

La lucha por el mercado del petróleo alemán en los inicios del régimen de Hitler

The struggle for the German oil market at the beginning of the Hitler regime

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Resumen: Sobre la base de documentos diplomáticos, el artículo reconstruye un cuadro detallado de la expulsión del mercado alemán durante 1933 de las empresas soviéticas "Derop" y "Derunaft", proveedoras de productos petrolíferos. Los materiales de la inteligencia soviética muestran que uno de los inspiradores de este proceso puede ser considerado el gran magnate petrolero holandés-británico Sir H. Deterding, quien, en el curso de la supuesta "cruzada" contra la URSS, esperaba, entre otras cosas, tomar el control de los campos petroleros del Cáucaso.

Palabras clave: petróleo, régimen de Hitler, 1933, "cruzada" contra la URSS, Deterding, von Papen, "Derop", "Derunaft".

Abstract: On the basis of diplomatic documents, the paper reconstructs a detailed picture of the expulsion from the German market during 1933 of the Soviet firms "Derop" and "Derunaft", suppliers of oil products. The document of Soviet intelligence shows that a big Dutch-British oil magnate, Sir H. Deterding, can be considered one of the inspirers of this process; he hoped, among other things, to seize control of the Caucasian oil fields in the course of the alleged "crusade" against the USSR.

Keywords: oil, Hitler's regime, 1933, "crusade" against the USSR, Deterding, von Papen, "Derop", "Derunaft".

Sumario: Introducción. 1. Los primeros pasos de los Nacionales socialistas para extraer el petróleo soviético del mercado Alemán. 2. Creciente presión y represión contra las estructuras Soviéticas y la empresa "Derop". 3. Participación de las estructuras políticas superiores Soviéticas en el problema del "Derop". 4. La etapa final de la lucha por "Derop" y su venta. Conclusiones.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the twentieth century, and today, and probably for the foreseeable future, oil has played an important role, and continues to play it. It animates, with the help of human will and hands, mechanical organisms for a short time, enabling them to fulfill their functions for both peaceful and military purposes. They only made themselves known during the First World War, but the Second World War was already the "battle of machinery". However, as historians discovered, it was not always the time when an actor of the international relations, a participant of the future hostilities, had access to oil fields¹. An inquisitive reader may ask the question, is there such a thing? How an actor (read as a member of the international politics) can plan, and moreover, participate in the military actions without providing itself with oil? Yes, it can happen. From this point of view, Germany of the inter-war period cannot help but draw attention to it, however paradoxical that may sound.

¹ MOROZOV, Stanislav, "K voprosu o roli neftjanogo faktora v evropejskikh mezhdunarodnyh otnoshenijah v techenie 1933 – 1935 gg. in *VII chtenija posvjashchennye pamjati R.L. Javorskogo. Materialy Vserossijskoj nauchnoj konferencii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem*, Novokuznetsk, KuzSPA Editorial and Publishing Unit, 2011, pp. 170 – 195; MOROZOV, Stanislav, "Khronika vytesnenija sovetskoj nefti s germanskogo rynka v techenie 1933 g.", in *IX chtenija posvjashchennye pamjati R.L. Javorskogo. Materialy vserossijskoj (s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem) nauchnoj konferencii*, Novokuznetsk, KuzSPA Editorial and Publishing Unit, 2013, pp. 226 – 238; GEHT, Evghenija, *Neft' v politike Germanii (1933 – 1943)*, (Abstract of dissertation for the degree of candidate of historical sciences), Yekaterinburg, Ural State University named after A.M. Gorky, 2007, p. 22.

According to the British historian W. Medlicott, for the year before the war, Germany produced only 552,000 tons of the consumed 7,100,000 tons of oil, 1,600,000 tons was made by independent synthetic petrol production; 450,000 tons were imported from Romania and the remaining 4,400,000 tons were imported from outside Europe². Moreover, this was the peak volume, since synthetic petrol production, for example, in Germany, in the early 1930s was just being developed. It turns out that 75 – 85% was imported by someone... By whom? There is an obvious intrigue here, and it would be very interesting to answer this and some other questions.

Some German researchers were undoubtedly concerned about the oil issue in interwar Germany. For example, in the mid-1960s, W. Birkenfeld drew attention to the fact that, following the failed attempt to gain access to the oil sources of the Middle East, the German leadership focused on the production of its own synthetic petrol³.

