

# Transformation of Communist Media Content and Public Space According to the Discourse ‘39Pact: Exiting the “Labyrinth” as an Act of Communication

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**Summary.** This text is about one of the longest processes of political communication, which, decades on, influences politicians of various generations of the Central, Eastern and Western Europe, contents of media and self-awareness of the audience. The process isn't over yet, this is obvious not only from the document adopted by the EP but also from an international political rhetoric. Analysis of consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on 1939 in media (D'39Pact) and related national and international decisions is the axis of information conflict between the East and the West concerning thousands of fates. Those thousands of people had and still have different historical narratives – some people justified the Pact and implemented it, others were fighting for the elimination of its consequences, yet others fell victims to it, with a death toll estimated in the millions. But not everybody's narratives are based on true arguments.

Let's look at the way the system of propaganda collapsed and the public opinion was transformed in countries of Central and Eastern Europe in 1988-1989. Moving from a lie to (hopefully) the historical truth. Review of consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was the main axis of such transformation (protection of environmental and cultural valuables, choice of one's viewpoint, legislative requirements and other rights were contextual aspects of this axis). During this period in the previously mentioned region the control of public space was on the decline.

This view will be based on a single thematic discourse: the provision of consequences of the 1939 Treaty of Non-aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and criticism in communist model media of Lithuania and neighbouring countries. It may be called D'39Pact.

D'39Pact in general has several narratives (it may also be seen from the EP Resolution), but taking into consideration the interpretation of Jurgen Habermas's Communicative Action, the analysis of transformation of 1988-1989 two of them would suffice, one of which is that of the authorities of the USSR and the other one – that of its opponents. Let's call opponents USSR dissidents, protestors, underground press (samizdat) and press of public movements which was published legally.

Narrative of the USSR authorities: the treaty was the inevitable and no annexes (secret protocols) exist.

Narrative of the opponents: based on secret protocols of the treaty, the USSR and Nazi Germany divided the countries and destroyed their political, military, cultural elite and finally – their population of various social layers.

Medias, as the main participant of the public space, most clearly disclose the collision of such narratives and transformation in D'39Pact. The purpose of the article is to discuss the circumstances of transformation of

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MMPT from the historical perspective and of the public space and come across the factors, which influenced the strongest role of MMPT interpretative accomplishments. Considering the way out of the “labyrinth” regarding the D’39 Pact, we see some similarities with the situation that now exists in Russia.

**Keywords:** public space, mass media and propaganda tools (MMPT), discourse of 23 August 1939 (D’39Pact), historical narrative, act of communication, the truth, resolution, political communication.

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## Introduction

In a Moscow library a person finds a book published almost 30 years ago and reads in surprise:

– I have to tell you a secret that I was leading a very robust course. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia came to us in 1939 and I told him “you will not return back until you sign the accession deal with us”. The Minister of War came from Estonia (I can’t remember his name, he was popular), and we told the same thing to him. We had to take such extreme steps. – Such kind of declaration on the annexation of the Baltic States and the division of Poland was made by a former Commissioner of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov in 1971<sup>1</sup>. However, the interview was published only on the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

That reader must have been confused: the official Russian Federation, the transferee of rights of the USSR, is in denial that the USSR have used blackmail and occupied neighbouring countries. This is the position maintained by the nationalised Russian media, which is similar to that of the Soviet propaganda period: on the eve of World War II and during the war critics of the USSR as an aggressor is not tolerated in the controlled public space. Notwithstanding the fact that in the end of 1989 in the Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR a resolution was adopted on the political and legal assessment of the 1939 Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty: “The Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR condemns the fact of signing the secret protocol on 23 August 1939 as well as other secret agreements made with Germany. The Congress declares the secret protocols legally unjustified and invalid from the moment of signing”<sup>2</sup>. A reader might not know about this Resolution of the Soviet parliament as the authorities of Russia and officials representing its position consider the document as a non-binding declaration and identify three subjects – Stalin, the existing government and the Russian nation<sup>3</sup>.

Another person in the European Parliament (EP), Strasbourg gets to read memoirs of Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda of the Reich: “23-03-1939. Draft notice is received

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<sup>1</sup> Чуев, Феликс. Сто сорок бесед с Молотовым. М., Терра, 1991. (Rus.: One hundred and forty conversations with Molotov. Chuev Diary, 1991; an interview with Molotov 1969 – 1986. Published: Moscow, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR, 24 December 1989. *Pravda*, 28 December 1989.

<sup>3</sup> “It becomes trendy to disclose Stalin and the Soviet Union as it conceals urgings: Russian people have to repent, confess their guilt and, according to some states, have to compensate for the material damage. One cannot ignore such thoughts,” says Sergey Ivanov, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Russian military-historical society (Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on the Issues of Environmental Activities). In: «Это не стговор двух диктаторов»: оправдан ли пакт о ненападении. Пакт о ненападении между СССР и Германией был оправдан, считает Сергей Иванов. *Gazeta.ru*, 04-07-2019.

from Kaunas. Completely inappropriate. Still lacks final decision. Meanwhile Kaunas announces his own version of the notice and afterwards ministers go to sleep. Well, enough of kindness. Our envoy is authorised to pull them out of their beds and put a gun to their heads. Either – or. Those little deceivers of Versailles must now return what they have plundered. Otherwise it won't be good! At three a.m. a message is received that everything remains in force. A notice comes in: Lithuania gives up on the Memel<sup>4</sup> Region”<sup>5</sup>.

Such person enters the hall – he will have to vote on the draft EU Resolution, which states that after 80 years the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on 23 August 1939, still has an issue of unsolvable consequences: the world shares different views towards circumstances of the start of World War II and responsibility for division of Europe. Even though the European Parliament adopts a Resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe<sup>6</sup>, no one knows how that member of the European Parliament has voted<sup>7</sup>. He/she might not have been interested in V. Molotov's confession that the government of the USSR was engaged in blackmailing other nations, because the person has not read anything about it, however, he/she was well aware of the fact that, for example, the Nazi Reich occupied France and exterminated its residents<sup>8</sup>. But maybe it is that member of the Parliament, who while trying to explain the motives of his/her voting has been interrupted, – which is not an important issue of communication, as the Resolution is still adopted and the document does not require additional historical data?<sup>9</sup>

However, if the member of the European Parliament notes that the “Masters of *dezinformatsiya*” have since the very start of World War II convinced the world that the USSR have led a peaceful mission in Poland, and afterwards in the Baltic States and Finland,

<sup>4</sup> Klaipėda.

<sup>5</sup> Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. K. G. Saur Verlag, München 1987, 1997 – 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe. 2019/2819(RSP).

<sup>7</sup> “For” 535, “against” 66, 52 abstentions (total number of votes: 653). In: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2019-0098\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2019-0098_EN.html)

<sup>8</sup> “Mr President, this one-sided resolution does not, in any case, honour the memory of the victims of totalitarianism. First of all, it is clear that the memory of the last world conflict is today diverted to political ends, for want of the European Union to be able to establish its legitimacy on any popular support. (...)The denial of history that transpires at every line of this text will never erase the blood of the 20 million or so Russians sacrificed for Europe to live. Thus, this resolution is part of the same rewritings of history that it claims to denounce as specific to dictatorial regimes, an observation that challenges us as to the nature of this Union whose authoritarian drift becomes more and more evident”. Dominique Bilde (ID). In: Explanations of Votes: 8.2. Importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-09-19-ITM-008-02\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-09-19-ITM-008-02_EN.html)

<sup>9</sup> “Mr President, 80 years ago, half a million Red Army troops backed by 5 000 tanks, 2 000 combat aircraft, smashed their way into Poland in a surprise attack. Masters of *dezinformatsiya*, they had first spread the story that they were coming to help their Slavic Brothers against the Nazis, but their intentions soon became clear. When the Nazi and Soviet armies met at Brest-Litovsk, they staged a joint parade. The two generals Guderian and Krivoshein had a slap-up lunch at which the Soviets invited the German journalists to join them in Moscow after the victory over capitalist Albion. The amnesia, the selective amnesia, that parts of the modern Left have about the Nazi—Soviet pact, is an extraordinary monument to the follies of human nature. We keep being told that the Red Army liberated us, that the Western theatre was just a sideshow, that it was really thanks to Stalin that fascism was defeated. Can we really have forgotten that for fully a third of the conflict they were on the same side? The only real victors here were the Left who (--)”: (The President cut off the speaker). Daniel Hannan (ECR). In: Explanations of Votes: 8.2. Importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-09-19-ITM-008-02\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-09-19-ITM-008-02_EN.html)

this means that the Stalinistic political communication was so effective that we still feel the consequences.

Moreover, may we guess what does a person in Moscow do with that book on Molotov's interview?

Most probably he pushes the book back on to the shelf, as the public discussion on the "secret" of the former Commissioner of the USSR concerning the "robust course" in 1939 would contradict the official Russian historical propaganda narrative. The fear of that person is an issue of Russia's political communication when the audience have to follow government-constructed historical politics transferred via media. He finds himself inside an Umberto Eco's "Labyrinth" as he is not granted a right to find what may be achieved and known. I take a free approach to interpreting U. Eco's thought<sup>10</sup>: it is not necessary for a person inside a labyrinth to find something new, but he needs the exact something that shows the connection between phenomena and provides basic grounds for a dialogue. A labyrinth is meant not for a search of a symbol, but for a reason – according to "The Name of the Rose". The official Russia seeks to demonstrate its strength by placing historical responsibility for World War II and division of Europe on other countries (preface of the above mentioned EP document includes 13 motives for it to be adopted also including the fact that contemporary Russia "is currently promoting the view that Poland, the Baltic States and the West are the true instigators of WWII"<sup>11</sup>).

The fear of acknowledgement of the deal is obvious. It is witnessed by reaction of the official Russia to the adoption of the EP Resolution when the blame is imputed to the Western countries<sup>12</sup>. Acknowledgement that authorities of the USSR have divided Europe might not only bring adjustments to history schoolbooks, but also cause a new discussion on historical responsibility not only for persecution, annihilation, deportation of population of other countries (not only politicians – leaders of the occupied countries) but also for historical factors being denied once again or being falsely interpreted, which is much like the position exercised by the USSR until 1989. Back then, having secret protocols of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in its archives, authorities were in denial that it (the proof

<sup>10</sup> Eco Umberto. From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation.

