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TRADE WITH THE AGGRESSOR AND THE PACT RIBBENTROP–MOLOTOV. OBSERVATIONS INSIPRED BY UNKNOWN DOCUMENTS

(Abstract)

This article is devoted to the problem of economic consequences of the pact Ribbentrop–Molotov. The discussion about the pact is going on for many years, however it is marred by scarcity of research examining the impact of the pact on the war efforts of the Nazi Germany in 1939–1941, the years of the utmost success of the Nazi war machine. The present paper relies on newly discovered documents revealing the economic relations between Germany and several states, including USSR. It constitutes a comparative study of the trade between Germany and Western democracies on the one hand, and between Germany and USSR on another, in order to better comprehend the role of the pact Ribbentrop–Molotov in the growth of the Nazi Germany's war machine.

Keywords: the pact Ribbentrop–Molotov; the Nazi Germany's economy; raw materials export in 1930s; USSR external policy; geopolitics during the Second World War

Introduction

A "silent revolution" took place during the start of the Second World War in the trade of raw materials exports from Eastern Europe to Germany. The "silent revolution" is responsible for the growth of the German war machine during 1939–1941 and the pact Ribbentrop–Molotov was part of this process, because Germany had gotten the access to the Soviet resources and Russian railways, which connected Europe with North China controlled by Japan.

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A vigorous debate has continued among Russian historians since the first free publication of the pact between USSR and Germany in 1990[1], but discussions about the pact continue mainly within narrow circles of specialists. There are few articles and books addressing the problem of economic cooperation between the USSR and Germany in 1939–first half 1941[2].

The purpose of this article is to examine the economic results of the German purchase of Soviet exports in 1940–first half 1941 in comparison with the trade with democracies before 1 September 1939. This article attempts to explore two major questions. First, how important was the role played by the Soviet Union's export of strategic minerals and oil to the German war effort in 1940. Second, how the Soviet export and Japanese export transited through USSR contributed to the weakening of the economic blockade against Germany in 1940? This article is based on documents poorly examined before, on documents "forgotten" in the archives. However, a reader needs to be warned that what is presented here constitutes mere hypothesis, however a hypothesis is the first step to the truth.

The import of raw materials to Germany before and after 1 Sep. 1939, and the aftermath of the economic blockade

The demands of a total war called for the extraction of raw materials, wood and food from all continents on a big scale. The early success of German trade contracts, the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany and Japanese offensive in China until 1939, which were influenced to a considerable extent by the drive to control raw materials, did not arise great trepidation among the West Allies and USSR. Despite pre-war self-sufficiency in coal, Germany was compelled to augment the existing mineral stocks in nearly every category – base metals, ferro-alloys, precious metals, gemstones, nonmetallic fuel and chemical elements – with imports from around the world. As the British Empire dominated Africa, Portugal and Asia, the Nazi Germany had to develop domestic production of synthetic fuel to their utmost capacity and enter into contracts with many countries in Europe. It was not only that copper, chrome, platinum, bauxite, zinc and manganese that were required in vaster quantities than ever before. A host of new and specialized

[1] **K.V. Volkov**, **R.M.**, **Ilyukhin**, **A.A. Koshkin**, etc. Lessons of history. Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Inst. of General history; "Thought" Moscow, 1990, p. 469.

[2] **V.J. Sipols**, *Trading and economic relations between USSR and Germany in 1939–1941 in context of a newly discovered documents from archives*, Modern and current History Journal 1997/2, pp. 29–41.

wartime instruments created the need for a wide range of minor minerals. Just the United States, despite its pre-war dominance in many categories, was compelled to import more than 2 billion dollars' worth of minerals from 53 different countries, in which some 11 Latin American nations and more than 12 African dependencies of the United Kingdom[3].

