech demonstrating the sudden turn in a German policy towards Poland and Great Britain was inspired by the Roosevelt's message in which the American president was alarmed by the Hitler's invasion into the Czechoslovakia and called upon Hitler to abandon the attack on about thirty mainly European countries, as a compensation he will ensure him the approach to raw materials necessary for Germany in the world markets. The Nazi leader just proclaimed cynically that "in each country mentioned by him the probes were carried out, but none of the countries feels to be threatened by Germany". See J. RIBBENTROP, *100 dokumentů o vzniku války: Výbor z úřední německé Bílé knihy*, Praha 1940, dok. Nr. 49, pp. 87-93.

March.<sup>36</sup> However, Hitler didn't contemplate to provoke this fight earlier than in September in the same year. For the maximum objective depiction of the situation it's necessary to say that a period of activities in which the properly accredited diplomats as well as empowered emissaries and the Secret Service, started roughly in this moment. An alliance with the Soviet Union should have become "exclusiveness" which this or that party should have firstly deserved, thus offer a sufficient price for it. Each pursued his own aim and agreed with the initiative in case it was useful for him, and at the same time was concerned honestly in a doubletalk of reality and doubt's deepening.

The importance of Hitler's April neglect came out several days later when the answer from Soviet embassy followed. Maxim Litvinov resigned involuntarily from the function of foreign affairs minister on the third day in May.<sup>37</sup> Although he had a Jewish origin he was married with a daughter of an English historian, preferred cooperation with Great Britain and France and was closely bundled with a policy of collective security which could have made an obstruction during negotiations with Hitler, in such personal exchange couldn't be seen any official turn in the Soviet policy. According to W. Maser and A. J. P. Taylor couldn't be evidenced that it was a consequence of the Hitler's April speech.<sup>38</sup> According to V. Smetana the policy of collective security could be a proof of Stalin's dualism and hid his real political aims.<sup>39</sup> German party saw in the Litvinov's resignation a "gesture of good will" which made easy a decision making in the situation when it couldn't in the planned conflict with Great Britain rely on Japanese militarily involved in China and Mongolia. German historian R. Ahmann mentions that resignation of M. Litvinov raised attention of Hitler because he got knowledge about the content of Stalin's March speech as lately as in a half of May.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, W. Maser argues that J. von Ribbentrop immediately thoroughly handed over the Stalin's speech to Hitler.<sup>41</sup>

No one should let be cradled by obligatory formulation that Litvinov's exchange was carried out "at own request",<sup>42</sup> especially if Soviet government didn't stopped the talks with Western European powers. Some expert studies signify that Vjaceslav M. Molotov after his coming even further exhibited effort to find the deal with Western powers and personally denied a change in Soviet foreign policy.<sup>43</sup>

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36 FERGUSON, p. 378.

37 A. RESIS, *The Fall of Litvinov: Harbinger of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 2000, p. 50.

38 MASER, p. 10, 22; TAYLOR, pp. 284–285.

39 Vít Smetana argues with the words of Walter Krivicky that Stalin never lost the trust in the cooperation with Germany and always called attention to the possible rapprochement in the series of articles printed in the international journals. Also the explanation is offered that he could be inspired by the domestic policy. See V. SMETANA, *Vítězství geopolitiky nad ideologií, sovětsko-německý pakt 1939*, in: *Dějiny a současnost*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1999, p. 26.

40 R. AHMANN, *Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt: Nichtangriffs- und Angriffsvertrag?*, in: E. OBERLÄNDER (hrsg.), *Hitler-Stalin-Pakt 1939: Das Ende Ostmitteleuropas?*, Frankfurt am Main 1989, p. 33.

41 MASER, p. 4.

42 The four-lined message informed about the resignation printed in the back side where was literally mentioned: "*The Presidium of the Highest Soviet released Mr. Litvinov from his function on own request.*" See RESIS, p. 51.

43 See M. J. CARLEY, *End of the "Low, Dishonest Decade": Failure of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Alliance in 1939*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 1993, p. 320; D. WATSON, *Molotov's Ap-*

The prompt nomination of V. M. Molotov, a self-confident man and with a certain influence on Stalin, improved diplomatic relations of Moscow with Berlin. There were the talks carried out in May<sup>44</sup> mainly between Georgij Astachov and Karl Schnurre in which both commented the desire to deepen sluggish relations and pick up on the Rapallo period which has been welcome mainly by representatives of German economic sphere in comparison with an opinion of the old party elite. Elaborated expert studies<sup>45</sup> still resulted from the thesis that Soviet union fall within a group of enemy countries but at the same time confirmed that German need of raw materials and foodstuff will be ensured by import only from 25 %, and provided that German firms don't break the business contacts with South Eastern Europe. There should be missing roughly two millions of tons of crude oil the most, and the demand should yet raise in the war conditions. Full-value raw materials could be ensured only by Stalin's Soviet Union in case of military-economical blockade. There were noticed another decline of import from Soviet Union at the final volume of 6 millions of imperial marks during the first quarter of 1939.<sup>46</sup>

The authority for four-year plan and *Wehrmacht* leadership deduced final conclusions from that. In order the short-term war needs were ensured, they calculated with an implementation of Soviet economical potential into imperial production capacities. The German side offered to Baltic and Scandinavian countries the non-aggression agreements in order to ensure the neutral zone in the north-east of Europe and so assure indirectly its food and raw materials' reserves. At the same time there was planned the contraction of German-Italian-Japanese alliance which should have discouraged Western countries and even Soviet Union from possible attack. According to Rolf Ahmann, Hitler relied on the fact that Stalin won't have an interest in deal with the West without this alliance.<sup>47</sup>

As early as 20 May 1939 the Moscow ambassador F. von Schulenburg instructed to suggest follow-up openings of talks about economic topics at the visit to V. M. Molotov. After longer than hour-long mutually cautious and distrustful discussion they come to an ambiguous conclusion that mainly "*Soviet army considers the business negotiations to be unhelpful until necessary political conditions will be made for them*".<sup>48</sup> The German representative even tried to learn the mysterious sense of Molotov's words, however their host was decided not to reveal more; he had no choice but to wait tacti-

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*prenticeship in Foreign Policy: The Triple Alliance Negotiations in 1939*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 2000, pp. 695–722.

44 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, *Aufzeichnung Schnurre*, Dok. Nr. 332, p. 355; ibidem, Dok. Nr. 351, p. 381; GK: *29 sentjabrja 1938 g. — 31 maja 1939 g.*, Tom I, Moskva 1990, Nr. 349.

45 There are analyses submitted at the end of April 1939 by Karl Krauch, director I. G. Farben and Göring's general representative for special requests of chemical production, and the Reich authority for the military-economical planning. See R. D. MÜLLER, *Das Tor zur Weltmacht: Die Bedeutung der Sowjetunion für deutsche Wirtschafts- und Rüstungspolitik zwischen den Weltkriegen*, Boppard am Rhein 1984, pp. 317, 329.

46 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 530, p. 608.

47 AHMANN, p. 34.

48 J. von Ribbentrop already required the talks about division of Poland that time which was, however, rejected by Hitler shortly before. ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 414, p. 454; ibidem, Dok. Nr. 424, p. 456; GK, Tom I, Nr. 363.



cally until the Soviet diplomats will be more communicative. However, it was evident already soon that Molotov's discretion was only the beginning of Soviet waiting game.