<sup>11</sup> "Whereas despite the fact that on 24 December 1989 the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR condemned the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in addition to other agreements made with Nazi Germany, the Russian authorities denied responsibility for this agreement and its consequences in August 2019 and are currently promoting the view that Poland, the Baltic States and the West are the true instigators of WWII". This document highlights Wiktor Pilecki, a participant in the Polish resistance, Auschwitz political prisoner.

<sup>12</sup> "This resolution is nothing less than a package of revisionist claims. The European Parliament has made yet another outrageous attempt to place an equal sign between Nazi Germany, an aggressor country, and the Soviet Union, whose peoples paid an excessively high price for the liberation of Europe from fascism. The European Parliament's claim that WWII began following the signing of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between the Soviet Union and Germany on August 23, 1939, has no connection to historical facts. At the same time, the resolution does not mention the Western countries' policy of appeasing the aggressor in a bid to redirect Hitler's plans of invasion from the West to the East, or the culmination of these operations, the Munich Betrayal of 1938. Its signatories threw a sovereign state, Czechoslovakia, to the Nazi wolves." In: Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova's answer to a RIA Novosti question regarding the adoption of the European Parliament resolution on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, 1872-20-09-2019. Mid.ru: [http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3793247?p\\_p\\_id=101\\_INSTANCE\\_cKNonkJE02Bw&\\_101\\_INSTANCE\\_cKNonkJE02Bw\\_languageId=en\\_GB](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3793247?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB)

of international crime) exists anywhere. Such discussion bearing the ability to dissociate oneself from crimes on the one hand means a shift in social consciousness, liberation from the framework of the false narrative.

On the other hand, it would mean political crisis in Russia itself. The myth of strength and honour would be destroyed, which is the ideological and value background of the existing regime. First off, Russian media would have to change its content and awaken the audience, which would replace the political regime. However, Russia would leave the "labyrinth".

Or maybe it's a misleading hypothesis?

It must be reminded that in the whole USSR, also in its territorial units (hence, in the Baltic States occupied in 1940), called "republics", also in every country of the Warsaw Pact the communist media model was constructed in accordance to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) political propaganda and agitation structure. The system had the same name in every region: [system of mass media and propaganda tools (MMPT)], which included national, regional, local and departmental information channels, both universal and specialised. Thus the subject of the Pact, showing transformation of the discourse in its contents is the subject of this study.

The scope of the above mentioned transformation included three stages of media content transformation:

- Denial of a historical narrative unacceptable to the authorities;
- An attempt to adapt (interpret) the historical truth according to the position of the leaders of CPSU (in other words, to merge "own" narrative with the "truth" of the opponents);
- Substitution of the historical narrative imposed by the CPSU with a completely new one.

All of them may be defined as exiting the "labyrinth". The text indicates six conflicts of communication, which are revealed during those stages.

During such stages of transformation the communist model media has undergone the transformation of the contents and the propaganda system. Transformation of the structural propaganda system shows action of communication while transition of media philosophy of the same system: it may not be stated unambiguously that one kind of newspaper and journalist was substituted with the other newspaper and journalist. First off, they transformed their contents, then the status and relation to the communist authorities depending on the interest of the audiences.

Of course, the breaking point of the USSR propaganda system (MMPT) has been analysed by media researcher Brian McNair: having lived in Moscow during the period of the USSR announced Glasnost politics he has observed modifications of the communist media, which, in his opinion, was influenced by an attempt of USSR authorities and media to conceal the danger of contamination caused by Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant explosion<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> McNair, Brian . Glasnost, perestroika and the soviet media. Routledge, 1991.

Having discussed the consequences of the disaster with CPSU leadership among other conclusions Michail Gorbachev, the Secretary General of CPSU, announced that a straight-forward cooperation with the people should be maintained<sup>14</sup>. However, the media of that period was still restrained in writing on CPSU mistakes or, what is more, responsibility, which may be seen from the following remark of M. Gorbachev: “Everything must be said to general secretaries in Budapest (i.e., the Meeting of communist parties’ leaders of the Warsaw Pact). And it should not look like facts disclosed in our newspapers. They are building nuclear power plants with our help, according to our projects. And have a look what kind of signal that is!”<sup>15</sup>.

The informational context of the USSR period contained two historical concepts – “Perestroika” and “Glasnost”<sup>16</sup>. They stand for political declarations of the USSR, which were preconditions for change in the USSR’s economic relation and public discussion on its development issues. However, the declarations did not change the viewpoint of neither the USSR authorities nor the authorities of other countries of the Warsaw Pact<sup>17</sup> what concerns responsibility of the communist parties for historical mistakes and criminal offenses. Inside CPSU the USSR denied any discussion on the subject.

<sup>14</sup> From the meeting with Secretary General of SUCP CC 1986-04-29: “(...) Fifth. Work with people must be based on fair and balanced play. Wider information must be broadcasted via local radio. Sixth. Preparation of a document for local radio.” In: В Политбюро ЦК КПСС. Протоколы заседаний Политбюро ЦК КПСС, посвященных Чернобыльской трагедии, 1986.

<sup>15</sup> From the meeting of political bureau of 1986-06-05. *Source.*: В Политбюро ЦК КПСС... P.44.

<sup>16</sup> *Publicity – Glasnost* is based on historical tradition of Russia. The need of publicity was declared by the CPSU leadership at the XXVII Congress of the party on 25 February–6 March 1986: “The principal issue for us is the development of publicity”, M. Gorbachev. Emperor Alexander II used the term *Glasnost* in Russian history for the purpose of decreasing secrets concerning judicial practice and for narrowing censorship of the media. Even later in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the government of the Russian Emperor Nicholas has repealed some bans concerning public information, among which was the prohibition to publish in Lithuanian language in Latin characters imposed in 1864. In general, more such prohibitions were imposed to different nation of the Empire at that time: for example, Piotr Valujev, the Minister of the Interior has banned the publishing of scientific, teaching and religious publications in Ukrainian in 1863, which the editor of newspaper *Moskovskije Vedomosti* (orig. *Московскія Вѣдомости*) and representative of the government (under a title of an adviser, even though he was not a public officer), called the dialect of Little Russia and criticised Ukrainian cultural movement stating that the people were tools for the Poles. Theatre shows in Ukrainian and Jewish were banned. And in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the declaration of this particular so-called publicity policy was predetermined by regional peculiarities, which were not “deleted” in the USSR itself and in the countries of the Warsaw Pact. *Glasnost* meeting was held in 1965 in Moscow’s Pushkin Square and was suppressed by KGB officials.

<sup>17</sup> For example, in February 1987 Jerzy Urban, a spokesperson of the Poland’s communist government of 1981–1989 (subsequently an founder and editor-in-chief of anti-clerical tabloid *Nie*) stated during his visit in London that “it is not possible neither to have Soviet conceptions nor to copy Soviet decisions”. This is associated to *Perestroika* declared by CUSP. Reforms in communist Poland were purportedly predetermined by “long-term discussions inside Poland and Poland’s internal experiences”, however, the reforms are presented as linked between Poland and the USSR. The official states that sanctions of the Western countries targeted at Poland, which was under a military state, purportedly have not intensified the opposition and have not weakened the authorities of Poland; and an opinion that the government of Poland might fulfil the requirements of Western countries due to its aspirations to have modern technologies and support, “is incorrect”. In: Konferencja Prasowa Jerzego Urbana w Londynie. *Dziennik Polski*, 1987-II-18. No 41. The representative of the communist Poland is one of those who declared military status in the country in 1981 for the purpose of suppressing the opposition, and in the beginning of *perestroika* in the USSR in 1985–1987 Polish security forces and militia officials launched a mass operation of arresting and registration of homosexuals “Hiacynt” so they could expand a list of secret collaborators by blackmailing them.

Thus, the different conception of the declared principle of Glasnost must be highlighted: "our newspapers", i.e. MMPT system had no right to publish the news until pressure from their audience was felt. I think, the actual breaking point of MMPT started a bit later – considering its and its owner's (CPSU) relation to the historical truth, i.e. to responsibility for past political decisions. And the fear of such political responsibility, in the encounter to D'39Pact, made CPSU political bureau consider an idea of economic independence of the Baltic States<sup>18</sup>.

Interpretation of Glasnost is reflected in the aspect of such issues in 1987 when CPSU's top leadership decided to solemnly celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of October 1917 revolution, called the Great October Socialist Revolution, as it would then have a historical chance to acknowledge Stalinistic offences and declare responsibility of CPSU. However, leadership of the CPSU has hardly moved anywhere near to an unbiased assessment apart from the condemnation of the cult of Stalin in the congress of the CPSU on 25 February 1956, as it only reprehended Stalinist repressions. Ultimately, during the solemn celebration M. Gorbachev states: "Today the West actively analyses the situation on the eve of [WWII]. The truth is being mixed with half-truth. Special fierce comes from those unsatisfied with the outcomes of the World War II, which are political, territorial and social, those who keep thinking how to fix them. That's why they are interested in inverting the historical truth upside down, smoothing out causative and consequential ties, and faking the chronology. In this case they use any possible lie seeking to shift the blame on to the Soviet Union for World War II, which was purportedly caused by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of Non-aggression"<sup>19</sup>. In 2019, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, speaks similarly about the cause of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact: he calls the above-mentioned European Parliament resolution a "shameless lie" speaking to officials organizing festivities for the 75th anniversary of the II WW's end<sup>20</sup>. At the unformal meeting of the leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): "Yes, we know who Stalin is, yes, we gave him our assessments. But I think that the fact remains that it was fascist Germany that attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, and the Soviet Union on June 22"<sup>21</sup>. Because: "When it comes to the Soviet Union, it is about us"<sup>22</sup>. Putin reads a message to CIS leaders according to archival documents, but does not mention Molotov's confession of how the USSR executed the D'39 Pact.