In the fall of 1939 Germany not only was denied access to the Latin America goods, but lost its access to the Asian and USA markets. The deficit of currency and gold created new problems for German economy under wartime conditions. Before 1 Sep. 1939 Germany purchased 53,3% of its import from the states which became increasingly belligerent with Germany, and following a "cold neutrality" after the outbreak of war[4]. Germany purchased 72,1% of all imported raw materials from the future enemies or from Latin America[5], which stood loyal by the UK after WWII had broken out. Germany imported not only a raw materials, but also trucks, spare parts for vehicles, textile, clothes, food, wood and many other goods. German economy produced 337 000 vehicles by 1938 and imported 97 000 ones, the value of the imported vehicles and spare parts was 136 mln. RM when the whole value of the automobile branch output (only vehicles) was 1 bill. RM[6].

Blocking the access to the markets of USA, Britain Empire, France, the Latin America and many other countries had caused in 1939 substantial losses for German economy, in the concrete amounts of basic products (tab. 1). The data shown in table 1 helps us to comprehend the role of democratic states and their allies in supplying Nazi Germany[7].

TABLE 1: *Effect of Allied blockade on German imports, in thousands of metric tones*

Industrial classification by raw material	Total import in 1938	Loss after the launch of blockade
Textile, wool and animal hair	847.7	664.6
Hides and skins	135.7	98.4
Wood for pulp	1674.7	444.4
Indian rubber	108.4	71.4

[3] **A.M. Bateman**, *Wartime dependence on foreign minerals*, Economic Geology 1946/XLI/4, Pt. I, p. 312.

[4] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 3. Act 1. (in German).

[5] *Ibidem*.

[6] Germany's economy during 1938/1939. Report from "Reichs-Kredit-Gesellschaft Aktiengesellschaft", Berlin 1939, p. 21.

[7] **H.C. Hillman**, *Analysys of Germany's trade and the war*, Economica. New series. 1940/725, p. 82.

Industrial classification by raw material	Total import in 1938	Loss after the launch of blockade
Mineral oils, technical fats	5436.9	2556.9
Non-ferrous ores	4353.4	1344.6
Non-ferrous metals	555.3	350.1
Iron-ores	23.612	8719.1

Source: **H.C. Hillman**, *Analysys of Germany's trade and the war*, Economica. New series. 1940/725, p. 82.

We can grasp from data exhibited in tables 2 and 3, that Germany favored non-ferrous metals in its import and that the trade allowed Germany to limit the cost of refining. For instance, one ton of refined copper required approximately 27 tons of coal (according to the prewar data on supplying Congo in 1930, part of 400 mln. tons of coal brought to Congo was spent on transport's needs)[8]. Of course, some allies of Western democracies continued the trade with Germany. These were Switzerland, Portugal, Sweden, Finland and Romania, which increased sales to Germany after 1 Sep. 1939. The crisis of vehicle production could create the deficit of Indian rubber, because German refineries were not ready in 1939 and 1940 to substitute the bulk of demand for natural rubber with synthetic rubber. Germany and countries occupied up to the fall of 1939 had poor deposits of copper. Supplies of copper from America and Africa were cut off. German officials reported in 1939 that Germany had only 290 000 tons of copper in stocks against its annual demand of 350 000 tons.

Despite high prices on textiles in Europe, Germany purchased textiles valued at 633,1 mln. RM by 1937 and 695,1 mln. RM in the first ten months of 1938[9]. Czechoslovakia's dominance in the supply of textile was essential for the Germany's consumption of this product. German economy spent about 550 mln. RM to finance the import from Czechoslovakia[10], approximately 8–9% of the whole import to Germany before WWII. The import of commodities from Czechoslovakia, Latin America and other countries allowed Hitler's regime to shift resources from civilian to military production. Its main counterpart in the WWII – the USSR had limited access to the international markets because of a discord between Joseph Stalin's regime and democracies in the beginning of 1930s over

[8] **R.E. Birchard**, *Copper in tha Catanga region Belgian Congo*, Economic geography 1940/16/4, p. 432.

[9] Germany's economy during 1938/1939. Report…, p. 23.