Moscow representatives still waited patiently for the British-French proposals. They wanted to make safe the Baltic countries in which Germany successively acquired the impact.<sup>49</sup> The Molotov's priority interest was to persuade a British and French government about contraction of a military deal with clearly defined conditions based on solidarity and equality of duties, mainly with the respect to providing of guarantees to Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Lithuania.<sup>50</sup> Molotov responded to western proposal by sending of amended variation of the resolution at the beginning of June which guaranteed the help in case of any aggression and concerned the namely mentioned countries. British politicians despite of stipulations agreed and promised delegating of a diplomatic delegation. However, the personal constitution didn't conform to Moscow imaginations.<sup>51</sup> Mainly William Strang, a member of the British Foreign Affairs Ministry, was perceived by Molotov as a representative of the "second league" of the British diplomacy.<sup>52</sup> During the trilateral negotiation in a half of June, Molotov criticized further the vagueness and lack of reciprocity in duties of British-French proposals and even their effort to extend the talks unproportionally.<sup>53</sup>

It's evident that Soviet interest to make a contract with Great Britain and France was still actual in this time period. According to T. Wolton and R. Ahmann, Stalin was afraid of a German attack through Baltic countries or Romanian area, and that is why the future economic cooperation with Germany was conditioned by the political non-aggression agreement. The successful ratification of such conceived agreement would then motivate a Soviet dictator to abandonment of negotiations with France and Great Britain, according to their opinion.<sup>54</sup>

There were proceeded even the Soviet-Germany negotiations, in parallel. At the beginning of June 1939 Anastas I. Mikoyan, a country commissioner, appealed to Gustav Hilger, a legacy councillor, with a question what "modus procedendi" the German empire imagines in the question of possible business negotiations.<sup>55</sup> By this Mikoyan confirmed the Soviet wish to start the common negotiations as soon as possible, and implied at the same time that parallel trilateral talks aren't proceeded satisfactorily.

On the basis of interdepartmental talks a new schedule of business negotiations was formulated by K. Schnurre. The list<sup>56</sup> of mutual requirements markedly exceeded the framework of January determined objectives, namely by the Soviet two-year obligation of raw materials' import in the value of 300 million of imperial marks. Except the supplies of war material, iron ore, phosphates, natural gas and cotton, Moscow

49 Occupation of Memel in March 1939. See TUMIS, p. 120.

50 WATSON, pp. 699-702.

51 Ibidem, pp. 705-706.

52 GK, Tom II, Nr. 570, p. 270.

53 SSSR should help Poland, Romania, Belgium, Greece and even Turkey, but Great Britain and France didn't have the same duty towards Latvia, Estonia and Finland in the case of an aggression. WATSON, pp. 706-710.

54 AHMANN, p. 35; WOLTON, pp. 22-23.

55 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 491, p. 551.

56 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 530, pp. 608-609.

required the payment in gold in order the Imperial Bank could exchange that for shortage foreign currency. The Soviet representatives amended the overestimated Germany proposal to final value of 160 million of imperial marks; at the same time requisitioned the compensatory settlement by a seven-year credit in the value of 200 million of imperial marks with 4.5% interest rate.<sup>57</sup> They even raised a requirement of supply of military technologies, weapons and industrial machinery in the value of 153.4 million of imperial marks.<sup>58</sup> The proposal was accepted in advance. There the secret notice was also attached that German leadership is prepared to improve the relations with Moscow.

The end of June 1939 was proceeded in a sign of absolute slump of all the started dealings. Neither other attempts of German embassy in Moscow supporting a recovery of the Rapallo political line brought positive results nor have the German-Soviet contacts been chilled again. The Soviet leadership thus didn't have any tangible result after several months of diplomatic efforts because of the alleged political strategy. It was still making negative noises about German proposals, both in political and economical areas.<sup>59</sup> As compared to the situation in autumn 1938, Stalin had a patience, time and even possibility to choose according to his own conditions. However, he at the same time didn't dispose of neither detailed information about the German plan of attack against Poland, nor its timing.

In parallel with the Moscow tried London to negotiate with Berlin. To compensate for the fact that the Third Reich renounce further aggression, Britain was ready to accept its dominance in Eastern Europe, including those against Poland. Throughout June and July, British diplomats tried to compromise, but their attempts failed. The agreement was entered into and Great Britain returned to the idea of an Anglo-Franco-Soviet alliance<sup>60</sup>

Until a half of July 1939 there was confirmed no British-Japanese war, neither a German alliance with Tokyo. The situation full of uncertainty persisted during a major part of July and as lately as in the last decade when negotiations with Western European countries were cornered, the Soviet diplomacy started to communicate again but ambiguously again. In Moscow there were agreed a concept<sup>61</sup> of so far invalid trilateral agreement with British-French block and on the other side there were even business talks with German diplomats restored in the last week in July. Hitler trust that Western democracy won't intervene in the affairs of Poland and must responded quickly in order to ensure the Soviet neutrality and avoided a war conflict without political and military coverage.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, p. 609.

<sup>58</sup> See L. A. BEZYMENSKIJ, *Sovetsko-germanskije dogovory 1939 g.: Novyje dokumenty i staryje problemy*, in: *Novaja i Novjšaja Istorija*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 1998, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> GK, Tom II, Nr. 442, pp. 65–67.

<sup>60</sup> The agreement, for example, went bankrupt on German demands to return the lost colonies after World War I and dominate the Middle East. See ZUBOV, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> On 23. 7. 1939 the agreement about mutual help between Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union was stroked, but its signing was postponed, that is why it wasn't valid. See A. ŠNEJDÁREK, *Druhá světová válka v dokumentech a fotografiích*, Praha 1968, Dok. Nr. 49, pp. 26–28.

The Soviet serious decision about the cooperation with Germany was sudden, unplanned in the long term and caused probably by a series of partial events and circumstances from July and beginning of August 1939. It was influenced by the failure of continuing military negotiations with Western powers initiated in the half of July. The Soviet government considered the personal constitution of British-French delegation as undignified and unrepresentative.<sup>62</sup> Molotov assessed the decision to send military professionals to Moscow by a slow business ship instead of plane as the go-slow. He also thought, on the basis of information from a Soviet ambassador in Great Britain, that British diplomats prefer rather negotiations with Hitler.<sup>63</sup> There was launched the trilateral discussion in Moscow in the second week in August. British and French officers arrived late and weren't able to respond to Soviet key questions which justified by the lack of competencies.<sup>64</sup> According to D. Watson, the Soviet leadership got view of such behaviour as the final proof of their untrustworthiness.<sup>65</sup> Molotov realized that joining the Soviet Union to the Axis Powers offered good prospects for the realization of Stalin's expansionist plans and the outbreak of war, as opposed to the Anglo-French-Soviet bloc.<sup>66</sup>

At the end of July 1939, K. Schnurre invited the Soviet counsellor G. Astachov and leader of Berlin business commission J. Babarin to dinner which took place in the luxurious restaurant Ewest.<sup>67</sup> All the three guests reminisced on the previous very close cooperation which was bilaterally advantageous and outlined the possible ways to its recovery.<sup>68</sup> Karl Schnurre assessed the talks positively because he thought that Soviet leadership hasn't been decided yet definitely and temporizes towards both Germany and Great Britain which considered as a success.<sup>69</sup> He was much more particular sev-

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62 Even marshal K. Voroshilov negotiated on the Soviet side and the British government rejected to send the appropriate minister deputies to the negotiation. It wasn't even willing to accept the Soviet delegation in London. WATSON, p. 713; I. M. MAJSKIJ, *Kdo pomáhal Hitlerovi: Ze vzpomínek sovětského velvyslance*, Praha 1964, pp. 150–155.