As time went on, the research questions underwent some transformation and 20 years later E. Teichert discovered that in the pre-war period, Germany had set its sights on self-sufficiency, i.e. autarchy. He set out to clarify the content of projects related to the concepts of "Autarchy" and "Greater Economic Space" in the context of German foreign economic policy⁴.

A couple of years later his colleague H. Meicher concluded in his two-volume work, on the basis of published archival materials from Germany, the USA, England and the Middle East, that already in the 1930s the Middle East had become an arena of struggle between large oil monopolies. Germany's attempt to supply itself with mineral oil through participation in the outsider company BOD failed because the big Anglo-American companies could not allow Germany to be independent in terms of oil supply. The author draws the reader's attention to an important fact: oil has become an excellent means of exerting pressure on German policy⁵.

² MEDLICOTT, William, *The Economic Blockade*, vol. 1, London, Longmans, Green and Co, 1952, p. 33.

³ BIRKENFELD, Wolfgang, *Der synthetische Treibstoff 1933 – 1945: Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Wirtschafts- und Rüstungspolitik*, Göttingen, Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1964, p. 64 – 238.

⁴ TEICHERT, Eckart, *Autarkie und Grossraumwirtschaft in Deutschland 1930 – 1939: Aussenwirtschaftspolitische Konzeptionen zwischen Wirtschaftskrise und Zweitem Weltkrieg*, München, Oldenburg, 1984, p. 48 – 155.

⁵ MEJCHER, Helmut, *Die Politik und das Öl im Nahen Osten*, vol. 2: *Die Teilung der Welt 1938 – 1950*, Stuttgart, Klett-Gotta, 1990, p. 68 – 149.

A surge of interest in oil issues among German academics took place in 2003 and 2006. In *Faktor Öl*, a two-part book published in Munich in 2003, R. Karlsch and R. Stoks attempted to provide an overview of the development of the German oil industry between 1859 and 1974. This study highlights a number of themes, including the relationship between the oil industry and international politics, diplomacy and war⁶.

A study by T. Kockel covering the German oil policy from 1928 to 1938 was released in 2005 and consisted of 5 chapters reflecting the main German oil policy phases up to 1938. The first chapter provides an overview for the prehistory of the German oil policy before 1933: "Feder's Era" (1933 – 1934), "Schacht's Era" (1934 – 1938), and the initial stage of the "Goering Era" (from February to August 1938). The main problem that the author addresses in his study is how to eliminate Germany's dependence on the Achnakaray Treaty countries for its oil supply. The merit of the research by Kockel is that he compares 3 possibilities of oil supply for Germany: 1) oil prospecting proper in Germany (drilling), 2) production of synthetic oil, and 3) oil prospecting outside Germany. However, the initiative to search for its own oil is more highlighted⁷.

The above works do not exhaust the body of research on the subject in Germany. The research carried out by German historians over a long period has undoubtedly provided an accurate reflection of the developments in the German oil sector, particularly in the interwar period. They cover a wide range of issues relating to oil and international relations, diplomacy, the interests of large oil corporations, and the foreign policy of Hitler's Germany⁸. However, the struggle for German oil market at the beginning of Hitler's regime and

⁶ KARLSCH, Rainer, STOCKES, Raymond G., *Faktor Öl. Die Mineralölwirtschaft in Deutschland 1859 – 1974*, München, C.H. Beck Verlag, 2003, p. 460.

⁷ KOCKEL, Titus, *Deutsche Ölpolitik 1928 – 1938*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2005, p. 393.

⁸ For the sake of objectivity, it should be noted that, along with German historiography, there are English- and Russian-language studies on various aspects of the oil issue. But they do not fully answer the questions asked in our study, primarily because of the commonness of the source base. Vid.: KLEIN, Burton H., *Germany's Economic Preparations for War*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University press, 1959; FRIEDWALD, Eugène M., *Oil and the War*, London, Heineman, 1941; PEARTON, Maurice, *Oil and the Romanian State*, Oxford, Clarendon press 1971; SESJULI, Richard, *IG Farbenindustrie*, Moscow, State Publishing of Foreign Literature, 1948; BRUCKS, Michael, *Nefi' i vneshnjaja politika*, Moscow, State Publishing of Foreign Literature, 1949; CZICHON, Eberhard, *Bankir i vlast'*, Moscow, Progress, 1977; WELLES, Sumner, *Where are we heading*, New York, Harper Brothers Publishers, 1946.

deliberate exclusion of Soviet oil products from the market, behind which there were hidden Western oil corporations with their malicious plans to control eastern (Soviet) oil sources, is not adequately described.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the aforementioned areas and, above all, how the Soviet oil suppliers “Derop” and “Derunaft” were squeezed out of the German market, clarifying questions such as who was behind this process and in whose interests it was carried out and what goals it pursued.