[10] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 3. Act 1. (in German).

the persecution of the clergy. Only the softening of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's position after 1934 allowed USSR to acquire the products of the US aircraft industry and technology for refineries.

Sweden, one of the main economic partners of Germany during 1939s, supplied Germany with 8,4 mln. t. of iron ore in 1938[11]. Norway in the same year shipped to Germany 1,1 mln. t. of iron ore[12], while during the first 9 months of 1938 German firms extracted 8,2 mln. t. of this ore in domestic provinces[13]. Germany imported 20,39 mln. t. of iron ore from several countries, France supplied almost 5,7 mln. t. to Germany in this year and almost the same volume of this material in 1938[14]. Just after the annexation of Austria and during persecution of Jews France continued to trade with the Nazi Germany. Despite the growth of import, Germany had not radically gone ahead of the level of net import of raw materials in 1928 (tab. 1). Exploration of German deposits did not bring to the Nazi regime the expected results (tab. 2).

TABLE 2: *Nets import of raw materials to Germany before WWII*

1000 t	1929	1937	1938
Refined raw materials			
Copper	429,6	551	460,5
Lead	57,7	126,8	104,7
Zinc	–1,7	101,4	99,6
Chrome	41,4	132,1	105,6
Nickel	13,8	20	24,3
Bauxite	386,9	1313,2	941,4
Brazil ore	1124,6	1427	1095,2
Raw materials			
Aluminum	8,9	5,6	7,4
Copper	213,5	252,8	258,4
Nickel	2,4	3,2	3,1
Lead	114,4	72,8	42,1
Tin	12,5	10,2	9,3
Zinc	95,3	70,5	50,9

Source: Germany's economy during 1938\1939. Report…, p. 16.

[11] Germany's economy during 1938/1939. Report…, p. 17.
[12] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 3. Act 1. (in German).
[13] Germany's economy during 1938/1939. Report…, p. 17.
[14] *Ibidem*.

TABLE 3: *Exploring German deposits before WWII*

1000 т	1932	1936	1937	1938
Raw ore				
Lead – and zinc ore	1179	2030	2220	2131
Lead – and zinc ore with mix of lead	51	69	79	–
Lead – and zinc ore with mix of zinc	75	157	166	–
Copper ore	965	1124	1263	906
Copper ore with mix of fare copper	31	27	27	–
Brazil ore	175	286	424	306
Brazil ore with mix of fare brazil	75	122	180	–
Refined products				
Copper	155	209,7	225,2	180,9
Lead	97	144,4	166,4	131,1
Zinc	42	136,4	163,3	142,1
Aluminum	19,2	97,5	127,5	–

Source: Germany's economy during 1938/1939. Report…, p. 9.

German firms hardly explored any bauxites. The South-East Europe shipped up to 53,5% of purchasing by Germany bauxites annually, the main supplier being Hungary. The weight of Finland and Yugoslavia in the copper export to Germany was not big. Finland was responsible for the purchase by German firms of 13570 t. of copper in 1938, Yugoslavia brought to Germany about 7 200 t. of copper in the same year[15]. Finland shipped to Germany small volume of nickel before the war because of limited capacity of Finland's mines[16]. Turkey met 60% of Germany's chrome demand in 1939, than 115 000 t.[17] Adolf Hitler stopped German arms export to Turkey after the "mutual declaration" Turkey with Britain in May 1939. The author believes that in 1938 purchasing chrome export from Turkey covered the whole of Germany's demand on this product. After 1 September 1939 Turkey had stopped chrome sales to Germany[18].

The tables above show that Germany purchased big amounts of copper annually. The main exporters of copper were Chili, USA, Canada and Belgian Congo

[15] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 3. Act 1. (in German).

[16] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 8. Act 15. (in German).

[17] **Gül İnanç**, *The politics of "Active Neutrality" on the Eve of a New World order: The Case of Turkish chrome Sales during the Second World War*, Middle Eastern Studies 2006/42/6, p. 908.