63 It was a merchant ship called *City of Exeter* sailing with the speed of 13 knots per hour. On the other hand, the Brits pointed out to the fact that army representatives couldn't be transported by army planes over the German territory in the period of peace and the train connection seemed to be too dangerous for the transport of persons with secret military information. See P. NEVILLE, *Hitler and Appeasement: The British Attempt to Prevent the Second World War*, London 2006, pp. 182–183; MAJSKIJ, p. 154.

64 MAJSKIJ, pp. 157–164.

65 WATSON, pp. 714–716.

66 See ZUBOV, p. 7.

67 See ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 729, pp. 846–849.

68 "What could England offer to Russia? In the best case the participation at European war and hostility of Germany, which certainly isn't the appropriate aim to the Russian effort. And what could we offer on the contrary? Neutrality and remaining Russia aside the possible conflict. In case if Moscow wished the German-Soviet conformity in the question of mutual interests, which would bring advantages to both countries like it was in former periods." Ibidem, Dok. Nr. 729.

69 Ibidem, p. 849; D. C. Watt mentions that the restaurant was called Ernest's. D. C. Watt, L. Mosley or K. Richter, as one from the Czech representatives, point out to the importance of this negotiation within a long-term perspective; See L. MOSLEY, *On Borrowed Time: How World War II Began*, New York 1969, p. 295; WATT, p. 383; K. RICHTER, *Pakt, který ochromil svět*, in: Přísně tajně!, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2003, p. 58.

eral days later when declared the German readiness to give up the territorial interests in Ukraine and Baltic.<sup>70</sup> Molotov firstly expressed more serious willingness to listen to Berlin proposals.<sup>71</sup>

Astachov gave von Ribbentrop notice that Soviet government is seriously interested in the improvement of mutual relations even in the political area at the beginning of August 1939.<sup>72</sup> Astachov finally telegraphed to Moscow that Schnurre met the Soviet conditions and suggest the secret dividing protocol of Poland and Baltic. G. Roberts considers the telegram as the first official reference to the secret protocol even with territorial requirements.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Molotov was still careful and abstemious in the effort to convince the Western European countries that they observe the antifascist policy. The Soviet leadership probably wasn't prepared yet to more fierce change in the foreign policy in this phase. G. Roberts argues that G. Astachov was in the close contact with German diplomacy's representatives, however, he didn't receive instructions until the end of July how to respond to appropriate proposals. At the same time he acknowledges that a reason why Soviet government changed the very negative attitude to German proposals consists in still increasing distrust of successful contracting of the trilateral alliance with France and Great Britain.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the persistent feinting and parallel negotiating there existed the military-economical reasons connected with a war preparation which motivated Hitler to temporary power-political reconciliation of interests with a Soviet Union and using of his raw material stock in the war production. It's very probable that Soviet leadership preferred definitely the partnership with Germany as late as in August. Between 8 and 10 August 1939 Stalin discussed with the closest associates in a cabinet. This affirmation could be supported by an eight-point instruction<sup>75</sup> issued for a newly designated leader of the Soviet delegation, Marshal K. Y. Voroshilov who was appointed at the beginning of August, in negotiations with Western powers. The document evidences the duplicity of Soviet foreign policy. The British and French delegations weren't able to ensure the ultimately required permit to Soviet forces' entrance to the territory of two sovereign countries, i.e. Polish and Romanian areas. On the one hand a Soviet participation at the negotiation had a purely utilitarian character and was focused on the secretion of own intentions, on the other hand it forced the German side to larger helpfulness, whereas the responsibility for unsuccessful end of negotiations with Western European countries charged on the Western democracies which behaved too cowardly according to the instruction's content.

G. Roberts makes reference to the news of the American Information Service and thus confirms indirectly the above-mentioned affirmation. According to his opinion, V. M. Molotov responded seriously roughly in a half of August and declared a pos-

70 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 729, pp. 846–849; *ibidem*, Dok. Nr. 736, pp. 854–855.

71 GK, Tom II, Nr. 511, p. 145.

72 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VI, Dok. Nr. 772, p. 899.

73 ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, p. 67.

74 *Ibidem*, pp. 65–67.

75 The instruction mentioned was firstly published at our country by historian E. Voráček. See E. VORÁČEK, *Instrukce sovětské vojenské delegaci pro jednání s britskou a francouzskou vojenskou misí v létě 1939*, in: *Slovanský přehled*, Vol. 87, No. 1, 2001, pp. 43–46.

sibility of general political deal with Berlin.<sup>76</sup> That was a reaction to negotiation with G. Astachov who interpreted the German territorial requirements. Hitler gave up surprisingly Ukraine, Bessarabia, and Baltic with the exception of Lithuania and east part of Poland in exchange for the Soviet unconcern about Gdansk and Polish areas formerly pertaining to Germany. G. Astachov warned V. M. Molotov that Nazi intentions are short-term and promotes a political cooperation just because they need the Soviet neutrality for the case of war with Poland.<sup>77</sup>

F. von Schulenburg was charged with a task to find out V. M. Molotov and tell him verbally the Ribbentrop's proposal. Its content was an assurance that German side doesn't have any aggressive intentions and between Baltic and Black Seas there aren't any debatable issues which couldn't be settled to a bilateral satisfaction.<sup>78</sup> At the same time it was an expression of the political will to cooperate. Molotov welcomed the German message without any negative reminiscences but he didn't want to over hasten anything. According to his opinion it was necessary to plan and prepare the diplomatic visit organizationally and in detail. He asked subsequently what a German government thinks about the concept of non-aggression pact.<sup>79</sup> The reply was received in less than twenty-four hours when an Imperial ambassador handed over the written declaration to a Country commissioner in which the German side agreed with signing the non-aggression pact supplemented by a special protocol, including common guarantees to the Baltic countries and Soviet-Japanese compensation.<sup>80</sup> V. M. Molotov in whom nearness the Western European diplomats were still staying, proceeded cautiously again and sent word that Soviet government prefers responsible practical steps to flamboyant gestures. He conditioned repeatedly a contracting of the pact by the signature of business agreement including a development of the secret protocol defining foreign-political interests.<sup>81</sup> The Kremlin's leadership decided definitely for the political deal with Berlin, apparently after the failure of negotiations with France and Great Britain on 17 August 1939 at the latest.<sup>82</sup>

On 18 August 1939 J. von Ribbentrop handed over to a German ambassador in Moscow the general outline of the three-point text which nearly duplicated in haste from the German June non-aggression agreement with Baltic countries.<sup>83</sup> It declared also the readiness to arrive immediately to Moscow and urged to clarify the relations as

<sup>76</sup> ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, pp. 68–77.