The source material from the archive of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service sheds light on the aims of influential backstreet structures, such as the organization of a crusade against the USSR, in which an oil king, Sir H. Deterding, and a major political figure such as the German Chancellor F. von Papen, were involved. An important source, if not the main one, was the official publication "Foreign Policy Documents of the USSR", particularly, reports of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, which provides a very detailed picture of various activities in the fight of Hitler's state against Soviet companies that supplied oil products to the German market. A substantial contribution to the achievement of significant results was made by the materials of scientific publications of documents from the Archives of the President of the Russian Federation, the largest newspapers of the Soviet era *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, as well as published results of scientific research.

1. THE FIRST STEPS OF THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS TO OUST SOVIET OIL FROM THE GERMAN MARKET

At the beginning of the study, and in order to demonstrate the awareness degree about the oil issue importance in that period, it is worth citing its assessment in 1925 by the Soviet leadership, in particular Stalin: "...the question of oil is a vital question, for who will have more oil, depends on who will command in the future war. The one, who'll have more oil, depends on who will command the world industry and trade. Once the navy of the advanced countries switches to engines, oil becomes the lifeblood of the struggle of the world states for domination in times of peace as well as in times of war"⁹.

In Germany, this trend was not averse to the coming war, too. As an example, one can cite the memorable letter of the industrialist H. Rechling to Hitler on 17 August 1936 that eloquently enough described the enormous role to be played by oil: "The coming war will be above all a war of technology,

⁹ STALIN, Josif, *Sochinienija*, vol. 7, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1947, p. 278.

and perhaps the victory will be provided by the highest technology, the greatest courage, and the greatest ability to overcome disadvantage"¹⁰.

The theme of the coming war is present in both assessments of the oil question, both in the Soviet Union and in Germany, and is the denominator that is already invisibly present in thoughts and prepares the leadership of the countries for certain actions. To what extent were such fears and predictions justified? From where and from whom could the threat of military action emanate, in whose interests could it be manifested?

The answer to some of these questions can be found in the document from the Foreign Intelligence Service Archive, dated June 24, 1932, declassified and placed on the President Boris Yeltsin Library site. It says about secret negotiations of German Chancellor F. von Papen with his French counterpart about war alliance creation. The news was confirmed in London. Von Papen conducted these negotiations as a secret chamberlain of the Pope. It was suggested that Poland may join this alliance as well as a common crusade against the USSR. These negotiations were coordinated by the Vatican, "which sought to influence Poland in the sense of concessions to Germany", for which Poland was to be "widely rewarded in the direction of the Soviet Ukraine".

In the event of a Franco-German-Polish march into the Ukraine, there would be another participant – England, which would try to "seize the Caucasus and, under the guise of liberating Georgia, seize" the oil sources there. In this regard, a preparatory action was carried out in London - "treatment of Georgian and other Caucasian emigrants". Oil industrialist H. Deterding "had already acquired all the old (tsarist time) shares of the Caucasian oil fields and enterprises".

In the final part of the document, another country-participant of this ornate plan loomed – Japan, which was to "seize oil sources on Sakhalin and attack the USSR from the Far East in order to draw back part of the Red Army and thus weaken the Western front of the Soviets against Poland and Romania". The success of this multi-pronged combination depended to a large extent on whether and how quickly France and Germany could come to an agreement¹¹.

¹⁰ DASHICHEV, Viacheslav, *Bankrotstvo strategii germanskogo fashizma. Istoricheskie ocherki. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1: *Podgotovka i razvertyvanie nacistской agressii v Evrope. 1933 – 1941*, Moscow, Nauka, 1973, p. 41.