This may be defined as adjusted demagogy of the Soviet historiography and propaganda – an invitation to stay in the "labyrinth". Such categorical statement shows that a

<sup>18</sup> On 27 November 1989 the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union SSRS has adopted the law No 832-I On Economic Independence of Lithuanian SSR, Latvian SSR and Estonian SSR: Закон СССР «Об экономической самостоятельности Литовской ССР, Латвийской ССР и Эстонской ССР».

<sup>19</sup> October and "perestroika": the revolution continues. „Statement in the joined meeting of CPSU central committee, Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union and Supreme Soviet of the Russian SFSR, called for celebration of 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution at the Kremlin congress palace” 2 November 1987.

<sup>20</sup> Putin condemns EU stance on Nazi-Soviet WWII pact as ‚shameless lie’. In: Dpa-international.com, December 11, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> According to: Неформальный саммит СНГ. В Санкт-Петербурге состоялась неформальная встреча глав государств СНГ. In: Kremlin.ru, December 19, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

“communicative action” (according to J. Habermas) is simply not possible. While, pursuant to the same theory of the act of communication, the social environment (lifeworld) loses power in everyday communicative practice,<sup>23</sup> when actors seeking consensus only follow interpretative accomplishments of their own. Act of communication predetermined by open speaking in order to achieve a certain agreement, requires truthful, argument-based knowledge. It means that while making an act of communication the speech has to transform if we seek that social changes would come without an act of violence. The media also has to transform the language in order to reach the audience in the increasing competition of opinions. Namely on the issue of D’39Pact. When the language transforms it is a sign that public space loses the control of the authorities.

### According to an unacceptable historical narrative

August 23, 1987, Sunday, demonstrations are being held in Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn, attended by thousands of people demanding a solution to the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. For example, in Vilnius, participants of the gathering at the monument of Adam Mickiewicz demand the withdrawal of the USSR occupational army from Lithuania. The event is filmed by a channel of MMPT system – governmental television channel<sup>24</sup>, shortly called *Lietuvos TV* (Lithuanian TV). Until then such or the like actions could not be generally imagined on the state television. Both journalists, who were carrying out an assignment to misrepresent the contents of the event (as it is obvious from the remaining material) act as investigators among the gathered, they demand explanation of the participants on how they have come across the secret protocols of the Pact<sup>25</sup>. There are also foreign journalists in the demonstration – for the first time ever the USSR government allows western media to enter Lithuania and to take part in the event, which is not acceptable to the authorities: Ann Cooper, *National Public Radio* Manager of Moscow office interviews participants of the demonstration. On August 24, the front page of the *New York Times* includes a note that around 500 people participated in the demonstration in Vilnius: “Participants in the demonstration in Vilnius said they were disappointed by the size of the crowd. They said people stayed away because of fear of the authorities and the distraction of special entertainment events staged by the local government today to divert attention from the demonstration”<sup>26</sup>.

Meanwhile in Riga militia prevents demonstrators, who were invited by a group of dissidents named *Helsinki-86*, from laying flowers at the monument of freedom. According to various sources, the number of participants ranges between five and ten thousand people – from the remaining record<sup>27</sup> it may be called the most massive event in com-

<sup>23</sup> Habermas, J. *Theory of Communicative Action 2*. Beacon Press, 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Ofic.: “Radio and television committee of the Lithuanian SSR under the Council of Ministers of Lithuanian SSR”.

<sup>25</sup> Gathering at the monument of Adam Mickiewicz in Vilnius (1987). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-D0M3PDaM>

<sup>26</sup> Keller Bill. Lithuanians Rally for Stalin victims. In: *NYT*, Aug.24,1987.

<sup>27</sup> Filmed by Rait Valter. In: [historia.lv/video/1987g-23-augusts-riga](http://historia.lv/video/1987g-23-augusts-riga)



parison to Vilnius and Tallinn, where people were invited by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact publishing group in Estonia, established a week before ("Molotov-Ribbentropi Pakti Avalikustamise Eesti Grupp": MRP-AEG); however, the permit granted to gather in the city hall was repealed and the demonstrators had to gather in a different place, participants carrying posters of the hammer and sickle, which were shown as being equal to the Nazi cross of swastika came to the *Hirvepark*.

The event in Vilnius, as well as demonstrations in Riga and Tallinn, show the strategic goal of the communication – to remind that the D'39Pact is a topical USSR's internal and foreign issue. This reveals a threefold conflict of communication, when during the first stage **the authorities having in control the public space keep denying the unacceptable historical narrative of D'39Pact:**

- 1) MMPT in the Baltic Region and in Poland keep criticising the idea of gathering and slanders the participants notwithstanding the publicity policy, which was officially declared by the top occupant authorities in 1986. Foreign radio stations<sup>28</sup> comprehensively present organisers of the event and political support granted to them by the USA. For example, the component of Vilnius CPSU – Central Committee of Lithuanian Communist Party, officially orders the media to reprehend the so-called event of "extremists", both before and after the events. Vocabulary typical of MMPT might be illustrated by an article of editor-in-chief of weekly newspaper *Gimtasīs Kraštas*<sup>29</sup>, which back then was a popular reading in Lithuania: "Bashing of bourgeois nationalists on 23 August was thus understood in all Lithuania – it was a bashing, a provocation. [...] August 23 of this year will neither become an important date, nor a milestone of change. It is just another signal marking the amount of strength given to socialism in our Republic, the depth of roots it has in the nation"<sup>30</sup>. He highlights the organisational role of Western radio stations: "synchronicity" – synchronised in capitals of three Soviet Baltic republics as visited by foreign journalists. These are the very same "voices" and their advocates who previously urged to fight against the Soviet authority, not join the "kolkhoz". Weren't they responsible for the death of a

<sup>28</sup> Only in 1986 in the USSR the suppression of some foreign radio stations was revoked, and the complete revocation of blocking of the signal of Western radio stations was implemented in November 1999. In other countries of the Warsaw Pact the authorities selectively revoked such blocking. In 1987 a representative of communist Poland government during his lecture in London defines the Radio Free Europe as "violating international law and holding on to ambitions of making up political facts of Poland", therefore, it purportedly have to remain blocked (In: Polska znów jest krajem ustabilizowanym. Dziennik Polski, 1987. No 42). "The leading radio station in Lithuania was the *Voice of America*. It was popular for many years. LSSR KGB analysing the influence of this radio station noted in 1974 that radio shows of the *Voice of America* were extremely popular among young people and intellectuals and that they let them form "nationalist views and separatist moods, falsely explain issues of national politics of CPSU, realisation of democracy and freedom, causes overly criticism and nihilism". In: Bagušauskas, Juozapas Romualdas. Shows of foreign radio stations in the nations' fight for freedom during the years of the Soviet regime. Genocid.lt <http://genocid.lt/Leidyba/10/juozapas.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Soviet newspaper for Lithuanian diasporas in the Western world, which became extremely popular in 1986 after publishing an article on traditions of the dinner of the Christmas Eve, which was unexpected in an aggressive atheistic system of propaganda and evidenced perestroika.

<sup>30</sup> Čekuolis, Algimantas. *Gimtasīs kraštas*, 1987. No 37.

large number of Lithuanians that died on “both sides of the woods” back then? Those “voices” didn’t then care much of Lithuania, our people, neither do they now. They care of their own interests, their own global politics”.

The “both sides of the woods” mentioned by the author is a reflection of the “class struggle” theory, which the USSR tried to present as a “civil war” after World War II, when it was the armed resistance to sovietisation of the Baltic States and Poland. And the author points the finger at the designers of the demonstration – those based in America, the same people who prevents the communist authorities of Poland from succeeding<sup>31</sup>. “Who are they”?

On 18 August 1987 twenty USA Senators sign a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the USSR’s CC reminding of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, according to which the Baltic States became part of the Soviet influence zone in 1940. Copies of the letter are also addressed to First Secretaries of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian communist parties (units of CPSU) so nobody could deny knowing that governors of regions knew all the details of the statement.

Expressing deep concern “on the suppression of discussions on the most important events in the history of the Baltic states and the free word” senators state “they have noticed a will of M. Gorbachev” to manage the USSR’s past facts with integrity, “especially in relations with Poland”, therefore they expect such view would be expanded to historical past of these countries too. Senators express their hope that peaceful ceremonies, like the one in Riga held on 14 June, will be allowed in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn on 23 August, and the organisers – dissidents Antanas Terleckas, Vytautas Bogušis, Petras Cidzikas, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Tiit Madisson – “will not experience any negative consequences”<sup>32</sup>. The senators offer to publish the annex to the agreement between the Nazis and the Soviets – secret protocols. The author of the text who criticised the gathering is referring to the interfering of the USA. The author himself is one of most adept opportunists – in a modern-day Lithuania he is a well-known figure with a 30-year experience as a publicist and presenter of an independent Lithuanian public television (which operates instead of the above mentioned Television and Radio Committee of LSSR)<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> “Is it a movement that was purportedly revived in the Baltic States? The bureaucracy is not ingenious. It is the very same *Black ribbon day*, which is sought to be commemorated in North America by the fantastic conservatories since 1986, and which they wish they could transfer on to us too. It belongs to the Baltics as much as Disneyland does. The same structures that have recently blown out Solidarność are going for it. They have confused brotherly Poland’s economy and the whole life that it most probably will need a decade to get it back together (...). Maybe President Reagan is keen on accelerating the process of transforming Poland?” He highlights the organisational role of the Western radio stations: “synchronicity” – synchronised in capitals of three soviet Baltic republics as visited by foreign journalists. These are the very same “voices” and their advocates who previously urged to fight against the Soviet authority, not join the “kolkhoz”. Was it too little Lithuanians that died in both sides of the woods because of them back then? It was this much that “Voices” then cared of Lithuania, our people, as much as they do now. They care of their own interests, their own global politics”. “Both” sides of the woods mentioned by the author is a reflection of the “class struggle” theory, which the USSR tried to present as a “civil war” after World War II, when it was the armed resistance to sovietisation of the Baltic States and Poland. Mentioned source.

<sup>32</sup> In: A letter from United States senators to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Mikhail Gorbachev on August 18, 1987.