<sup>77</sup> Several days later G. Astachov was invited back to Moscow and died in a Soviet labor camp at the beginning of the forties. See GK, Tom II, Nr. 541–542, pp. 185–188.

<sup>78</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 56, pp. 51–52; GK, Tom II, Nr. 523, pp. 157–158.

<sup>79</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 70, pp. 63–64.

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem, Dok. Nr. 75, p. 70.

<sup>81</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 105, pp. 95–96.

<sup>82</sup> See TUMIS, pp. 124–125.

<sup>83</sup> Mutual duty to abstain the aggressive action was identical; on the contrary he unusually amended the rules of ratification because the contract should have been valid immediately after the signing with the effectiveness of 25 years and J. von Ribbentrop, when copying hastily, fully forgot on the final third point — unlimited duty of neutrality. The analyses of German proposal, including its wording, see in: AHMANN, pp. 38–39; GORNIG, p. 16.

soon as possible with respect to the planned German-Polish conflict.<sup>84</sup> Molotov identified a German outline of the pact as entirely deficient.

F. von Schulenburg returned to the embassy and immediately was called back to Kremlin. V. M. Molotov was awaiting him here and acquainted him with the Soviet deal's proposal including the secret protocol and added that J. von Ribbentrop can come flying one week after ratification of the economical agreement.<sup>85</sup> F. von Schulenburg the positive news telegraphed home immediately.

It's difficult to find out what caused this sudden change. A. J. P. Taylor and G. Roberts refers to von Schulenburg who thought that Stalin intervened personally, however, he couldn't prove that persuasively.<sup>86</sup> Most of other professionals came with just mere guesswork. According to their opinion the final decision about auburn cooperation was voted down as late as at the conference of Politburo<sup>87</sup> on 19 August 1939 at which the Soviet dictator analysed strategical possibilities and pointed out the usefulness of German-Soviet pact in case of war. However, supporters of this version don't have any direct proof that words of this signification sounded there. It's possible to argue with a content of Stalin's visit book in which an allusion about Politburo's proceeding is missing.<sup>88</sup> Also E. Jäckel calls attention about the striking Stalin's honesty, formal inadequacies and time disharmony and considers the document to be false.<sup>89</sup> The materials from Politburo were firstly imprinted by the French journal *Le Temps* at the end of November 1939 and it appealed to the *Havas Agency* which acquired the classified information from an "absolutely trustful Moscow source".<sup>90</sup> J. Hoffman and even a part of current Russian historians assume that the false document served mainly to propaganda purposes and justification of the pact, also because another copy written in Russian didn't survive.<sup>91</sup>

An unpleasant perspective raised to the Soviet government, namely that it will have to face alone and without adequate compensation to the Nazi aggression. The possible pact was even for Stalin one of the easiest and most acceptable resolutions, in the background of foreign political and strategical considerations, because it offered a neutrality, guaranteed valuable territorial gains and even the modern technical equipment in terms of subsequent business exchange. This act wasn't planned in

84 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 113, pp. 100–103.

85 Ibedem, Dok. Nr. 132, pp. 124–125.

86 TAYLOR, p. 316; ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, p. 70.

87 See B. LITERA — J. WANNER, *Přeměny Rudé armády a sovětské strategické plány 1931–1941: Dokumenty a materiály*, in: *Slovanské Historické Studie*, Vol. 26, No. 18, 2000, pp. 163–164.

88 More detailed see B. BONWETSCH, *Stalins Äußerungen zur Politik gegenüber Deutschland 1939–1941*, in: G. R. UEBERSCHÄR — L. A. BEZIMENSKIJ (hrsg.), *Der deutsche Angriff auf die Sowjetunion 1941*, Darmstadt 1998, pp. 147–149.

89 E. Jäckel who devoted to detailed analysis of the document's authenticity, points out to the time inconsistency between the negotiations of F. von Schulenburg and V. M. Molotov about the proposal of the pact and speech. See E. JÄCKEL, *Eine angebliche Rede Stalins 1939*, in: *Vierteljahrshäfte für Zeitgeschichte*, Bd. 5, Hf. 4, 1958, pp. 380–389.

90 See J. HOFFMANN, *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg 1941–1945*, München 1999, p. 26.

91 The French materials were discovered again in the half of the nineties of the Twentieth Century and presented at the conference in Novosibirsk, namely by the Russian historians T. S. Busajeva, I. V. Pavlovova and V. L. Dorosenko. *Ibidem*, pp. 26–27.

the long term but it was rather a sudden decision influenced by momental conformity of interests. Long and uncertain trilateral negotiations were risky for the Soviet Union's representatives and exhausting to a certain extent, thus they rather moved towards the pragmatism deal with Germany. According to some Western historians, British and French politicians also underestimated the Soviet military potential under the impression of *Big terror*.<sup>92</sup>

Ribbentrop's visit from the end of August didn't correspond periodically to German military programme. Fears from another delay take effect in the amounts of telegrams and personal messages sent to Stalin in which Hitler accepted the Soviet proposal and required if Ministry of Foreign Affairs could arrive already on 22 August or one day later.<sup>93</sup> F. von Schulenburg agreed by telegram immediately.<sup>94</sup>

### CREDIT AGREEMENT FROM 19 AUGUST 1939 AS THE PRESUMPTION OF POLITICAL COORDINATION

The German government didn't coordinate mobilization plans and didn't reach autarchy at chosen foodstuff and raw materials in spite of statistically provable results of the second four-year plan. The economical diplomacy in the interwar period played a significant role even in Soviet foreign policy and Moscow was requiring good economic relations very often as the necessary condition for the political and military cooperation. In order the political non-aggression pact could be signed, there a step towards rapprochement in the economic field had to be made, namely in the form of business agreement. German credit proposals submitted to a Soviet agent G. Astachov were discussed in detail in a half of August 1939 and on 19 August ended in the signature of the business and credit agreement.<sup>95</sup> So there passed more than half of year than both sides came to a formal deal.

K. Schnurre counted that including the settlement of old Soviet debts which sourced from the credit agreement from 1935 there the common exchange should have been realized in the approximate volume of one billion of imperial marks.<sup>96</sup>

The August credit agreement meant a turn in business relations and a hope for formation of economic block independent on the oversea business. It was advantageous for both sides. Stalin got the possibility to purchase the most modern German weapons on a credit payable in the longer time period. The economic connection had a decisive importance for the Nazi economy with a respect to longer persistence of war conflict and Hitler was enabled to decrease the raw material insufficiency. The leader of general staff Eduard Wagner saw "*the last ditch from the military-economical reasons*" in the agreement because the army didn't dispose of sufficiency of ammunition, spare parts and tyres in last days, due to a shortage of fuels also the public

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<sup>92</sup> TAYLOR, pp. 240–241; WATSON, p. 695.

<sup>93</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 142, p. 131; GK, Tom II, Nr. 582–583, pp. 302–303.

<sup>94</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 159, pp. 140–141.

<sup>95</sup> ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 18; Dok. Nr. 50.