¹¹ President Boris Yeltsin Library, "Agenturnoe soobshtchenie v INO OGPU pri SNK SSSR o peregovorah kanclera Germanii F. fon Papena v Parizhe o formirovanii zapadnoj voennoj koalicii protiv SSSR. 24.06.1932", URL:

We have obtained answers due to this document to a number of questions about the masterminds of the war made possible, its potential participating countries, their objectives, the object of the impending crusade, and the scale of the impending war. Sir Henry Deterding, a major Dutch-British oil industrialist, was named along with von Papen as one of the protagonists in this document, as he was directly interested in overthrowing Soviet power in the Caucasus because he had previously bought shares in local oil companies from their former owners. He was a very important figure and, given his sophistication in the political aspects and implications of the oil business, it would be reasonable to assume that he had some involvement in the subject we are investigating.

The role of the Western oil companies in preparing for World War II has already been discussed by some historians¹². Since Germany actually had no any oil fields of its own as a result of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 – 1920, it was largely dependent on foreign imports. Prior to Hitler's rise to power, the Soviet Union supplied a significant portion of the oil supplies through the joint Soviet-German companies “Derop” and “Derunaft”¹³. By moving the German oil market under their control, Western oil entrepreneurs with close ties to London's top brass were able, among other things, to manipulate Berlin's foreign policy activities in their intricate combinations. However, in order to do so, the Soviet oil supplier “Derunaft” and the gasoline seller “Derop” had to be squeezed out of the German oil market.

Up to 1932 inclusively, the German government was quite pleased with the activities of the Soviet business partners and even planned to continue cooperation with them in the future. In particular, in the final minutes of the Soviet-German talks of January 17, 1933 it was noted that "state institutions are in principle ready to buy Russian oil products, as has already been done directly or through intermediary of “Bensolverband” and “Reichskraftsprittgesellschaft”. Interested organizations, including

https://www.prlib.ru/item/1296775#v=d&z=2&n=5&i=13520995_doc1.tiff&y=668&x=561
Retrieved on July, 15th, 2022.

¹² MOROZOV, Stanislav, *Pol'sko-chehoslovatskie otnoshenija. 1933 – 1939. Chto skryvalos' za politikoj «ravnovesija» ministra J. Becka*, Moscow, Moscow state M.V. Lomonosov University publishing, 2004. pp. 131 – 236; MOROZOV, Stanislav, “1934 – 1935: Germany, Japan and Poland against the USSR”, *International Affairs*, 2, vol. 53, 2007, Minneapolis, pp. 121 – 134.

¹³ These two firms supplied 30% of all oil and gasoline used in the Reich to the German market. “Jewish Daily Bulletin”. May, 14th, 1933. URL: http://pdfs.jta.org/1933/1933-05-14_2546.pdf?_ga=2.132693454.1395278887.1634494859-712969897.1634494859
Retrieved on July, 15th, 2022.

communal authorities, insisted again that increased imports of Soviet oil products were in the German interest"¹⁴.

The position of the Soviet leadership also testified to its readiness to continue and strengthen mutually beneficial co-operation. In particular, the Chairman of the USSR CPC¹⁵, V.M. Molotov, in his report on the 1933 National Economic Plan at the 3rd session of the USSR Central Executive Committee of the 6th convocation on January 23, 1933, stated: "A special place in our [foreign policy] relations belongs to Germany. We have had and continue to have the strongest economic ties with Germany of all the countries which have diplomatic relations with us. And that is not by chance. It stems from the interests of both countries"¹⁶.

1.1. The resolution of the agreement between the five powers in December 1932 and the creation of a new Department of foreign policy of the National Socialist Party

However, at that time in the political life of Germany, the National Socialist Party began to play an increasingly significant role, which won the elections to the Reichstag on July 31, 1932, and H. Göring was elected its chairman¹⁷. In the international arena, Germany also managed to achieve an important achievement – in December 1932, the resolution of the agreement between the five powers (France, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, USA) recognized Berlin as "the right to equality within the framework of a security system equal for all". And on January 30, 1933 A. Hitler became the Reich Chancellor¹⁸. The day before, in a New Year's speech in the National Socialist press, he declared himself a fighter against Marxism and against the "gigantic danger of Bolshevism". And in an interview with the English "Daily Mail" on February 7, he said, among other things, that the main thing he sees as a danger is communism, which is "an obstacle to the peaceful development and a new flourishing of the German nation"¹⁹.

Soon it was officially announced the creation of a new Department of foreign policy of the National Socialist Party under the leadership of A.

¹⁴ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, vol. XVI, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1970, p. 33.

¹⁵ Council of People's Commissars – the USSR government.

¹⁶ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 50.

¹⁷ Istoriya diplomatii. Pod red. akad. V.P. POTEMKINA, vol. III, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1945, p. 457.