[18] **Gül İnanç**, *The politics*…, p. 909.

during interwar period. All these states were democracies or allies of democratic powers. Germany had to receive 82% less of manganese ore, 55% less of copper ore, 70% less of lead ore, 50% less of zinc ore, 55% less of chrome ore, 51% less of nickel ore and to undergo under losses of many other types of ore because of blockade[19]. On the other hand, we can comprehend from these figures, how much amount of a raw materials Germany received before the war from democracies of the West. Allies hoped the Nazi Germany would not survive the blockade. Estimations of experts from Britain outlined the declining of Germany's export because of deficit of raw materials, however they considered the ability of German economy to produce military production where only a shortage of fuel could limit Germany in its war efforts. German officials wrote about a severe shortage of zinc, at a time when the German economy required 3,5 mln. tons monthly, and about 0,7 mln. tons monthly in the winter 1939. However Germany received only 1 mln. tons in the first half of 1940[20]. The zinc export to Germany descended to 0,2 mln. tons monthly in the winter 1940.

Trade with Western democracies or with Germany? The Stalin's choice

The Great depression provoked the expansion of the Western firms on the Soviet market. The governments of many democracies worked out various schemes to encourage exports by guarantying or insuring payments for goods sold to the countries with an exchange deficit. The USSR had run a chronic deficit in trade because of its shortage of foreign currency and gold. Stalin's regime operated also under pressure of ideology, while western conservatives demanded a blockade against the USSR. Russian communists regarded the cooperation with the West as a temporary factor; they wanted to break relations with democracies at first opportunity. Stalin considered the British Empire his main enemy. However, as a result of Japan's aggression against China, Japan occupied territories adjacent to territories vulnerable to an invasion – the Far East and Siberia. Stalin did not want to allow the Japanese army to defeat China and establish "the Great Asian Empire of welfare". Such a military and economic monster could swallow all east territories of the Soviet Union. Stalin had to keep in the Far East and in the East Siberia a big army, almost one million soldiers and sailors, ready to clash with the Japanese Empire. So, Stalin needed modern aircrafts, other weapons,

[19] **H.C. Hilman**, *Analysys of Germany's trade…*, p. 86.
[20] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 35. Act 114. (in German).

and technology to produce military goods, which inspired Soviet cooperation with USA, France, Britain and Swiss during 1930s. The USSR depended on the goods from the West to overcome its backwardness.

The deficit of currency and the big Soviet debt ($ 300 millions up to 1931) had blocked almost all trade between USSR and USA. The administration of president Herbert Clark Hoover had found itself under a political pressure of conservatives to stop all trade with the USSR. American export to USSR reached only $ 15 millions in 1934, much less than in 1930, when it amounted to $113 millions. Stalin's regime had to resort to trade with his main enemy in Europe – the United Kingdom. The USSR sold agricultural production and raw materials to the UK (the USSR cash flow from the export to Britain reached RUB 350 millions in 1938, equal to almost $ 50 millions).

The USA had to trade with USSR under unfavorable circumstances, Russian debt piling up at the end of 1939 to $ 507 millions[21]. However, President Roosevelt followed the old Hoover's strategy to continue trade with the USSR while offering guarantees to exporting firms[22], because US economy demanded manganese ore[23]. After 1933 Roosevelt launched programs for building a modern ocean fleet and air force. The American export to the USSR was also very high because the Soviet military industry was granted access to modern aircraft technologies in return for raw materials. By the summer of 1939 Roosevelt was ready to grant USSR new contracts for purchasing military equipment and goods of other sorts valued at $ 50 millions in return for 800 000 t. of magnesia[24].

Stalin had not blocked the trade with USA after the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact, however, the pact complicated the Soviet–USA political relations. The point of contention in the Soviet–American relations was the "moral embargo", which was put by Roosevelt at 2 Dec. 1940 as an answer to the Soviet–Finland war (1939–1940). The embargo could be provoked by the pact, and the war between the USSR and Finland only made president's decision coming sooner. But Roosevelt limited his declaration only to recommendations for the US aircraft industry because he desired to stabilize the relations between USSR and USA. American experts were sure that the war between USSR and Germany was inevitable.