<sup>33</sup> Greeting of the leader of the country: “People gathered today in the studio and around TV sets and they are

The media of the neighbouring countries, parties of the Warsaw Pact, was in solidarity, staged according to the standard of MMTP. A heading of Poland's regional communist daily newspaper, published in Krakow, announced an "attempt" to organise an *anti-Soviet* demonstration in Vilnius.<sup>34</sup> This extensive message (as it is characteristic of the TASS's propaganda style) is linking the demonstration to the USA's Central Intelligence Agency. It is full of words, which not only bring doubt to the meaning of the event, but also defame it by comparing the participants to criminals of the WWII knowing that a reader having no access to archives and not knowing the people described will not be able to deny such disinformation<sup>35</sup>. However, the actual organisers – members of the Lithuanian Liberty League A. Terleckas, V. Bogušis, dissident P. Cidzikas (signatory to the Baltic Appeal of 1979), secret Catholic activist N. Sadūnaitė, were not mentioned in the TASS news.

Poland's press agency PAP<sup>36</sup> in Moscow announces that on Sunday a meeting took place in "Estonia's capital Tallinn" inspired by radio stations *the Voice of America*, *Free Europe* and *Svoboda (Freedom)*, also by a small group of people who have been previously

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happy to owe you their world experience, joy of life and curiosity. The number of such debtors makes you rich and undoubtedly happy. Many generations of Lithuanians have explored and still explore the world with your edited newspaper *Gimtasīs Kraštas*, television shows and books. Phileas Fogg, a character of Jules Verne, made a wager that he can circumnavigate the world in 80 days. Your wager is already on for 80 years and we are happy that we can travel besides you (...). President Dalia Grybauskaitė. President's press release. 10.11.2011.

<sup>34</sup> "Agency TASS has published information on a group of extremists, urged by Western radio stations, who have attempted to organise an anti-Soviet demonstration in the capital of Lithuania Vilnius on Sunday in aspiration to defame a decision made by the Lithuanian people to restore soviet regime in the country and access the USSR. Regardless of constantly transmitted instructions of foreign radio stations concerning the time and place of the gathering at the monument of Adam Mickiewicz, only 250-300 people gathered there, continues TASS. Not few accidental passers-by joined them as the place selected for the provocation was a busy tourist attraction of the old-town. Hopes of churchgoers joining the organisers faded as they were then taking part in the mass at the Church of St. Anne. Sunday mass was not interrupted. (...) No incidents were registered during the meeting. Foreign reporters participated. In the course of speeches an attempt was made to vindicate war criminals that have collaborated with German occupants, who took part in liquidation of 700 thousand people (...). Algirdas Klimaitis, who took part in the killing of Jews in Kaunas, took part in the event among the criminals of war. His son, a professional provocateur Algis Klimaitis, Head of the European office of the so-called Global Federation of the Baltic Nations, was among organisers of the Sunday provocative action in Vilnius and that was heard from the speakers". In: *Próba zorganizowania w Wilnie antyradzieckiej demonstracji. Dziennik Polski*. Kraków, 1987 VIII 24. No 195.

<sup>35</sup> Such texts witness an intension of KGB to disparage the meaning of the protest field and to discredit its participants, making purposeful confusion of facts of different periods. For example, the mentioning of the name of A. Klimaitis might be remembered from the context of press releases of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on a person seeking to deny suspicions on his collaboration with the KGB: on 2 February 2007 "Vilnius Regional Administrative Court (...) has overruled the decision of the Lustration Committee made in May of the previous year under which Algis Klimaitis, German businessman of Lithuanian origin, was called a collaborator with the soviet security agency (...). It was the second time that the Vilnius Regional Administrative Court abolished the decision of the Lustration Committee concerning Klimaitis' collaboration with the KGB. In September 2005 the decision of the Committee was recognised as unmotivated and has been put for revision. However, the opinion of the Lustration Committee remained unchanged. (...) Klimaitis himself told journalists that he is tired of being considered someone whom he never was. Aivaras Raišutis, the lawyer of Klimaitis, told journalists that the Lustration Committee only analysed some of the material, which the General Prosecutor's Office held in 1993. As it became clear afterwards, the material was drafts of KGB's officers, who had contact with Klimaitis, i. e. they purportedly have confessed to have added misleading facts". In: *Klimaitis is glad to get rid of the label of an agent* (Lith. Klimaitis džiaugiasi atsikratęs agento etiketės). *Lietuvos žinios*, 2007-02-03.

<sup>36</sup> Polska Agencja Prasowa.

tried for anti-Soviet activity”<sup>37</sup>. This press release includes a statement that participants of meetings both in Riga and Tallinn have linked the events to “some resolutions of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939”).

Similar attitude is also formed by the Warsaw committee daily newspaper of the Polish joint workers party: *Failure of anti-Soviet demonstrations in Vilnius, Tallinn and Riga*<sup>38</sup>. However, not a single name was mentioned of the so-called “eminent representatives of the Lithuanian nation”, who as announced by TASS-PAP professedly “expressed outrage concerning similar provocations in their statements”. Nevertheless, the above mentioned releases of TASS sort of reveal the information on existence of “some decisions” of the 1939 Soviet-German Pact for foreign readers. Thus, regardless of the negative propaganda, the public is being reminded of previously non-disclosed facts, only from a biased and deceitful position: it was Poland that was first attacked and divided by Germany and the USSR after the agreement, signed on 23 August 1939<sup>39</sup>. The above mentioned daily *Życie Warszawy* – unlike the key communist mouthpiece *Trybuna Ludu* – gives attention to an ultra-delicate subject and publishes a cycle *Last Month of 1939*, which analyses the circumstances of signature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In general, the main subject of the publications is the responsibility of the Western countries and Hitler in preparing for war with Poland: *Hopes and Games of Interests*<sup>40</sup> and *Chamberlain did not Find the Way*<sup>41</sup>. However, no explanation on the division of Europe, which was prepared and harmonised between the USSR and Germany, was published: the preparation of the agreement by the USSR is purportedly urged by leaders of the West and the undeclared decision of Hitler himself that Poland will be invaded on 26 August 1939. The fact that such texts were published for the interest of the public to be informed was undoubtedly an advantage; however, they did not reveal the role of the USSR as an instigator of war. The USSR’s inspirations to occupy more territories in Europe were diminished by blaming the leaders of the Western European countries, especially Britain and France, of inflexibility, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland – of arrogance. The statement holds a certain amount of truth: political conformism of the period between the wars is criticised in both research and memoirs sources. However, this truth is consciously being confused

<sup>37</sup> The statement that “provocateurs organising the action tried to deny the revolutionary past of Estonian labour people” is not new to the USSR’s propaganda system, it is a common equilibrium in support of the myth of lie; however, the reader must collect the facts from such phrases: “main participants of the anti-Soviet show became an instrument of inflammatory action of 20 senators”, as ostensibly “the gesture of those senators is considered a direct interference with the USSR’s internal affairs – says TASS”. It claims that the statement of members of the Parliament of USA concerning the status of the Baltic States is the vice of information, as in the logics of the propagandists of the USSR, only the USSR has a right to assess the world, although the assessment of the West usually remains in pages of the press covered with defamatory and disinformation language. Of course, the impulse of information comes from KGB. In: Prowokacyjne zebrania w Tallinie i Rydze. *Dziennik Polski*. Krakow, 1987 VIII 24. No. 195.

<sup>38</sup> Nieudane antyradzieckie demonstracje w Wilnie, Tallinie i Rydze. *Życie Warszawy*, 1987-08-25.

<sup>39</sup> On 20 and 22 August 1939 Lithuanian and foreign media informed that the Non-Aggression treaty will be signed between the USSR and Germany. For example, Kaunas daily newspaper *XX century* (Lith. XX amžius), 1939-08-22.

<sup>40</sup> Rzepniewski Andrzej. Nadziejemy i gry interesów. *Życie Warszawy*, 1987-08-27.

<sup>41</sup> Rzepniewski Andrzej. Chamberlain nie znalazł drogi. In: *Życie Warszawy*, 1987-08-29/30.

with Hitler's predatory policy in justifying the criminal decisions of the USSR. And contextual presentation of such history interpretations in the newspaper was presented as releases on commemoration of victims at the sites of former Nazi concentration camps. An issue of Katyn massacre, which was significant to Poland, was still kept secret in 1987.

Thus, the language of dissidents and MMTP is different: with the help of MMTP, in the language of propaganda, authorities present the reminder of the Pact of 23 August 1939 as an action of "extremists", thus the key issue is on language required by the general public. Observing the public space it may be stated that it has two proposals on how to exit the labyrinth: one is seeking economic changes without discussion on historical responsibility (which is obviously the position of CPSU leadership); another one is seeking changes in all the fields of human rights not only evaluating reasons of economic crisis, but also of political one.

2) Communist authorities, who usually stated one way and acted quite the other way, this time may seem open: they did not induce violence to disperse or arrest the demonstrators<sup>42</sup>. This is a deceptive impression. Meetings only created an illusion that the public space is getting wider, yet it remained under control. Under the pretence of Glasnost, after the event authorities kept persecuting organisers and participants of demonstrations in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn, using traditional methods: arrest, inquisition, instruction to dismiss from a job<sup>43</sup>, in other words – criticism is being constructed of ideas of the meeting and its organisers, which is ostensibly expressed by "ordinary people" to reporters<sup>44</sup>. A conclusion was drawn in the meeting of central committee bureau of Lithuanian communist party that "meeting organisers failed to reach their established goals" and "people did not support provocateurs".<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Until then all meetings and protests in the territory of the USSR were not only being dispersed, but people were being arrested in advance, interrogated, convicted (for example, in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas) starting from demonstrations inspired by Hungarian rising ideas, protests in 1956 and to a demonstration inspired by Romas Kalanta self-immolation in 1972; Lithuanian daily newspaper of USA *Draugas* published news on events in Armenia in 1974: "Several students were convicted in October to 7 years of hard labour imprisonment for taking part in undercover Joint national Armenian party". In 1975 an anti-Russian movement expands in Armenia. *Draugas*, 16.01.1975, No 13). For circulation of underground press, preparation and dissemination of memoranda dissidents were previously being arrested, imprisoned, deported or murder by faking "accidents".