¹⁸ Istoriya diplomatii. pp. 457 – 458.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 466.

Rosenberg, who, among other things, feared that "communism will spread from Vladivostok to the Atlantic Ocean". He further pointed out that there are no fundamental, vital differences between Germany and the Western powers. The German one faces the problem of the "eastern space"²⁰.

The statements of the new German Reich Chancellor and his foreign policy ideologist indicate that foreign policy in the eastern direction may undergo certain changes. However, an excuse was needed for this, which followed – on February 27, the building of the Reichstag was set on fire, in which the Nazis rushed to blame the communists, through which they could free their hands and solve many other problems. In particular, for rapprochement with some Western partners, and delimitation with the Eastern ones.

This aspect did not escape the attention of Soviet diplomats. In particular, the Soviet plenipotentiary²¹ in Berlin L.M. Khinchuk informed the People's Commissar²² for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.M. Litvinov that the inspirers of this act were H. Göring and the Dutch-British oil magnate H. Deterding, and their agents were involved in the arson of the Reichstag. Göring's involvement in the report was not commented on, but Deterding's involvement was explained by three motives – his desire to aggravate the fight against communism and the USSR, as a result of which the Soviet company "Derop"²³ was expelled from the German energy market and an oil monopoly was established²⁴.

The veracity of these assumptions could be confirmed or refuted only by time, which soon happened. Already on March 12, Khinchuk reported to the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR N.N. Krestinsky that hostile activity was launched against the Soviet institutions operating in Germany. Its scale was so significant that it was necessary "to react to every such event immediately by contacting the Ausamt²⁵, the Polizeipräsidium and the Polizeirevier"²⁶. At the same time, recorded events of hostile activity were

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 467.

²¹ An Ambassador.

²² A Foreign Affairs Minister.

²³ DEROP (Deutsche Vertriebsgesellschaft für russische Ölprodukte AG) is a Soviet-German joint-stock company established in the early 1920s. the Soviet government with a small participation of private German capital for the sale of finished petroleum products (gasoline and kerosene) in Germany.

²⁴ *Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR*, p. 140.

²⁵ The German Foreign Ministry.

²⁶ A police station.

sent through diplomatic channels to Moscow. Especially sophisticated forms of this activity found its manifestation in relation to the firm “Derop”. In particular, on the night of March 12, a detachment of SA²⁷ stormtroopers entered the apartment of the chairman of “Derop” F.F. Yenko and searched. Yenko and his wife were not touched²⁸.

On March 16, the Soviet plenipotentiary envoy made a formal demarche to Bülow, an official of the German Foreign Ministry, about the arbitrariness perpetrated by the “Derop” joint-stock company. Having listed all the cases, he pointed out that these events had a harmful effect on the work of “Derop”, affecting the decrease in sales, and that the trade mission, compiling the balance of payments, did not count on the loss of proceeds. Bülow replied that his boss Minister Neurath and he himself had talked with the Minister of Economics Hugenberg about a joint appeal of the two ministries to the governments of all German states and communal institutions about rendering assistance to “Derop”. Bülow promised to tackle this problem since 13 March²⁹.

2. INCREASING PRESSURE AND REPRESSION AGAINST SOVIET STRUCTURES AND THE COMPANY "DEROP"

However, the promises of the German officials remained just an empty shake of the air, for the reports of the Soviet diplomats testified to something completely different – instead of the promised assistance, the scale of the activity deployed against the “Derop” increased many times over. In particular, this was evidenced by a letter from the Charge d’Affaires of the USSR in Germany S.S. Aleksandrovsky to the Deputy People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR N.N. Krestinsky of March 20. He reported that on the night of March 18 – 19, Nazi militiamen in uniform burst into the apartment of the director of the Leipzig branch “Derop”, a Soviet citizen, Cohan, which then entered his apartment together with the police. A search was carried out, an interrogation was carried out, several issues of the newspaper *Pravda*, several books in Russian, as well as a trade mission

²⁷ SA (Sturmabteilung) - assault detachments, paramilitary units of the Nazi party, which began to be created in Germany in August 1921 on the basis of some units of the “Volunteer Corps”.

²⁸ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 162.

²⁹ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, pp. 171 – 172.

journal, a notebook, private letters and some official documents were confiscated³⁰.