Stalin had no economic reasons to secure contracts with Germany, because he could demand from Roosevelt almost any good and technology he desired. The

[21] Archive of foreign policy of Russian Federation. Fund 06. Collection 1. P. 15. Act 156, lists 6–7.
[22] **E.C. Ropes**, *American–Soviet Trade relations*, The Russian Review 1943/3/1, p. 92.
[23] Archive of foreign policy of Russian Federation. Fund 06. Collection1. P. 15. Act 156, list 4.
[24] Archive of foreign policy of Russian Federation. Fund 06. Collection1. P. 15. Act 156, lists 6–7.

trade between USSR and the British Empire grew up in 1938. The economic and political perspectives of the trade with Germany clouded in 1939. The contracts with Hitler must have turned out to be a factor in the worsening of the relations with Western Allies and USA, however Stalin followed his political aims, when he granted the contracts with the Nazi Germany.

The Soviet oil export to the Nazi Germany

An endurance test of the value of the trade agreement between USSR and Germany in 1939 was that between 1940 and winter 1941 the shipment of oil from Russia satisfied 10,7% of Germany's fuel consumption in 1940 (total amount of consumed fuel was 6389 tons[25]), thus bolstering the fuel resources of the Hitler's regime. Germany itself extracted about 1 million tons of crude oil from domestic deposits in 1940[26]. Expansion of Romanian oil output was slow in 1939–1940. In 1939 Romania shipped to Germany 1,2 mln. tons of oil[27]. After 1 Sep. 1939 Romania was detached from UK and French investors, which bolstered the exporting capacity of its oil industry. Romania exported to Germany about 1,15 mln. tons of oil and fuel in 1940, when an amount of fuel import in Germany reached about 1,5 mln. tons[28].

Hitler's regime hoped for a synthetic fuel, but to no avail. The war corrected the output of this product, because coal from which this type of fuel was extracted was required by other branches of economy and the army. The reduction of the output of all types of fuel occurred in Germany during 1941, the decline being estimated at 1,026 tons[29]. Germany economy and the army received from different sources 7,1 mln. tons of fuel in 1941[30]. The main types of fuel in Germany were fuel oil, gasoline, petrol, "burning oil" (very crude and cheap type of fuel). Ger-

[25] The experts of the German Institute for economic research *How was forged "German sword". The industrial potential of the Third Reich*, "Yauza", "Eksmo", Moscow, 2006, pp. 212–215.

[26] We have different data on the domestic crude oil in Germany in 1940. According to official announcements in 1942, Germany's economy received a little less 1,5 mln. tons of a crude oil from a domestic deposits, however, in a one top secret document issued by German experts at 1942 the Germany's output of a rude oil was pegged at 0,4 mln. tons in 1940 (Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 35. Act 256), therefore we supposed the amount of this output to be 1 mln. tons, because often German officials made mistakes in estimations and we add to the minimum German domestic production the captured resources in Poland and in other countries.

[27] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 3. Act 1. (in German).

[28] *How was forged "German sword"*…, p. 212.

[29] Russian state military archive. Fund 1458. Collection 35. Act 247 (in German).

[30] *Ibidem*.

many's economy consumed only 832 000 tons of fuel oil (50 less than in 1938), 615 000 tons gasoline (80% less than in 1938), 160 000 petrol (36% less than in 1938), 167 000 tons "burning oil" (34% less than in 1938)[31]. So 5 326 000 tons of fuel satisfied the needs of the army and fleet, and exported.