<sup>43</sup> After Ann Cooper leaves, the Bureau of Central Committee of Lithuanian communist party is debating the "information on the work done in criticizing participants of anti-Soviet gathering (...)", during which Executive Committee of Vilnius informs that articles, reprehending "participants of provocative gathering" and "explaining destructive activity of extremist elements", are being published every day. In: "Информация о проделанной работе...". LYA, f.1771, ap. 270, b. 182, l. 27.

<sup>44</sup> The words of people in daily newspaper *Vakarinės Naujienos* [Vilnius paper] of 08.27–09.07 are captioned as follows: *Black Thoughts – Black Bands, Looking for Something they didn't Lose, Don't Earn for Bread However Eats It* (No 195); *Caused Indignation, Deceived People, Show of Dissenters* (No 196); *Shameless Hypocrites* (No 197); *More that Funny* (No 198); *Pitiful Action, They Resent Friendship of Nations* (No 199), *The Truth Overcomes Lie, Nostalgic Dreams and Reality, On Historical Truth* (No 200); *What Do They Want?, Save but not Despise* (No 201); *Life does not Stand Still, Vein Efforts, Soap Bubble Explodes* (No 202), *Who are Susceptible to Foreign Influence and Why?, History without White Spots* (No 204). The texts have been written by actual people: prominent figures and ordinary workers.

<sup>45</sup> The same source states that 30 people were selected from "the best prepared" members of the communist

The 1987–1988 political season was a challenge to the CPSU and regional communist authorities of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia as the subject of commemoration of declaration of independence of the mentioned countries (in 1918) popped up. The commemoration of such historical decisions was once again targeted to criminal contents and consequences of decisions of D’39Pact documents. Therefore, communist authorities, which declared their support of publicity, have organised official meetings in Riga on 18 November 1987, in Vilnius on 15 February 1988 and in Tallinn on 24 February 1988 with the purpose of showing that people, supposedly, were protesting against the interference of the USA in the internal affairs of the USSR.

Corporate employees were given time off work to take part in the campaigns of the authorities. On 2 February 1988 in Tartu Soviet militia repressed a march commemorating the 1920 Peace Treaty of Tartu signed between the Republic of Estonia and Russia; some of its participants were arrested. Thus, the authorities sought to suppress the commemoration of historical events dedicated to the celebration of declarations of Independence and to show that the policy of the USA which refused to recognise the occupation of the Baltic States was ineffective. MMPT increased commissioned “historical” contents, which sought to discredit the activity of 1917-1918 political elite of the Baltic States. For some time CPSU engaged in an information war against people of the Baltic nations, who raised an issue of D’39Pact as topical to Glasnost: it sought to deny the essence of fight by Poland’s *Solidarnosc*, urgings of the Pope John Paul II “to not be afraid” of keeping moral values. The Catholic Church, which has been prosecuted for decades ever since the start of the occupation by the USSR, was dragged into an information war by the Lithuanian propaganda system. On 17 February 1988 TASS agency published a message to the world: “Liudas Pavilionis, the Head of Bishops’ Conference of Lithuanian SSR<sup>46</sup> has welcomed (...) a group of foreign journalists and made a presentation on existing situation of the Roman Catholic church in the country; and put a highlight on the fact that Catholic churches are not being exploited for political purposes in Lithuania”. The message was re-posted by other communist information agencies’ reporters; Poland’s PAP<sup>47</sup>: “This was stated taking into consideration press releases of the Western stations on ostensibly national-

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party and Komsomol to deliver “explanatory approach” between “potential” participants of the so-called “circle”, and “preventive work” was carried out with active organisers, and among ostensibly “local nationalists”, “reactionary priests” and “religious fanatics” “disagreement was caused” in an “operational manner”. Detailed “pieces of information “on the work performed” was also provided by CP committees of other cities and regions, which included names of individuals that were “discussed and criticised by collective bodies or at meetings of house dwellers”. The source also states that “organisational and propagandist work” lacked “proper attacking”, as “restraint and fear of taking advance actions” emerged. In: “О имевшем место антисоветском сборище (...)”. Протокол № 42 Заседания Бюро Центрального Комитета Компартии Литвы от 28 августа 1987 года. / Minutes of the meeting of Bureau of the Central Committee of LCP. 1987-08-28. LYA, f. 1771, ap.270, b.55, l. 2. (rus.).

<sup>46</sup> Imprisoned from 1962 till 1966 for construction of the Klaipėda church; 1966–1969 the Dean of Vilnius Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1969–1973 Auxiliary Bishop of Telšiai Diocese. Later – Administrator of Archdiocese of Kaunas and Administrator of Diocese of Vilkauskis, in 1984 appointed by the Pope an Archbishop, 1979–1988 Chairman of Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference. (During the period between wars he was an editor of Catholic children’s two-week publication *Šaltinėlis* (1931–1940).

<sup>47</sup> Quote of the statement of Jozef Rzeszut Poland’s PAP reporter 1988-02-18. In: *Oburzenie Litwinów w związku z deklaracjami Waszyngtonu. Trybuna Ludu*, 1988-02-18.

ist manifestation after the mass in one of the churches of Kaunas on the occasion of 70 years of Independence of 16 February 1918." Further it specified that "Lithuanian public expressed indignation on the statement of President Reagan and the joining of the Congress to anti-Lithuanian action, taking it for interference in the affairs of Lithuanian SSR and as an insult to Lithuanian national self-esteem, who without the instructions of Americans know what to do and which commemoration days they should celebrate. Vilnius and Kaunas, to the contrary to what has been published by propagandistic centres of the West, lead regular lives. The only manifestation that took place recently was the manifestation against the interference of the USA in the affairs of Lithuanian SSR." CPSU and KGB, which have constructed a hierarchy of adaptation, fear and pandering, may not admit that in the society of conformists<sup>48</sup> a discussion was raised on the meeting as a significant event, its contents and negative historical factors of the USSR in general.

- 3) There are informational factors precluding the USSR from maintaining deceitful construction of D'39Pact in the international public space. It was important for authorities to make a favourable impression abroad (as it is typical of the politics of the USSR). Authorities of CPSU and government of the USSR, seeking international dialogue due to a difficult economic situation was forced to imitate a discussion of the public of the USSR: TV connections between the USSR and other countries, for example, audience of Germany, the USA were established. On 26 August 1987 central USSR TV show *Vremia* provides broadcasting to millions of audiences from the town of Chautauqua in the USA on III discussion held between representatives of the USSR and the USA. During the broadcast a reporter claimed that purportedly unlike the Soviet representatives, the Americans have debated violations of human rights in the USSR. The audience, which were used to reading the official propaganda in contrast to negations or statements, were prompted to interpret the publicity policy in a slightly broader nature than it was first defined by the CPSU. From the communicational viewpoint, the witnessing of one of the participants Bohdan Nagajlo, a Ukrainian journalist, is valuable, when he describes the Soviet delegation of 240 people: "Their belief in bright future of the USSR explains their superficial understanding of upsetting factors of the Soviet history, a complete indifference towards them, as well as careless approach to Soviet young people, the majority of which is politically passive and sceptical of the politics of the Soviet government"<sup>49</sup>. The witness highlighted the conference being rather innovative in comparison to the previous on, as participants were ready to discuss the offered painful subjects: war in Afghanistan, the Baltic States, a situation in the Eastern and Central Europe; and KGB officials neither observed every participant nor disturbed the communication.

<sup>48</sup> Author defines society of conformists as majority's position to not openly express a genuine view towards authorities and soviet system, in order to acquire and keep the social status defined by authorities.

<sup>49</sup> Нагайло Богдан. Гласность и конференция в Чатокуа. In: Проблемы Восточной Европы, 1987, No 19-20, p. 222.

It was a sign of a breaking point of the propaganda system: CPSU CC, differently to the way it has acted in the past, allowed and authorised the selected representatives to speak on various subjects abroad, but in order to maintain its influence, instructed to keep supporting the position of the politics of CPSU. In other words, to stick to the performance of reform in which CPSU would lose all its historical responsibility. Thus, an act of communication was sort of based on several levels, which showed that in an international discussion on economic and defence relations it was not enough to be detached from ideological background: the above mentioned historical narrative included an inevitable factor of human rights and rights of nations. Such factor was a right of the Baltic nations to make a decision closely connected to D'39Pact, and more often became a subject of international dialogue. On 6 November 1987 the USSR's central TV news show *Vremia* for the first time broadcasted to millions of the USSR's viewers a meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Eduard Shevardnadze and the United States Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead, which was held in Moscow, followed by text of the announcer that "in focus were issues of safety", a preparation of M. Gorbachev for the visit to the USA was discussed for the purpose of leading debates on the agreement to destroy short and medium range missiles. Finally news on "thorough exchange of mutual opinions on humanitarian issues and other important aspects" was given. A quick-witted viewer may understand that it was the statement that also meant discussion on self-determining of nations. The news was followed by a release from the street of Moscow, where three deputies of the Supreme Council of Latvian SSR come to deliver a letter of protest to the Ambassador of USA, as if the "selected" representatives of Latvia were resenting "the interference with Latvia's internal affairs" by the USA Congressmen.

Although a right to decide on internal and foreign affairs was taken away from Latvia by the Soviets back in 1940, the statement attempts to show that the Soviet delegation of Latvia reacted to America's political position on its own, without actions of the top authorities of CPSU. Kārlis Rūtenbergs, interviewed in the coverage is indignant about the fact that on 18 November Americans consider it appropriate to "send us a representative of the President of USA – a controller who was sent to observe the life in our Republic". Similarly, K. Rūtenbergs was quoted by Latvian CP CC daily newspaper *Cīņa* published in Riga<sup>50</sup>: the publication of major Latvian newspaper of MMTP system was captioned *Act of Disrespect to the Latvian Nation*. It not only applied to the Congress of the USA, but also to the former Ambassador of the USA in the USSR Jack F. Metlock, who did not host the so-called representatives of Latvian SSR. The publication revealed the reason: an advisor of the Embassy Thomas Greham informed that USA did not recognise the annexation of the Baltic States, thus they may only be admitted as private individuals. Thus, propagandistic protestors have to leave with nothing. In the mentioned coverage of *Vremia*, K. Rūtenbergs was resentful and promised to search for other ways to deliver the important document to the USA

<sup>50</sup> The publication called a case of the USA's request to allow its representative to visit Latvian SSR "an unprecedented case" and described the activity of the Congressmen of the USA as "scenario of an anti-Soviet campaign", which purportedly was also assigned a "controller". In: Necieņas akts pret latviešu tautu. *Cīņa*, 1987-11-17.