<sup>96</sup> *Aufzeichnung Schnurre vom 29. 8. 1939*, in: ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 436, p. 357.

transport was stopped.<sup>97</sup> This event was assessed very positively by the majority of representatives of imperial enterprise sphere and even Soviet press. It welcomed the business recovery as well as sales possibilities in the east market. It was considered bilaterally as the signal for starting of the first phase of political convergency.<sup>98</sup> For Hitler it represented a pleasant easement because he didn't need to worry about an attack of France and Great Britain in the period of German-Polish conflict planned. Germany returned to the position of the biggest business partner of SSSR. The very importance of an agreement could be appreciated after understanding of political circumstances, including the events of the following period.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE RIBBENTROP-MOLOTOV PACT AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

When interpreting this agreement there still exist extensive disproportions up to the present day. They are also influenced by the ideologisation of a whole topic, mainly in case of communist historians. Until the beginning of the eighties of the Twentieth Century there weren't any discussions on the topic of background and consequences of German-Soviet pact preferred officially in countries of the Soviet bloc.<sup>99</sup> Also the opinion was prevailing there until the Gorbacov's reforms that agreements helped Stalin get time, a certainty of neutrality necessary for armament. The non-aggression pact was in Brezhnev's epoch considered by Roj Medvedev as contributive and reasonable.<sup>100</sup> A declassification of the archival materials and crisis of the communist system which survived several tens of years longer unlike Nazism, helped understand more the essence of alliance.<sup>101</sup> The current historiography still justifies the Stalin's decision. Among the most frequent arguments belong affirmations that the decision was forced indirectly to Soviet leadership by the moderation of Western powers, respectively was influenced by security interests<sup>102</sup> by which they marginalize the Stalin's part in the creation of World War II. I. K. Koblyakov argues that the subsequent German-Soviet cooperation didn't have a large importance for the eco-

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<sup>97</sup> See MÜLLER, p. 334.

<sup>98</sup> About which even the words of K. Schnurre testify: *"If we look back from the economical importance of the agreement, its significance lies in the fact that negotiations helped for the re-establishment of mutual thread with the Soviet Union and is assessed from both sides as the first decisive step for the renewal of political relations."* See J. H. PERREY, *Der Rußlandauschuß der deutschen Wirtschaft- die deutschsowjetischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen der Zwischenkriegszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ost-West Handels*, München 1985, p. 296.

<sup>99</sup> ZARUSKY, p. 98.

<sup>100</sup> R. Medvedev moderated his declaration after 1989. See R. BUCHNER, *Todfeinde: Komplizen: Kriegsbrandstifter: Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt und die Folgen*, Leipzig 2009, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> The newest and most complex analysis of causes, significance, consequence of the pacts in the Europe-wide context see in: A. KAMINSKY — D. MÜLLER — S. TROEBST, *Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt 1939 in den Erinnerungskulturen der Europäer*, Göttingen 2011.

<sup>102</sup> See B. PIADYSHEV, *We Defended Whole World: Now We Will Take Care of Ourselves*, in: *International Affairs*, Vol. 3, 2005, pp. 18–21.



nomical growth of both economies.<sup>103</sup> S. Sluc has such opinion that a mutual cooperation brought economical advantages mainly to the Nazi system.<sup>104</sup>

August events could be interpreted in many ways. The supporters of an “offensive stream” among which V. Suvorov and W. Maser could be ranked thing that World War II was provoked consciously by Stalin with the aim to weaken Germany and even the Western European countries. The economical-political alliance should have been used according to their opinions to increasing of military potential of Soviet army. French historian Y. Santamaria points out in this context on the incompleteness of German and Soviet archives which probably brought about that supporters of the offensive stream accredited a huge importance to the NKVD materials which directly or indirectly proved the Stalin’s aggressive plans.<sup>105</sup> Another opinion stream is American “revisionist school” represented by Geoffrey Roberts and Alan J. P. Taylor.<sup>106</sup> Its representatives credit the main guilt to Stalin who according to them didn’t estimate the rate of strong-mindedness of the West to oppose Hitler and tried primarily to assure own security and neutrality. On the other hand we could state the theory of “two handcuffs in the fire” represented by G. L. Weinberg and David C. Watt. This interprets the Soviet leader to be a minister of dualism and disguise who always tended subconsciously to the German empire. Germany historian G. L. Weinberg thinks that Hitler would attack the Poland even if there wasn’t reached the contraction of German-Soviet pact because he wasn’t afraid of war but peace.<sup>107</sup> Although the pro-German orientation couldn’t be denied, this conception attributes too large importance to a secret diplomacy compared to the official line and doesn’t take into account the genuine Stalin’s aims.

According to a current Estonian historian Hein Arumäe,<sup>108</sup> a large critic of the Russian official stream, there were an opinion widespread in the countries of former Soviet bloc that the pact was an unavoidable defensive arrangement because Soviet Union would become already in 1939 a victim of Nazi aggression on the one hand and on the other hand it was endangered even by capitalist countries after the failure of trilateral negotiations.<sup>109</sup>

Was this opinion justified? Hitler didn’t stop to seek the “living space” in the east and the mutual conflict due to ideological reasons was unavoidable in the long term. However, the leader on a short-term basis didn’t wish a mutual war earlier than re-

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103 I. K. KOBLYAKOV, *Wer hat den Zweiten Weltkrieg entfacht*, Moskau 1982, p. 338.

104 S. SLUC, 17. September 1939: *Der Eintritt der Sowjetunion in den Zweiten Weltkrieg: Eine historische völkerrechtliche Bewertung*, in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 48, Hf. 2, 2000, pp. 219–254.

105 SANTAMARIA, pp. 101–102.

106 See for example ROBERTS, *The Soviet Decision...*, pp. 58–77.

107 G. L. WEINBERG, *Offene Fragen und kontroverse Punkte*, in: R. MÖLLER — A. ČUBAR’JAN (hrsg.), *Mitteilungen der Gemeinsamen Kommission für die Erforschung der jüngeren Geschichte der deutsch-russischen Beziehungen*, Bd. 1, München 2002, p. 82.

108 Heino Arumäe acted at the Academy of Sciences in Tallinn and as the first one translated and published in the Baltic the German wording of the August agreement even with the secret supplement which has already previously been printed in the West.

109 H. ARUMÄE, *Noch einmal zum sowjetisch-deutschen Nichtangriffspakt*, in: E. OBERLÄNDER (hrsg.), *Hitler-Stalin-Pakt 1939: Das Ende Ostmitteleuropas*, Frankfurt am Main, 1990, p. 115.

solve the “Polish issue” and remove the threat of British-French intervention. Olaf Groehler mentions that already in the ratification day of August credit agreement the German instruction<sup>110</sup> was carried out for the war against Soviet Union. There was taken into account that Soviet sea military forces will be destroyed and German trade in the Baltic Sea will be safeguarded including the sea connection in East Prussia. If we consider then the military-strategical analyses, war potential and a fact that Germany didn't dispose of suitable starting space for the offensive, then could be assumed that the response to a question raised is negative. Even the creation of possible front launched against the Soviet Union could be assessed as too unilateral theoretic speculation. H. Arumäe argues that supporters of this idea underestimate the antagonism within a capitalist block and forget that real state interests always stay on the first place against subjective opinions and moods of particular politicians.<sup>111</sup>