The war against Western Allies in 1940 required less fuel, German aviation received only 863 000 of petrol. Up to 75% (647 250 tons) of the demand supplied German refineries, however they worked on imported oil[32]. German refineries could produce 889 000 tons of petrol for aircrafts in 1941[33]. Hitler was preparing an assault on USSR since the summer of 1940, however German refineries had not expanded radically the output of aircraft petroleum in 1941. This must be puzzling, if we take into account that this sort of petroleum required oil of very high quality. After January 1941 the Soviet export of oil to Germany radically declined. German officials tried to substitute the Soviet oil with Romanian oil, but Romania had to supply also Italy, which contributed to the decline of its export of oil to Germany in 1941. By the winter of 1941 German air forces developed a sharp deficit of petrol[34]. German air formations won on the old stocks made in 1940. German air forces received 359 000 tons of fuel from the 1941 stock. The stock of aircraft petrol piled up in Jan. 1941 to 613 000[35]. So Germany received from different sources 1 476 000 tons of aircraft petrol (approximately 200 000–300 000 were captured in France and the Low Countries).

To understand, how Germany's refineries survived on the imports from USSR and Romania, we limit our examination only to aircraft petrol. Without high activity in the air the German army could not win the campaign against France and other operations in 1940–1941. Cracking allows to receive about 0,7 ton of a petrol from 1 ton of a rude oil. So Germany had to import about 1 mln. tons of crude oil to produce 647 250 tons in 1940. On 1 Sep. 1939 Germany had small stocks of aircraft petrol which were spent during the campaign against Poland and patrol missions along the West front by the winter 1939/1940. The import from Romania's was enough to provide German air forces with petrol, however German refineries had to supply other types of troops and national economy. The German civilian segments of economy received 848 000 tons of petrol of

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31 *Ibidem*.

32 *How was forged "German sword"…*, pp. 213–214.

33 *Ibidem*, p. 213.

34 **W.G. Jensen**, *The Importance of Energy in the First and Second World Wars*, The Historical Journal 1968/11/3, p. 553.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 552.

different types in 1940[36]. Germany's industry produced 1,5 mln. tons of syntactic fuel, however its output could not covered the whole demand of the army and economy. Only German army's land units required 852 000 tons of petrol during 1940 while the Germany's consumption of a fuel descended to almost 5,85 mln. tons in the same year. Than the bulk of natural petrol produced in Germany was shifted in 1940 to the army, approximately 1,4 mln. tons in 1940, so German refineries received about 1,9 millions tons of a rude oil in 1940 to meet the army's demand. However, Germany's war machine required also stocks of a petrol from crude oil. It transpires than, that maximum 300 000 tons of aircraft petrol were stocks captured during 1940, but a little more than 300 000 tons was received from domestic industry. So, about 0,5 mln. tons of a rude oil required delivery of a petrol to the stocks of the German air forces in 1940. This allows us to conclude that Germany received about 2,4 mln. tons of a rude oil to meet the demand of its army in 1940. In 1940 Germany had produced 1 million tons of oil within its borders. We need to remember that Romania's import had reached about 1,15 mln. tons in 1940, therefore purchasing of the Soviet oil export could provide 0,16 mln. tons of army's demand in 1940. However we must take into account that Romania's export could be shifted to civilian sector of the economy. At the same time the lack of the Soviet oil export could reduce army's consumption of petrol to 0,16 mln. tons in 1940. Also, we should take into account that stocks of aircraft petrol in Germany had become very small by Christmas 1940. The Soviet shipment of crude oil was very important at the end of 1940 and during the winter of 1941, because stocks of aircraft petrol could cover the need of German air forces only for 2–3 months[37]. In the winter–spring 1941 the USSR delivered to Germany yet about 350 000 tons of a rude oil, this amount could provide the production of about 215 000 tons of a good petrol, however only German air forces consumed during 1941 about 1,16 mln. tons of petrol, but Russian export of oil in 1941 was purchased in the period when Germany faced severe deficit of an aircraft petrol and the Russian oil had proper quality.