Congress". However, viewers may understand how petty is an individual, who was kept a puppet of the Soviet regime. The overall act of communication must be understood as change of an individual. And exactly the transformation of an individual together with social, economic, informational systems' changes was the most significant factor, as it revealed the background of values, on which the public was based on. And which must be followed by the media if it wished to achieve massive audience. That's why after two years, in 1989 upon the Resolution of the Supreme Council of Latvian SSR "on the political and legal assessment of agreements signed between the USSR and Germany in 1939-1940"<sup>51</sup> the mentioned Latvian deputy became a member of the commission which evaluated political and legal effects on Latvia made by agreements between the USSR and Germany in 1939–1940<sup>52</sup>. The Commission provided conclusions on the violations of international law of 1939-1940 and this was published in the media of Latvian SSR on the eve of commemoration of the Independence Day (1918). In Estonia a member of CPSU, a painter Enn Põldroos who have made a statement in the meeting of communist authorities "against USA's interference in the affairs of the USSR" has brought shame of the public to himself, later became a member of Eestimaa Rahvarinne council and in 1990 sought to chair a newly established Party of the Estonian Liberal Democrats. Public space enforced changes.

If nowadays a student of social science finished a book of Ralph Keyes "The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life"<sup>53</sup> he may draw a conclusion that he currently lives the epoch of lie. And what is liberation from a propaganda system worth when he finds out that the *Post Truth* theory was started to form back in 1992?<sup>54</sup> However, we have to distinguish between mechanism of political lie: one is the situation when authorities force us into believing false data, in our case – twisted history, by controlling public space with censorship and physical violence; the other – when authorities seek it by manipulating data, however, fearing criticism and denunciation, as any discourse may cover several narratives of the issues in the public space.

The USSR's propaganda system used to mask criticism, different views to phenomena and decisions with new words, which was only different in words that the authorities substi-

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<sup>51</sup> Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes lēmums par to seku politisko un tiesisko novērtējumu, kādas Latvijai izraisīja 1939. - 1940. gadā starp PSRS un Vācijas noslēgtās vienošanās. Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija priekšsēdētājs A. Gorbunovs, Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija sekretārs I. Daudišs. Rīgā, 1989. gada 28. Jūlijā.

<sup>52</sup> The Commission, inter alia, acknowledged: "in the act of implementation of the secret complementary protocol of 23 August 1939 the soviet government has violated the system of agreements, which was based on the acknowledgement of right of self-determination of the people, including the peace treaty between the Soviet Russia and Latvia on 11 August 1920, the Non-aggression agreement signed between the USSR and the Republic of Latvia, which was extended until 30 December 1945, and Article 10 of the Charter of the League of Nations." With this document it offered to review an assessment of 1940 and access a respective Commission of the USSR. In: Par Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes komisijas darbu, kura novērtē politiskās un tiesiskās sekas, kādas Latvijai izraisīja 1939.—1940. gadā starp PSRS un Vācijas noslēgtās vienošanās. Komisijas priekšsēdētāja vietnieka I. Ķezbera ziņojums. Cīņa, 1989-11-15.

<sup>53</sup> The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life, by Ralph Keyes. 1st edition, St. Martin's Press, 312 p., 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Steve Tesich. A Government Of Lies. The Nation. January 6/13,1992.

tuted with new ones. Propaganda officials used generalised statements and clichés to cover particular facts in the publications, as appropriate, with negative or positive connotation, that the content of information would not encourage an inner user to critically assess the politics of the USSR. The definition of *Glasnost* is no exception. Thus, the press release of TASS agency on the meeting between M. Gorbachev and M. Thatcher in London in 1987 also included repudiation of ostensibly British interference with internal policy of the USSR: “Concerning the agreement to-be-signed (...) Margaret Thatcher discussed that it would be important to ensure its ratification at the USA Congress in relation to the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union. Afterwards a slight debate followed, during which Mikhail Sergejevich Gorbachev reminded the Prime Minister of an agreement, reached in Chequers in December 1984, on the fact that each country will independently make decisions concerning its internal affairs and will avoid interference in the affairs of other countries”. This and the like statements were a sign to the audience of the USSR that the leader of the British Government and later the President of USA were not raising abstract issues on human rights in the USSR, but issues on the rights of people of the occupied countries. After the previously mentioned meeting in an interview to the Soviet central TV M. Thatcher highlights: “The relations between East and West Europe are not just those of arms control. They are those of largely European peoples. We are also interested in the enlargement of human rights. We see perestroika and glasnost as being an enormously significant move forward. That is freeing-up people, ideas, movement, personal responsibility, personal initiative”<sup>55</sup>

These propagandistic methods did not have a significant effect: having declared publicity on D’39Pact it became clear that the subject of public space may not be silenced. The leadership of CPSU thought they may overcome a D’39Pact narrative on the USSR’s responsibility for segregation of part of Europe, publicly declared in demonstrations of August 1987. Having failed since Spring 1988, it sought to over-write this narrative by aiming to show that the CPSU itself have suffered repressions of the Stalinism era. Therefore, communist authorities have started to partially transform the narrative of the CPSU. The second stage – **a narrative on historical truth is sought to be adapted in line with the position of the management**. As the Perestroika is a process of convincing the same authority about the possibility of applying different means of governance. Thus, two types of conflict arise:

- 4) The contents of MMTP formulated an opinion inviting to take an ostensibly “unbiased” look at the past. That’s why in May 1988 CC of Lithuanian communist party organised a meeting in Vilnius at the monument of Zigmās Aleksa-Angarietis<sup>56</sup>, an activist of bolshevik CPSU. People were invited to participate in the event via MMTP chan-

<sup>55</sup>Margaret Thatcher. TV Interview for Soviet TV, 1987 Dec 9. In: <https://www.margarethatcher.org/document/106713>

<sup>56</sup>Z. Aleksa Angarietis (1882–1940) was a member of Lithuanian communist (bolshevik) party, one of the commissioners of “Lithuanian–Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic” (1919), criticised independent Lithuanian state, member of international Comintern, arrested in 1938 by the Soviet security agency NKVD tortured and executed in Moscow prison.

nels – radio and television. Thus, the propaganda presented viciousness of Stalinism, which purportedly everybody had experienced in equal parts: both the communists, and other people, including citizens of the occupied countries. The agreed contents of speeches must have disoriented a participant of the meeting with less understanding, as criticism to deportations made by the USSR, as the son told a story about the arrest of the family of his father Augustinas Gričius, journalist, writer of Lithuanian period between wars, was associated with the help sought for the deported people by some activists (collaborators) of the soviet puppet Lithuanian government: “they have taken measures to ease our fate”<sup>57</sup>. Unexpectedly another speaker said: “It is time to say the words: don’t forgive them as they were well aware of what they were doing. Stalin knew, creators of Stalinism knew”<sup>58</sup>. So far it was an abstract requirement for responsibility for implemented crimes, however, it was the first time that it was publicly announced in a meeting arranged by authorities in the presence of communist party leaders. Speaking like this must have disturbed almost everybody – not only those who have directly implemented persecutions and operations of massacre, but also those who were relatives of executioners of post-war resistance movement, militia officers, servants of repressive structures. MMTP system having received a role to make a narrative on historical wounds into a general narration faced a dilemma: the journalists find out that some personal stories, especially of those in the regions, are targeted to requirement of responsibility.

Is it possible for public space to further remain under control by turning historical truth into a manipulative tool so that public opinion remains false? In summer 1988 newsletters were started to publish by initiative groups of public movements of Estonia (Eestimaa Rahvarinne), Latvia (Latvijas Tautas fronte) and Lithuania (Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis)<sup>59</sup>, which were first signs of possibility of alternative public information to that of MMTP system. Nevertheless, the members of such movements treated the official MMTP system media as information channels informing the society of what is most important, therefore, they required an unbiased work of journalists in informing about events and requirements to authorities as thousands of audiences would have preferred to know the truth<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> “*And in the morning, when we have awoken, we saw our father sitting in front of a gun pointed at him, the room was under search, a printed resolution with his name written by hand was read out stating that all our family must be deported to further regions of the Soviet Union*, says artist of the People’s Republic Jonas Gričius (cinematographer): – *In Siberia we were found by Justas Paleckis, Antanas Sniečkus, Mečislovas Gedvilas, Antanas Venclova, Petras Cvirka, who have taken measures to ease our fate, but they were only able to do this when we travelled for the second time from Barnaul to Yakutsk. In case our children or grandchildren will have to experience anything like this, it will only be our own fault*”. In: A Documentary Film Chronicle Magazine “Tarybų Lietuvos kronika”, 1988, No 11 (Director V. Damaševičius).

<sup>58</sup> Writer Mykolas Karčiauskas. Min. dok.

<sup>59</sup> Latvijas neatkarīgās informācijas aģentūra (Latvian independent information agency) published *Informatīvais Ziņotājs*, Initiative group of Reform Movement of Lithuania – *Sājūdzio Žinios*.