Since the non-aggression pact was connected with the secret amendment, both documents were assessed negatively since the very beginning. According to H. Arumäe their negative consequences consisted in the fact that European power balance which was existing till this time and represented the effective element of international stability namely in favour of Germany, was destroyed. Hitler could take a share in the destruction of Poland and break off the World War II.<sup>112</sup>

However, it's not so easy to find an explicit response to question why the system of collective security was broken down. The representatives of Soviet diplomacy are criticised in this context for the inconsistency and permanent effort for a recovery of the cooperation with Germany, disregard of democratic system and short-term calculations with the aim to turn the Nazi aggression towards the west. All of these could be proved successfully. Similar accusations could be, however, applied even against Stalin's democratic partners as well. According to B. Litera and J. Wanner is much more difficult to assess the extreme interpretations which blame Stalin for the incitation to war within own power strategy, as well as at unilateral expediently focused attempts of Soviet professional public to prove a solidarity to the Fascism and democracy relating to the Soviet Union.<sup>113</sup>

Even the historical experience of that time indicated that a collective security didn't infill the programme aim because responsible powers simply weren't interested in the fact that small state organs, the principles of international law, majesty and even democracy, could complicate their intentions. The proof of this affirmation is for example the non-punishment of Japanese expansion to China, inadequate reaction to Anschluss of Austria or the circumstances of Munich Deal. As *Comintern* didn't manage to discomfit by its mistaken and chaotic progress the Nazi's grab of power,

110 O. GROEHLER, *Sebevražedné spojenectví — německo-sovětská spolupráce 1920–1941*, Praha 1997, p. 82.

111 The World War II showed that the Great Britain deliberately supported the Soviet Union, and not Germany. The evidence is the business agreement from October 1939 which lost its value when it emerged that the Soviet Union exchanged British products for the German weapon stockpile, however, the image of Stalin wasn't damaged in any radical way. ARUMÄE, p. 118.

112 Ibidem, pp. 119–120.

113 LITERA — WANNER, p. 37.

either the West underestimated a danger of aggression when didn't respond to the cancellation of particular articles of the Versailles agreement with a necessary resolution and relied upon to its diversion by a traditional backstage diplomacy. Even if the principle of collective security was evidently the only instrument against the war led according to Hitler's unprecedented rules and means, it was never an easy option. According to the British historian, N. Ferguson, the connection with a Stalin's regime was practically impossible for the British conservatives, likewise the deal with a czarist Russia for the liberals before the World War I.<sup>114</sup> According to I. Kershaw, R. D. Müller or H. Arumäe, all the sides involved in the eruption of war have its share of responsibility, even if Hitler's share was the biggest unambiguously.<sup>115</sup>

What motivated both dictators to the cooperation even at a political stage? Although Hitler was decided for the military attack against Poland, we cannot pass over the fact that despite numerous postponements he would hardly make so fatal step if he didn't secure the alliance with Stalin. According to Suzanne Schattenberg<sup>116</sup> it wasn't a failure of French-British policy but in connection with the pact it could be rather discussed about the momental conformity of two different strategies which agreed in a certain historical moment regardless of their inner policy, ideological principles and fundamentals.<sup>117</sup> A. N. Tupolev, a soviet aero builder, characterized concisely the value of pact when he read the Moscow journal with a published text of the agreement about borders and friendship. He crumpled the news and yelled: "What friendship? What is going on, they already went mad totally?"<sup>118</sup> Hitler proved a political flexibility; he connected shortly with his ideological enemy in order to simplify the way to his future assault. Stalin managed to exploit a maximum from the given international situation thanks to his calculation. According to W. Maser, the vague formulations and other law inadequacies of the document give a clue that both pact partners didn't prepare to keep exactly the letter of documents, it was just a temporary resolution dictated by circumstances which was confirmed later by themselves, not only verbally.<sup>119</sup>

Stalin wanted to avoid a lone conflict with Hitler and at the same time needed a free transit over Polish and Romanian areas. When Soviets suggested a trilateral alliance with Western European countries which would protect not only them but also the neighbouring countries against the Nazi aggression, they were rejected or the

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114 FERGUSON, p. 377.

115 MÜLLER, pp. 343, 398; ARUMÄE, p. 120; I. KERSHAW, *Hitler: 1936–1945: Nemesis*, New York 2000, pp. 224–225.

116 Suzanne Schattenberg (\*1969), German historian and professor at the University of Bremen.

117 S. SCHATTENBERG, *Diplomatie der Diktatoren: Der Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pakt*, in: *Osteuropa*, Bd. 59, Nr. 7–8, 2009, p. 7.

118 See R. C. TUCKER, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above 1928–1941*, New York / London 1990, p. 599.

119 When Ribbentrop said to Stalin after the signing of September agreement that he „is convinced about the fact that now both the Germans and Russians should never cross the weapons“, Stalin had a think about for an instant and then replied: "You are right, it should be like that probably." See MASER, pp. 123, 126.

negotiations were extended disproportionately.<sup>120</sup> According to H. Kissinger, the British politicians enabled unconsciously the Soviet side to acquire more advantageous negotiating position, they provided Stalin an unilateral guarantee without additional costs that will defend the borders of all European countries neighbouring with the Soviet Union excluding the Baltic territory. This enabled Stalin to choose the delaying tactics. He could talk with allies led in Moscow primarily used as an instrument of psychological pressure on Hitler.<sup>121</sup> If Poland is attacked, there will a war conflict occur but it would take place several hundreds of kilometres from Soviet borders.<sup>122</sup> It's also necessary to understand that Stalin was helpful towards all the variants and wanted to decide for this one which would be the most advantageous in a given moment with respect to potential territory gains. Even T. Wolton confirms this indirectly and holds an opinion that when the British-French delegation arrived to Leningrad at the beginning of August 1939 to negotiate the military-political agreement, the Soviet side didn't look for another resolution already and was preparing for cooperation with Germany.<sup>123</sup>

The Nazi regime wasn't much prepared to a war on two fronts. According to N. Ferguson, Hitler relied rather on the infringement of liabilities of Western countries against Poland.<sup>124</sup> If Germany attacked the Soviet Union which would stayed neutral, then a military potential would be rather in favour of Stalin. The Red Army exceeded the number of divisions of ground forces in Germany two and a half, four times as France, Great Britain five times, and the United States eleven.<sup>125</sup> American politician John F. Dulles found as far as fascinating similarity when comparing the ideological basis of the Stalinist dictatorship to a mind base of the Hitler's regime, mainly as regards the aims and even means leading to their achievement. Both systems made efforts to acquire the world supremacy and the instrument with whose it could have been achieved was the "programme of unlimited expansion" which others could "ignore just at their own risk".<sup>126</sup> Just the August pact helped them invaluablely as the means to achievement of the continental majority. Stalin enabled Hitler a territorial expansion, however, he could be aware of that the surest way how to stop the Hitler's intentions, is a threat of encirclement of Germany at two fronts but he didn't calculate that. According to N. Ferguson, the British liabilities towards a Polish territory disallowed such alliance which could discourage Hitler or speed up his defeat.<sup>127</sup>

In my opinion, the German-Soviet pact is a characteristic example of a real-policy applied in practise and thus it's not seldom called the Hitler's "voucher for the war". Paul Schmidt still had a chance to look inside the secret protocol that night and commented its text in words: "*The intentions of both contract sides couldn't be expressed more*

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120 FERGUSON, p. 377.