In the same report, it was noted that especially strong pressure on the “Derop” began to be produced in the Cologne district. In particular, in Bonn, the local city police previously took about 1,000 liters of gasoline from “Derop” every month. Now police office has officially announced that they will not buy Russian gasoline and will warn all their bodies not to do this either, since "Russian gasoline is a breeding ground for propaganda". For the same reason, the large company “Vutos” refused to buy Soviet gasoline, which took 800 liters a month. The firm "Müller and Vutos" took 1.5 thousand liters, but its own clients, apparently the National Socialists, began to demand in March that it not sell Soviet gasoline, which is what it goes for. Petrol station owners informed the “Derop” board that gasoline sales had dropped dramatically, with buyers frankly saying they were afraid to take “Derop” gasoline because of National Socialist threats³¹.

Aleksandrovsy informed that earlier "Derop" had negotiated with a number of persons on the conclusion of contracts for the maintenance of “Derop”'s gas stations, which had been closed for a long time. The negotiations had already led to an agreement, and it remained to sign the agreements. At the last minute, the contracts were returned, and the counterparties motivated the refusal, clearly under the dictation of the "Nazi", again the same: Soviet gasoline is a means of communist propaganda, and the counterparties are afraid of this due to the political situation in Germany.

The same report fixed cases of open terror on the part of the Nazis. On March 16, a car with 15 uniformed Nazis and two agents of the political police drove up to the premises of “Derop” in Cologne. The Nazis herded all the employees into one room and searched the entire office. During the search, they did not find anything and did not take anything, but they arrested the German Langer's employee of “Derop” and took the complete list with the addresses of all the employees.

There have been numerous other cases of open hostile manifestation. “Derop”'s Cologne-based lawyer, Dr. Warneck, was harassed and harassed for his work in the “Derop” cases. In Kassel, on March 9, “Nazis” came to the “Derop” department and demanded from the warehouse manager to hand over the “Russian communists” who were allegedly hiding from him. On 10

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 175.

³¹ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 176.

March, the Hilfspolitzai³² arrived at the “Derop” warehouse in Bingen and searched for weapons. On the same day, March 10, an official in police uniform appeared at the office of the “Derop” branch in Frankfurt during the absence of the directorate and checked the overtime employees of the branch. According to some reports, in the Düsseldorf district one “Derop” column was smashed at night. All gasoline was discharged from the other two dispensers at night. Soviet diplomats were going to use these data for a new oral and written appeal to the German Foreign Ministry³³.

2.1. The reaction of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs regarding the policy of ousting company “Derop” from the German market

The leadership of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs followed from Moscow with concern and sent instructions to Berlin. In particular, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR N.N. Krestinsky on March 27, shared with Plenipotentiary Khinchuk his concern over the “center-led campaign [of the Nazis] against the local branches of «Derop»”. He quite rightly expressed his fear that the provincial German inhabitants and the clientele of “Derop” might get the impression that it was better, in order to avoid trouble, not to do business with “Derop”. Krestinsky strongly recommended seeking not only an end to all the outrages that were taking place, but also such an open statement by the Minister of Economy or the Minister of Internal Affairs, or even both together, which would restore the former positions of “Derop”. In conclusion, he recommended that a serious presentation be made to Minister Neurath and asked for regular detailed reports on all incidents and on all steps taken by the embassy³⁴.

It should be noted that various hostile actions on the part of the Nazis were deployed not only against the firm "Derop", but also against the branches of the Soviet trade mission, various economic organizations, as well as individual Soviet citizens. In connection with this growing anti-Soviet campaign, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR M.M. Litvinov was forced on April 3 to make a statement to the German Ambassador H. Dirksen, where a certain place was also taken by the problem of hindering the sale of Soviet oil products in Germany.

³² The auxiliary police.

³³ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, pp. 176 – 177.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

In the statement, in particular, it was noted:

The German official and unofficial authorities – whether they act on the direct orders of the central authorities or with their connivance – have chosen the economic organization “Derop”, which sells Soviet oil products, as a special target for their illegal attacks. This organization is actually declared under a boycott, and all sorts of orders create the impossibility of its existence and work. Moreover, direct material damage is inflicted on it by senseless pumping out of gasoline dispensers or by taking it free of charge. It is quite obvious that all this is being done according to the plan with the specific purpose of selling Soviet oil products, which is an undoubted violation of the economic agreements recently concluded between the two countries³⁵.