Non-ferrous ores from USSR and Japan

We focus in this chapter on the problem of purchasing by the Nazi Germany of the USSR's exports of manganese, chrome and wolfram ores. One of the biggest exporting manganese ore country was USSR. Germany, as mentioned above, had

[36] *How was forged "German sword"…*, p. 214.
[37] **W.G. Jensen**, *The Importance of Energy…*, p. 552.

lost access to 82% of its manganese consumption after 1 Sep. 1939. Germany increased the exploration of this ore in occupied countries in 1939, however this measure could cover 50% of the prewar demand, approximately 1 000 000 tons annually. The trade with the USSR brought to Germany 185 000 tons of manganese in 1940.

As mentioned above, Germany lost almost all its import of chrome ore. After 1 Sep. 1939 German industry annually delivered about 100 000 tons of chrome. Hitler's regime faced the deficit of chrome just before the aggression against Poland. Thanks to Britain diplomacy, Turkey had radically cut the chrome export to Germany in May 1939. Facing a severe shortage, Berlin requested chrome ore from Stalin's regime. The USSR shipped 23 000 tons[38] mainly in 1940. The annual minimum chrome demand of the German industry was 7 400 tons, which allowed to produce enough weapons. The offensive required an annual supply of 15 400 tons of chrome excluding the demand of the civilian sector[39]. So the Soviet export of chrome ore could cover the more than annual needs of the Germany's military industry. We believe, that German officials exaggerated the possibilities of the German firms to explore domestic deposits of chrome ore, because during the winter of 1942 Germany received only about 60% of required amount of chrome ore[40]. This was maybe the result of a depletion of chrome deposits in Germany and in the occupied countries. We believe that this depletion of chrome deposits could have occurred earlier.

The problem of wolfram ores was one of central subjects of German external and economic policy during the Second World War. The main supplier of wolfram ore to Germany was Portugal. One of the problems in 1940 was that of safeguarding the flow of Portuguese minerals along the Atlantic coasts to refineries in Central Europe against the patrols of Britain war ships. German fleet could not protect convoys in the Biscay Bay. Another problem consisted in the capacity of Portugal's mining at the beginning of the war, which was poor in the first half of 1941. And the third problem: Portugal's government had little motivation to collaborate with the Nazi Germany, because USA pressed on Lisbon, and only the collapse of France in May 1940 had pushed Salazar's regime into closer cooperation with Hitler.

While the war continued for only two years, the production of the Portugal's mining sector rapidly increased. The main investors in Portugal's mining were in the UK, whose economy mobilized slowly to reach its peak during the Battle

[38] **V.J. Sipols**, *Trading and economic relations…*, p. 38.

[39] **K. Reinhardt**, *The turn near Moscow. The crash of Hitler's strategy by winter 1941/42*, "Voenizdat", Moscow 1982, p. 350.

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 350.

of Britain (Oct. 1940). Even if the Nazi Germany with the help of the Franco's regime reached out toward Portugal's economy after the defeat of France, the Salazar's regime continued to export wolfram ore to the UK. German firms assisted Portugal's mining companies to expand the production of wolfram. In 1941–1942 Germany was receiving 153 tons of wolfram monthly[41], which resulted in the growth of the military output in Germany, especially tanks and cannons. However, before 1941 Germany had a substantially lesser access to wolfram ore.

One document reveals that wolfram's export to Germany before 1941 came from Japan, which had occupied China's wolfram fields before 1940. We have discovered only one short mention from German officials about the transit of Japanese goods through the Soviet Union. According to this document in September 1940 Japan delivered to Germany 357 tons of wolfram. The share of this mineral in the whole export from Japan in this month was 3,5%[42]. We suppose that the share of wolfram shipped by Japan through the Soviet railroads every month stood at about 3,3% in 1940, when the annual amount of Japan's wolfram export to Germany amounted to about 4 000 tons of wolfram delivered in the period of 1 Nov. 1939–30 Sep. 1940, because the whole weight of shipped to Germany by Japan cargo was 99944 tons during this period[43]. Since the end of 1940 there began the decline of Japan's export to Germany because of deficit of railroad cars in the USSR.