<sup>60</sup> An invitation to support the public movement *Latvijas Tautas fronte* was published in Latvia’s MMTP system daily newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne* (Soviet Youth). And in the meeting in Vingis park in the capital of Lithuania, with approximately 100.000 participants, Sąjūdis urged the people to quit reading the central communist newspaper

Observing such transformations the leadership of the CPSU tried to understand where they were heading. According to it, speaking, in contrast to the decision, may help in maintaining the influence, although manipulative political communication was evidently ineffective. In August 1988 Aleksandr Yakovlev, the Secretary of the central committee of CPSU, visited Latvia and Lithuania, who after being asked wouldn't it be worth to suppress public movements replied: "in order to find out what should be suppressed, let it evolve first". Witnesses of the meeting say: "After the visit we have felt that many matters may be solved easier. The press and other means of information were no longer unreachable"<sup>61</sup>. As CPSU prepared for the XIX conference of the party in Moscow for the purpose of discussing *perestroika* politics, its delegates from Lithuania were seen off and afterwards met by legal massive demonstrations in Vilnius, where communist authorities tried to reconcile the announced radical requirements to transform communist politics with the support for *perestroika*. Thus, publications were not only allowed but attempts were made to offer the public solutions that would contribute to favourable impression on the CPSU politics. Until spring of 1988 people of the Baltic States were prosecuted for public raising of flags of the period of between wars of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and in Vingis park in 1988 the following was stated:

– Here I see an abundance of tricolour flags, and if they are raised and many people today came holding them, what does it stand for? Obviously, it means a lot to our people and I would like to say that we have discussed this issue in the government of the Republic and assigned the Presidium of the Supreme Council to take a positive decision concerning this flag by legalising three national colours in the nearest future<sup>62</sup>. Cheers of joy and applause fill the meeting of thousands of people – authorities have acknowledged the flag of "bourgeois nationalists" as a symbol of their own. This is comparable to the council of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in autumn 1988, the so-called discussion between party secretaries of different levels, where the role of the communist party in initiation of "the round table" – a dialogue with the opposition concerning the reform of the state, was discussed. Publication of the daily newspaper under the heading *Listen Carefully, Act Consistently* explains the strategy of authorities to keep power: "Such initiative was not found in a vacuum (...): it is an evidence of pragmatism, also proof of serving of the party to people and their essential interests. It is an element of a line of agreement with the people implemented by the party in a coherent manner. (...) The condition of success of the round table is that its discussions would be held under a calm public atmosphere; participants may not be people acting in an anti-socialistic and

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*Tiesa* (The Truth). Central committee of the Lithuanian communist party passed a decision that the Resolution of Sąjūdis concerning the newspaper *Tiesa* was assessed as "unfounded, anti-democratic, conflicting with the principles of publicity, freedom of press and socialist pluralism."

<sup>61</sup> Kalniete Sandra. *Es lauzu, tu lauzi, mēs lauzām, viņi lūza*. Jumava, Rīga, 2000.

<sup>62</sup> A speech by Secretary of the Lithuanian communist party Algirdas Brazauskas. "Meeting of public democracy and publicity held for the occasion of seeing off of delegates of the LSSR to the XIX party conference of the USSR", 09.07.1988. Source: A Documentary Film Chronicle Magazine "Tarybų Lietuvos kronika", 1988, No 15. Lithuanian Central State archive, Cinema Fund.

anti-grassroots position. (...)”<sup>63</sup>. A viewpoint is formed the essence of which is reflected in the following statement: “Representatives of all social groups must join this table, including the opposition, but it must be people the main goal of whom is *better, more secure and more peaceful life in Poland for us*”<sup>64</sup>. It must be pointed out that Vaino Väljas, the First Secretary of the Estonian communist party, chaired the Extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of Estonian SSR and offered to adopt a declaration on the sovereignty of Estonian SSR.

Meaning that MMTP has to change its language: not only the criticism of “bourgeois” symbols must be deleted from its contents, but also the associated concepts used in the USSR for political and cultural elite of the period between the two world wars. It stands not only for the change in the vocabulary, but also for the changes in the historiography.

- 5) Back then, as well as today, observers and researchers evaluate the period as an instance of nationalism: “Many stories on the collapse of communism picture nationalism only as a consequence of fall of communism, as a stage of post-communism, not as an independent or contributing power in the collapse process itself”, notes Mark R. Beissinger, of course with reasonable note of the meaning of national movements and their influence in the collapse of the USSR: “(...) From this point of view the critical dimension of political mobilisation of 1987–1992 is completely disregarded. Massive concentrations of million people were raised in the Soviet Union and nationalistic requirements were the most significant among slogans which collected people.” However, are those “nationalist requirements” only issues of ethnic exclusion based on cultural features, or broad issues of human rights? Further events show that people of the Baltic States posing requirements according to D’39Pact were first of all seeking justice and democratic values.

### **Third stage – MMTP transforms the contents and starts to disregard the position of the CPSU.**

The harm made to the post-war society was included in the contents of MMTP and alarmed the regime. In other words, the contents of MMTP underwent substantial transformation (there were several cases when publications did not support the narrative on D’39Pact, but it was insignificant in the evolution of history). In this case we also have one conflict:

- 6) People, who have executed decisions of repressions were afraid of the perspective of transformation which came out from the contents of medias. Because it implied responsibility.

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<sup>63</sup> Rola partii w zainicjowaniu „Okrągłego stołu”. In: Słuchać uważnie, działać konsekwentnie. Trybuna ludu, 1988-10-06: (Stanowi element konsekwentnie realizowanej przez poartię linii porozumienia narodowego. (...) Cel Warunkiem powodzenia “okrągłego stołu” jest to aby rozmowynmprzy nim odbyły się w atmosferze spokoju społecznego; ich uczestnikami nie mogą być ludzie działający z pozycji antysocjalistycznej i antynarodowej (...) Cel bowiem “okrągłego stołu” to stworzenie prereformatorskiej koalicji wszystkich sił społecznych, zainteresowanych dobrem Polski i jej lepszą przyszłością”).

<sup>64</sup> Przed spotkaniem okrągłego stołu. IN: Trybuna ludu. 1988-10-06: „Przy tym stole powinni zasiąść przedstawiciele wszystkich grup społecznych z opozycją włącznie, ale muszą to być ludzie, których zasadniczym celem jest to, by w socjalistycznej Polsce żyło nam się lepiej, lżej i spokojniej”

350 representatives of “people’s defence”<sup>65</sup> signed a letter to the Minister of the Interior of the Lithuanian SSR (MVD) and evaluated the stories in the media as “persecution of the party, veterans of war and labour, former people’s defence and active members of post-war Soviet community and of the party”<sup>66</sup>. They were alarmed by the “draft law of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR put forward by the Association of Lithuanian Lawyers and supported by *Sąjūdis* movement on the Responsibility for Crimes Against Lithuanian People”, even though the letter also included the acknowledgement of liability “with bitterness and regret” for “participation in deportations, which were arranged for the purpose of elimination of economic base of terrorist groups, as it was then explained by authorities of the time”<sup>67</sup>. Another application sent to the CC of Lithuanian communist party and the Supreme Council of LSSR, signed by 36 former representatives of “people’s defence” was a demand “to reject the proposed draft law on the Responsibility for Crimes Against Lithuanian People, especially the part where deportation of people of 1940–1953 was referred to the laws then in force on responsibility for complicity in qualified homicide, as unjustified, illegal, bearing a purpose to crackdown fighters for consolidation of the Soviet regime in Lithuania”<sup>68</sup>. The second application witnesses fear, anxiety and awareness of repression politics of the USSR: “deportations of the mentioned years [as provided in 1940–1953] was applied as means of fight with enemies of the Soviet authorities without a purpose to kill, destroy people, but only to isolate underground activists who were back then fighting against the Soviet authorities, first of all, their armed squads”<sup>69</sup>. They were indignant over the fact that “recently members of nationalist squads were started being called national heroes”. And in the end of 1988 a letter on the topic was sent to the Central Committee the USSR’s KGB Lithuanian Unit, “Chairman of General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the Council of Ministers of the LSSR”, i.e. head of the censorship institution, and head of the alliance of activists who implemented Soviet occupation and repressions against people<sup>70</sup>. The statement includes a list of MMTP system newspapers in Lithuanian regions<sup>71</sup>, which, as noted by the empowered persecution functionaries, “started having more publications, which purposefully misrepresent revolutionary processes in the Republic, especially facts on war, which reprehend and compromise the activity of the party and Soviet officers, activists.”<sup>72</sup> The statement firstly arises from apprehension that the texts switch sides of historical heroes: “Soviet regime is illegal in Lithuania, that

<sup>65</sup> It is the name of military squads of the Ministry of the Interior in the USSR’s occupied Baltic States after World War II, whose mission was to destroy the movement of resistance.

<sup>66</sup> Special Archive of Lithuania (LYA), f. 1771, ap. 272, b. 147, l. 127.

<sup>67</sup> Mentioned source, l. 128.

<sup>68</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap. 272, b. 160, l. 53.

<sup>69</sup> Mentioned document l. 52.

<sup>70</sup> *Concerning press publications*, 1988-12-06. LYA, f. 1771, a. 271, b. 211, l. 76.

<sup>71</sup> Each newspaper was an “organ” of respective region of LCP or of LCP city committee, auth.

<sup>72</sup> Mentioned doc., l. 71. Interesting circumstance are names of newspapers, e. g. *Towards Communism*, *Communist Word*, *Flag of October*, etc.

actual patriots of Lithuania are not the Soviet activists but other people, who were and still are fighting for a "free and independent" Lithuania"<sup>73</sup>. The letter shows that those who were not used to read or hear a different opinion, but to only suppress it ("Masters of *dezinformatsya*"), gave a manipulative evaluation: the newly described facts of Lithuanian regions were called disinformation. Thus, "disinformation" was described as the contents of newspapers of communist MMTP system – this marked a considerable transformation. In this context a notification on the meeting of KGB officers in Moscow for the purpose of discussing analysis of historical experience, was of significant value. In the event in a way characteristic to the Soviet propaganda, victims were taken for executioners and vice versa, as it may have been understood from a publication of Moscow weekly newspaper *AiF*: "Massive repressions of the period of cult of an individual have taken hundred thousands of innocent people, including *chekists* – is sadly part of our history"<sup>74</sup>. However, the most significant part of information is as follows: "Chekists, as claimed by the participants of the conference, will not have to opt out and do not opt out from the thorough and comprehensive analysis of repressions. Moreover, they are active participants of this investigation and cooperate in creating an unbiased picture."<sup>75</sup> In other words, it is announced that investigations of Stalinist sufferings will be performed by the executioners themselves and at the very least accomplices of crimes.