121 ZUBOV, p. 7.

122 KISSINGER, pp. 342-343.

123 WOLTON, pp. 24-25.

124 FERGUSON, p. 379.

125 ZUBOV, p. 4.

126 See J. L. GADDIS, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947*, New York 1972, p. 320.

127 FERGUSON, p. 377.

*clearly, I realized that I didn't say goodbye to the peace unnecessarily that evening before a signature.*"<sup>128</sup>

Both systems didn't share too many mutual values, rules or regulations, nor did ideology connect them. They tried primarily to ensure more advantageous position and decisions subordinated to that. The Soviet archives indicate that it wasn't an act planned in the long term but rather a momental conformity of interests achieved several days before the deal's ratification. There could be the unreadiness and a certain rate of improvisation when organizing proved by insufficient formal essentials of the paper form of pact as well as by the situations, to a certain extent paradoxical, before and during the Moscow conference at which the non-aggression agreement was signed. The secrecy of the action was purportedly so excellent that neither the Soviet anti-aircraft defence knew about it nor planes destined to Moscow were bombarded over the town of Smolensk.<sup>129</sup> The Moscow airport was garnished with turned-up swastikas borrowed from the Moscow film studio which used them for recording of anti-Nazi films. More consistent information about the progress of negotiation come mainly from German official sources and memories. The non-aggression agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany<sup>130</sup> contains seven articles. Both signatories rejected to use violence in mutual relations and take part at the power groupment bent against one of them, denied help to any third side in possible war action, nevertheless, there was missing a clause about automatic banishment of the contract in case of aggression committed by one of the contract sides. Further, it embeds a duty to consult issues of the common interest and exchange information. The fifth article imposes a duty to resolve all the issues by peaceful means. The agreement's lifetime was prolonged from five to ten years and entered in effect immediately after the signature. At the same time it didn't contain national emblems, government or ministerial seals and shields of no of contract sides.

I am inclining to the opinion that British and French politicians underestimated some key matters. They didn't estimate the real Soviet military force, judged the Stalinism and didn't appreciated the strategical importance of the Soviet Union for Germany in the Central and Eastern Europe. They didn't realize as well that will lose, in case of alliance of both totalitarian systems, an impact in large part of important European space, as well as they missed out the fact that Stalin has more options how to enforce his interests. After the Munich crisis Stalin was afraid of the long-term isolation and needed to contract the military pact which would ensure him the neutrality and territorial gains in the sequence on Hitler's expansive policy.<sup>131</sup> According to N. Ferguson, France and Great Britain still assumed incorrectly that foreign policy of Germany and Soviet Union will be more corresponded with their ideology than pragmatism. The representatives of British diplomacy made a mistake according to his opinion when didn't conduct against Germany more vigorously, didn't estimate

128 P. SCHMIDT, *Paměti Hitlerova tlumočnicka*, Brno 1997, p. 169.

129 This affair was indirectly confessed by V. M. Molotov in the interview with a Russian historian F. Cujev from 4.10.1972; see F. CUJEV, *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics*, Chicago 1993, p. 12.

130 See *ADAP*, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Do. Nr. 228 p. 205; *GK*, Tom II, Nr. 602, pp. 319–321.

131 TUMIS, pp. 122, 125.

its military-economical power and rather retreated in the second half of the thirties.<sup>132</sup> Thus they increased unconsciously the Hitler's chances to win in the long term planned war. Two strong countries decided in a certain moment to prevent a mutual conflict by defining clearly the spheres of influence and divided the controversial territories. Both regimes were interested in Poland. This wouldn't change even if the alliance wasn't signed. Thanks to the absence of suspensive clause, both signatories could attack their neighbours without prohibition by the second side. The first tangible result was the agreement about borders and friendship.<sup>133</sup>

The additional secret protocol<sup>134</sup> specified the spheres of influence in the South-East Europe and Baltic. Stalin used negotiations to make a press on the German partner and achieve as many compromises as possible. Hitler found himself in a time pressure and his starting position was worse objectively. The final version thus much more correspond to the Soviet requirements. In consequence of the August and September pact and autumn expansion, the Soviet Union's border was shifted to the line of four rivers Pisa-Narew-Visla-San and thus exceeded the Curzonov's line per nearly 150 kilometres to west, by which both countries became neighbours.<sup>135</sup> The territorial changes concerned mainly Lithuania which thereby fell into the Soviet sphere of influence. The Lublin province and a part of the Warsaw province fell into Germany.<sup>136</sup> Since that time the Third Reich controlled 48 % of the territory of former Poland instead of 35 % declared by the August agreement. Thus even the area east of Visla bordered by the Bug River as far as the Krylov, further to west over Tomaszów as far as the San River, including the hook around Suwalki and Augostow. The Soviets annexed finally 194,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Polish areas including 12 million of inhabitants of mainly Ukrainian and Belorussian nationality. South-west areas which belonged to Austria-Hungary in the past, for example Lvov-Lemberg, until that time didn't make a part of the Soviet Empire. They acquired the control over sea and aero baselines in Estonia and Latvia at the same time. The territorial balance was active at the side of Soviet Union which gained successively 77,620 km<sup>2</sup> even with Romanian Bessarabia, the Baltic, Karelska isthmus and Finnish sea baselines compared to the territory of 72,866 km<sup>2</sup> falling into the German sphere of influence.<sup>137</sup>

Even if it's not so difficult to trace up the signals calling attention to the agreement's conclusion today, in the eye of then fellows the events antecedent to this act were judged rather more blithely. For example the tragically fatalistic attitude of the Poles shows evidence that they assumed with a marvellous calm that "this pact will

132 FERGUSON, pp. 379–380.

133 The text of German-Soviet agreement about borders and friendship from 28. 9. 1939 and related protocols see in *ADAP: Die Kriegsjahre: 4. September 1939 bis 18. März 1940. Serie D (1937–1945)*, Bd. VIII, Baden-Baden 1961, Dok. Nr. 157–159, 193, pp. 127–129, 162–165.

134 See *ADAP*, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 229, p. 206; *GK*, Tom II, Nr. 603, p. 321.

135 Valentin Falin in German television stated in 1989 that the original demarcation line was equivalent to the Curzonovov's line which was determined in August 1918 as the Eastern border of Poland, thus was correct from the historical point of view. See GORNIG, p. 38.

136 *ADAP*, Ser. D, Bd. VIII, Dok. Nr. 159.

137 GORNIG, p. 29; SANTAMARIA, p. 28; ARUMÄE, p. 119.

not change anything”<sup>138</sup> and fully relied on British-French help.<sup>139</sup> In the European society the persuasion that both systems are so contrary that their reconciliation wouldn't be possible, or it would earlier or later end in a war conflict, hadn't got a minority position.

There were the Germanization and Sovietization of the rest of population proceeded on the divided territories, including the rights' restriction of the local elites. The Sovietization under Chruscov leadership allowed the *Red Army* levy on the local resources. The offer concerning the Baltic and Poland submitted by Hitler could be specified as a very well-calculated step. H. Arumäe supposes that Stalin considered the existence of a sovereign Baltic to be a temporary effect, its implementation into the Soviet Union to be natural and unavoidable from the long-term perspective.<sup>140</sup> The Soviet interest in the mentioned areas was inspired not only by an effort to broaden the communism, but also by particular economical, military-strategical and historical reasons. Especially in the reflection on increasing danger of the attack, it was necessary to shift aside the positions of German armies as west most as possible.