Conclusions

Germany's wartime demand for strategic minerals and oil from abroad had not grown radically with the loss of valuable sources of supply in the North and South America, Africa and Asia. Slowly the volume of production grew along with the pace of economic changes in the mineral and oil zones of Europe. The way of purchasing raw materials by Germany differed from that practiced by the British Empire and USA during the Second World War. In one sense the German–Soviet trade between 1939 and June 1941 confirmed the old credo of German conservative movement that Russia's primarily role was to buttress German economy in time of confrontation with Western democracies. A wide range of Soviet ores and Japanese wolfram played a vital role in German victories of 1940–1941. Especially, it contributed to the German military success during 1941, because

[41] *How was forged "German sword"*…, p. 74.

[42] Central Archives of Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Fund 500. Op. 12450. Act 64. List 952 (in German).

[43] *Ibidem*.

Germany's war economy was bolstered in 1939–1940 by the stocks of raw materials and weapons made before the war. The Soviet oil export to Germany played a role of additional source, which focused mainly on the stocks of a fuel used in the campaigns against Greece, Yugoslavia, British troops on Balkans and in the North Africa and USSR in 1941.

The comparison of German imports from Western democracies before 1 September 1939 and from the Soviet Union in the years 1939–1940 shows that the British Empire and the US made in 1930s little effort to constrain the rearmament of the Nazi Germany. We believe that the democratic states, by sale of non-ferrous and iron ore for Hitler's regime, made it more easy to enlarge the volume of German military production before the outset of the Second World War. However, it is hard to understand Stalin's strategy in 1939, when the USSR enjoyed close cooperation with the most economic powerful state of the world – the USA. Maybe Stalin's choice was inspired by an old Lenin's concept to maintain good relations with Germany when circumstances in Europe grow tense. We believe that the aggression of Japan against USSR in the summer 1939 made Stalin more aware about the Soviet Union's territories in the Far East and in Siberia and it rendered dubious the political concept of the ex-minister of foreign affairs M. Litvinov who stood for the cooperation with Western democracies.

An interesting fact discovered in our research is that the data on non-ferrous metals export to Germany mentioned by Hilman H.C. and German official data do not coincide. This fact points to the contraband to Germany from many regions of the world during 1930s. Perhaps, the Britain's intelligence did not know the actual volume of smuggled goods.

The struggle between democracies and the Axis in 1930s failed to stop supplying the Nazi Germany with raw materials. This experience shows that there was a gap between economic interests under the concept of the free trade and the political actions of different governments. The problem of inconsistency existed also in the external policy of the USSR.

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HANDEL Z NAJEŹDŹCĄ A PAKT RIBBENTROP–MOŁOTOW. SPOSTRZEŻENIA ZAINSPIROWANE PRZEZ NIEZNANE DOKUMENTY

Streszczenie

Artykuł ten poświęcony jest problemowi gospodarczych skutków paktu Ribbentrop–Mołotow. Dyskusja na temat paktu trwa od wielu lat, jakkolwiek nie wykazano w badaniach wpływu paktu na sukcesy militarne nazistowskich Niemiec w latach 1939–1941, czyli okresie największych sukcesów nazistowskiej machiny wojennej. Autor, bazując na nowo odnalezionych dokumentach ujawniających stosunki gospodarcze pomiędzy Niemcami a kilkoma państwami, włączając ZSRR, prezentuje studium porównawcze handlu pomiędzy Niemcami a demokracjami zachodnimi z jednej strony, a Niemcami i ZSRR – z drugiej, w celu podkreślenia roli paktu Ribbentrop–Mołotow w rozwoju machiny wojennej nazistowskich Niemiec.

Słowa kluczowe: pakt Ribbentrop–Mołotow; gospodarka nazistowskich Niemiec; eksport surowców w latach trzydziestych XX wieku; polityka zagraniczna ZSRR; geopolityka w czasach II wojny światowej