Either media system is closely connected to the decisions of political authorities and the information it is willing to transmit and is transmitting. Such relation may be based not only on significance of socially important news but also on economic and political interests. It directly effects the framing of news in mass media, which is based on an interaction between owner, editor, journalist and an event, which is evaluated by them based on the approach or decision of the authorities and its representatives. However, in theory framing of subjects also means creative decision of journalists and editors depending on audience, in the propaganda system as well. William Gamson and Andre Modigliani, who have prepared a topical publication of the time on the discourse of medias and the public opinion<sup>76</sup> on framing issues, state that thus *media packages* are generated which (in line with common vocabulary of communication technologies) should be defined as tools of media. In general, framing of topics implies a specific scale of positions<sup>77</sup>, thus, we may in fact agree that it is the thing that gives an opportunity to argue for those who are united by such framing. The above mentioned authors distinguish framing devices that suggest how to think about the issue (a) and reasoning devices (b) that justify what should be

<sup>73</sup> Mentioned doc., 1.73.

<sup>74</sup> "USSR KGB informs on and comments on ideas of perestroika – at the direction of practical performance": КГБ СССР сообщает и комментирует. Идеи перестройки - в русле практических дел. In: Аргументы и Факты (АиФ), № 52 24/12/1988.

<sup>75</sup> Mentioned source.

<sup>76</sup> Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jul., 1989), pp. 1-37.

<sup>77</sup> "This frame typically implies a range of positions". In: Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jul., 1989), p. 4

done about it: (a) metaphors (i.e., historical examples from which lessons are drawn), catchphrases, depictions, and visual images; (b) roots, consequences, appeals to principle.

To generalise, I may offer an assessment of the framing issues by tools of at least two groups: opinion formation and argumentation. In propaganda system the tools are merged, in a system of democratic (or liberal) medias they must be parallel in the process of media and public opinion. That's why D'39Pact becomes part of the contents of MMTP media in Lithuania, which belongs to CPSU propaganda structures, also in other Baltic States and in Poland.

The discourse opens up as testimony on particular public experiences of what was happening during the periods of occupation. D'39Pact – CPSU narrative is a propaganda construction, which after the public space for discussion has been opened, collapses in comparison to the narrative of the opposition based on experiences, i.e. proof. Here editors of MMTP system have to make a choice: following the interest of the audience by completely transforming the contents or ignoring that interest, which in media market will eventually cause the loss of audience. Some cases may be compared to an attempt to deceive a reader by manipulating the relevance of issues<sup>78</sup>. Nevertheless, MMTP channels were more often forced to choose between doctrines of CPSU and viewpoints of the audience<sup>79</sup>.

On 23 August 1989 demonstration the Baltic Way was organised – the joining of hand of people spanning from Tallinn to Riga and from Riga to Vilnius, which completely transformed the limits of public space: CPSU understands that it is out of control of D'39Pact and has to search for explanation of facts that were told to be concealed by MMTP medias ever since the start of perestroika. The Political and Legal Assessment Commission of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939 chaired by A. Jakovlev, the above mentioned Secretary of the Central Committee of CPSU, provided first recommendations to CPSU political office in summer 1989<sup>80</sup>. This Commission is of interest to MMTP, as it finds a secret of Molotov in the “labyrinth” – secret protocols, the key item of D'39Pact. However, A. Yakovlev tries to formulate such recommendations, which would at least in part correspond to communist state interest to narrow the

<sup>78</sup> If we are aware of the fact why in underground conditions the *Catholic Church Chronicles* publication was published (to report on violations of human rights) we would least expect church clerks to be given a right of speech in the MMTP system channels.

<sup>79</sup> However, major daily newspaper of Lithuanian communist party have to surprise readers by publishing an interview with Vincentas Sladkevičius, Cardinal Priest, an Apostolic Administrator ad nutum Sanctae Sedes, on the love of those near you. In: Tiesa, 1988-07-15. No 164.

<sup>79</sup> For example, on 25 August 1988 a team of reporters of committee of TVR went to a regional town to make a reportage on the Drama Theatre, but actors refused to be filmed and completely ignored the role of television in the public. Until then, creative team of television would not have been a fiasco anywhere it went. This time with this protest actors expressed their resentment to propaganda broadcast aired on news from Sąjūdis meeting in Vilnius dedicated to the pact of 23 August 1939. And then something unprecedented happened: staff of the Lithuanian TVR committee were in consent with the actors, they addressed in writing not only a CC of the LCP but also the press. They stated: “We demand an essential reform in the committee of the TVR; complete publicity in disclosing key events and facts of Lithuanian history and those of today”. Special Archive of Lithuania, f.1771, ap.271, b.240, l.9.

<sup>80</sup> Тезисы А.Н. Яковлева к обсуждению на Политбюро ЦК КПСС вопроса о Договоре 23 августа 1939 г. 31.07.1989. In: «Архив Александра Н. Яковлева». <https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/>



historical responsibility of CPSU: "It would not be purposeful to mention other regions in the conclusions of the Commission apart from the Baltic States, although the secret protocol of 23 August also includes Finland, Bessarabia and Poland. Our relationship with Finland, Poland and Romania are regulated by unilateral and multilateral agreements, and current disputes on agreements between the Soviets and the Germans of 1939 do not apply to them directly"<sup>81</sup>. However, public opinion may not be formulated in a way that an act of communication concerning it would give an opposite result to its interests. As stated in the introduction of the article, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR set forth the following: "a secret additional protocol had been signed which determined the spheres of interest of the signatories from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and from Finland to Bessarabia"<sup>82</sup>.

The document published in the major CPSU daily newspaper in 1989 was of historical value – the Resolution was an evidence in acknowledgement a D'39Pact as a topical issue, which might have been solved not as requirement of the "nationalists", but as a right of the Baltic nations to decide upon the political perspective. However, the contemporary official Russia keeps ignoring statements of the document<sup>83</sup>: on the one hand, Resolution of the USSR is the lowest legal act, thus it may be stated that in today's Russia it may not be held the legal norm; on the other hand, upon return to D'39Pact "labyrinth" Russia's government claims to not being engaged in keeping secrets but a myth of its own power. D'39Pact is merged with another narrative – on heroic fight of the military and civilians against Fascism, ignoring the genesis of reasons of WWII and aggression of the USSR in Poland and Finland. Construction of its power on the basis of such historical narrative the official Russia equals identifying itself with Stalinism politics.

## Conclusion

In the case of D'39Pact analysis, the transformation of MMTP contents by at first denying the narrative of truth, then trying to "adapt" it and finally by acknowledging it, indicates a fundamental factor of interpretative accomplishments – personal experience, which is a record of historical memory, reflected as witnessing in documents and stories of participants. In media contents such witnessing is the public's weapon against lie.

Therefore, an "act of communication" caused by the transformation of language may cause a consensus and help countries/parties exit the "labyrinth" only when the public space is free from control of the authorities or other parties with financial or political power. In this case, any media becomes dependent from the interest of the public/audience. But it was and is a mistake to think that D'39Pact loses its relevance: if the public of Russia fails to acknowledge the narrative of truth on D'39Pact it will not escape myths

<sup>81</sup> Mentioned source.

<sup>82</sup> On the political and legal assessment of the 1939 Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty. Resolution of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, 24 December 1989. "Pravda" on 28 December 1989.

<sup>83</sup> "The Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR condemns the fact of signing the secret protocol on August 23rd 1939 as well as other secret agreements made with Germany. The Congress declares the secret protocols legally unjustified and invalid from the moment of signing", mentioned source.

of the current regime. Official Russia, returning to the USSR narrative, tries to convince the West that this is historically true, and the decisions of 1988-1989 have no legal force.

Requirement of historical responsibility and justice stand for an aspiration to reveal the truth, which is a stronger imperative than the possible judgement of any court or tribunal, as in public space it acts as a factor causing political changes. After the Tribunal of Nuremberg in the USSR and countries of the Warsaw Pact public space controlled by the communist authorities not only prevented the opportunity to publish the truth, but it was also targeted at concealing subsequent criminal acts of CPSU and its puppet regimes for decades. Glasnost politics gave a possibility to people to express their historical experience, but the USSR regime tried to restrict the D'39Pact and therefore have settled certain "boundaries of publicity"<sup>84</sup>. Liberation from the public space boundaries made authorities of the USSR acknowledge the historical truth, however Russia sees it as weakness.

D'39Pact may also be treated as a symbol marking a conflict between history and contemporary politics of countries arising from fostering different values and experiences. Analysis of such discourse allows noticing personal transformation – irrespective of it being sincere or a psychological decision: in the presence of truth liberation of historical memory may also be a strong act of communication, which overcomes propaganda and makes a person change his views. In this case, interpretative accomplishments make it possible to let go of myths supported in the public space and to be based on knowledge. From a historical point of view, transformation of vocabulary meanings is subject to contextual condition, what is being turned upside-down is the reconstruction of the truth:

Characteristics given by a journalist	
1987	Post 1989
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extremists</li> <li>• religious fanatics</li> <li>• falsifiers of history</li> <li>• servants of foreign radio stations</li> </ul>	<p>“Creators of independence”</p>

Even if the same individual transforms his vocabulary towards public, he may decide by himself when he really feels free to publish a piece of news or to comment on the events. From a personal point of view transformation or adaptation is a different subject; author only provided several most significant cases as his analysis was first targeted at transformation of media contents as an act of communication. It is obvious that official Russia replaces the above elements in places: on the D'39Pact “returns” falsifiers of history.

The contemporary D'39Pact may witness a conflict not concerning historical narrative on separation of Europe on 1939, as Molotov's “secret” is already revealed, but for the purpose of setting experiences of the West against those of the East, which are restricted to knowledge on victory against the Fascism. It is important to emphasize that the D'39 Pact discourse has more than two narratives - the European Parliament's resolution testifies that

<sup>84</sup> Interview with M. Gorbachev. In: der Spiegel, 22-10- 1988.

there are more of them, so Russia can follow the historical approach laid by the USSR. The fact that D'39Pact narrative on the USSR's division of Europe and crime against nations, personalities, their cultural heritage and structures have overcome deceptive narrative of CPSU and finally the overall communist regime, might stand for a significant warning to Russia: identifying oneself with lie may not be the basis for long-term politics. However, the Kremlin and official Russian foreign policy consider the narrative of the D'39 Pact to have the same content as in the period of the USSR. However, the topic remains relevant: Russia's official relations with history are based on the discussed narrative of the USSR that Russia was not and is not an aggressor. Such a position, when justified by the Pact, determines the appropriate relationship with other parties and countries.

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