Although the German and Soviet Union's policy were calculative in that moment and their means unforgivable, it was realistic at the very most. If we summarize the immediate results of both political agreements, we will reach the following conclusions. They allowed the Soviet Union to restrict the scope and authority of the Nazi regime in the East European territory whereby minimalized the war conflict temporarily. At the same time ensured that Stalin had an approach to the strategical economical areas on the Western border, not unnecessary even for his defensive. The Soviet leader got a slight time for armament and realization of some military reforms, including the promise of an economical cooperation. Stalin believed that pacts will bring the weakening of a German position. Last but not least they indirectly brought about the war conflict and destruction of the very Poland. V. M. Molotov assessed the significance of political pacts in words: “*My mission was to broaden the borders of our native country. It seems that Stalin and me faced up to this task quite well.*”<sup>141</sup> According to T. Wolton, Stalin was serviceable, reconciliatory and loyal ally since the first days of the pact's existence, on the contrary Hitler was rather reserved in the fulfilment of obligations.<sup>142</sup>

The political alliance provided Germany both a feeling of relative security in the war against Poland and neutrality of the second party, including a guarantee of a series of commodities necessary for the war economy. The defensive alliance of Western powers became inefficient. Hitler got near to the realization of main objectives of the conception of the *New Rule* in Europe. Whether Hitler was motivated by the effort to apply the Nazi ideological plan, or was affected purely by the power-political calculus and pragmatism of international political situation at his decision making, the historians conform that the Nazi leader was willing to risk a war conflict since Munich crisis and subsequent occupation of the rest of Czechoslovak territory. The representatives of British diplomacy were on one hand willing to arrange the talks

138 KERSHAW, p. 206; WATT, p. 466.

139 ADAP, Ser. D, Bd. VII, Dok. Nr. 217, p. 195.

140 ARUMÄE, p. 122.

141 See CUJEV, p. 8.

142 WOLTON, p. 25.

about German requirements, on the other hand they didn't accept other corrections. At the same time they didn't accept the Soviet efforts to revision of Polish borders justified by ensuring of security. Only Hitler could offer a similar alliance to Stalin.

Although their motives were different, both Germany and Soviet Union considered the pacts as the means for reaching the long-term intentions. Both countries renewed their economical cooperation<sup>143</sup> and strengthened the positions in the international situation that is wasn't possible to reach any deal on the Europe continent without them in the future.

## CONCLUSION

Stalin had several possibilities of the foreign-political orientation in the second half of the thirties of the Twentieth Century. Firstly to cooperate with the Great Britain and France. Secondly, he could assert the isolationistic policy. Thirdly, to intensify the economical-political relations with the Third Reich, which were very limited in that time. The Soviet leadership asserted all three variants and parallel negotiations were proceeded in the last two pre-war years. The Soviet respectable decision about cooperation with Germany was sudden, unplanned in the long run and caused probably by a series of partial events and circumstances from July and beginning of August 1939. The Soviet archives imply that Kremlin leadership definitely decided for the political deal with Berlin after the failure of negotiations with France and Great Britain roughly in the half of August 1939 at the latest. Unreadiness and a certain rate of improvisation could be evidenced by insufficient formal essentials of the physical form of the pact and even paradoxical situations before the performance and even during the Moscow conference at which the Non-aggression agreement was signed. I am tending to the opinion that British and French politicians underestimated some key circumstances. They didn't estimate the real military power of *Red Army*, judged the Stalinism and under valuated the strategical significance of the Soviet Union for Germany in the Central and East Europe. They didn't realize as well that in case of the alliance of both totalitarian regimes, they will lose the influence in a large part of important European area. They missed out the fact that Stalin has more options how to enforce his aims. After the Munich crisis Stalin was afraid of isolation and needed to make a contract which would ensure him neutrality as well as territory gains in the sequence of Hitler's expansive policy. At the same time, the Nazi regime wasn't prepared for the war at two fronts. Further, France and Great Britain assumed wrong that the foreign policy of Germany and Soviet Union will correspond more with their ideology rather than pragmatism.

In my opinion, the German-Soviet pact was a characteristic example of a real-policy applied in practice. It was a calculated deal with exact objectives when both

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143 About the importance and character of the renewed economical cooperation see: K. FABIANKOVÁ — T. KASHAPOV, *Torgovlja i ekonomičeskoje sotrudničestvo Germanii i SSSR v period s 1939 po 1941 gg.*, in: Nacionalnaja bezopasnost', Vol. 19, No. 2, 2012, pp. 111–123; K. FABIANKOVÁ, *Hospodářská spolupráce totalitních režimů na příkladu Německa a Sovětského svazu v letech 1939–1941*, in: Dvacáté století — The Twentieth Century, No. 2, 2014, pp. 54–71.



systems outshone the ideological differences by common national interests which among others consisted in the division of Poland.

The political alliance provided Germany both a feeling of relative security in the war against Poland and neutrality of the second party, including the guarantee of a series of commodities necessary for the war economy. The defensive alliance of Western powers became inefficient. The August and September pacts enabled the Soviet Union to restrict the scope and authority of the Nazi regime in the East European territory by which minimalized the war threat temporarily. They at the same time ensured that Stalin had an approach to strategical economical areas at the Western border, not unnecessary even for his defensive. The Soviet leader achieved the realization of its goals, the capitalist States entered the war, waited to run out and be willing to accept its conditions. He acquired a slight time for the armament and realization of some military reforms, including the promise of the economical cooperation. The economical association had a large significance even for the Nazi economy in relation to a longer persistence of war conflict and military aid at the destruction of the British Empire. Hitler drafted a series of power-political decisions in which the Soviet Union played the central role surprisingly, and because he also assumed that at the given economical situation the Soviet import of mineral resources and foodstuff is irreplaceable.

#### **SEARCH FOR PARTNERSHIP: GERMAN-SOVIET POLITICAL RELATIONS ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

##### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the essay is to analyse the most important circumstances which could affected the final Stalin's decision leading to the ratification of Soviet-German political relations at the end of the thirties. Among others to verify the affirmation that it was a calculated deal with exact objectives in the case of Ribbentrop-Molotov's Pact. The German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact of August 23rd, 1939 was a calculated accord with precise objectives when in both systems common national interests, which consisted also in the partition of Poland, overshadowed their ideological differences. This paper outlines the circumstances of the negotiations, the main actors, and motives leading to the creation of the agreement. A part of the research is the analysis of importance and direct consequences of the German-Soviet Pact. The political alliance provided Germany both a feeling of relative security in the war against Poland and neutrality of the second party, including the guarantee of a series of commodities necessary for the war economy. The defensive alliance of Western powers became inefficient. The August and September pacts enabled the Soviet Union to restrict the scope and authority of the Nazi regime in the East European territory by which minimalized the war threat temporarily. They at the same time ensured that Stalin had an approach to strategical economical areas at the Western border, not unnecessary even for his defensive.

##### **KEYWORDS**

Hitler; Germany; Soviet Union; Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact; Political Relations; August 1939

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