Referring to the difficult atmosphere created in bilateral relations, the numerous oral and written statements and notes of the Soviet embassy in Berlin, which remained without any attention from the German government, which did not provide any explanations and satisfaction, did not take any measures to suppress the actions of the German authorities and allowed further continuation of this practice, Litvinov was forced to declare the most resolute protest. Dirksen listened to the Soviet People's Commissar with a very embarrassed look and expressed the hope that the Soviet side would refrain from publishing the protest in the press for the time being³⁶.

The next day, on behalf of Litvinov, Plenipotentiary Representative Khinchuk read and handed over to Minister Neurath a summary of the latter's conversation with Dirksen. Drawing the minister's attention to the unprecedented ugly search of the Leipzig branch of the Soviet trade mission that took place the day before, as well as the Soviet merchant ships searched in the Hamburg harbor, the Soviet diplomat demonstrated to Neurath with figures the decrease in the sale of Soviet oil products in Cologne, Frankfurt, and other points, indicating that “Derop” ranked among the boycotted firms.

Neurath said that he had repeatedly spoken about this with Hitler, recommending that he take his people in check and promised to report to the latter a summary of this conversation. On the same day, he intended to have a conversation with Hugenberg about “Derop”. He intended to suggest that he send an appeal to the administration of the German lands to stop the outrages with "Derop" and to assist in the sale of oil products of the latter. Khinchuk did not fail to draw the minister's attention to the seriousness of the

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 214 – 215.

³⁶ *Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR*. pp. 214 – 215.

situation, to the indignation of the Soviet public and industrial circles, and also stressed that Moscow expects immediate energetic measures to eliminate all excesses and bring those responsible to justice³⁷.

3. INVOLVEMENT OF SOVIET HIGHER POLITICAL STRUCTURES IN THE PROBLEM OF "DEROP"

By this time, the situation with "Derop" had already become the subject of consideration by the highest authorities of the USSR. The problem was that this firm was organized in the form of a joint stock company and, although all the shares belonged to the Soviet side, there were two Germans on the supervisory board. They, according to the instructions of the authorities, demanded to appoint a non-party German as the head of personnel in order to introduce the Nazis into the "Derop" apparatus and began to threaten with resignation. In order to avoid further attempts to put pressure on the staff of the apparatus and on the work of "Derop" there was a proposal for its organizational transformation.

On March 20, Stalin and Molotov received a note from the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Trade A.P. Rozengolts and Deputy People's Commissar of the USSR RKI³⁸ Z.M. Belenkyj with a proposal to transform "Derop" from a joint stock company into a limited liability partnership, on which Stalin imposed the "Hold back" resolution³⁹. Apparently, in the highest spheres of Soviet power, they still hoped for an amicable settlement of the conflict. However, the situation around "Derop" not only continued to thicken, but was gaining momentum and developing according to an unfavorable scenario.

This was evidenced by the note of the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the USSR I. J. Weitser to his boss A.P. Rosengolts on April 7th. Searches and raids on the offices and warehouses of "Derop" ended with a search of the central office of "Derop" and the arrests of its employees. As a result of pressure from the side of the Nazis, some state and municipal institutions refused to renew their contracts with "Derop" and refused existing

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 220 – 221.

³⁸ RKI (Rabkrin) – Raboche-krestianskaya inspektsiya [Workers 'and Peasants' Inspection] was a system of government bodies that dealt with issues of state control. The system was headed by the People's Commissariat of the Workers 'and Peasants' Inspection (NKRKI). At that time, Yan Ernestovich Rudzutak was the People's Commissar of the RKI.

³⁹ Moskva – Berlin: politika i diplomatiya Kremlya. 1920 – 1941: sb. dok. v 3 t. / otv. red. SEVOSTIANOV, Grigorij, vol. 3: 1933 – 1941, Moscow, Nauka, 2011, p. 9.

contracts. At the same time, a press campaign was launched with threats against the buyers of "Derop", which caused certain firms to refuse to continue purchasing Soviet oil products, etc.

All this created an absolutely impossible environment for the operation of "Derop" and reduced the sale of Soviet oil products. The deputy commissar expressed concern that in the near future there will be a noticeable decrease in the sale of Soviet oil products in Germany, since there will be a refusal to purchase not only in the retail apparatus, but also on the part of wholesalers.

3.1. The participation of the German police authorities and representatives of the industrial community in the process of ousting "Derop" from the German market

The apotheosis of the development of the situation was the call on the leadership of "Derop" F.F. Yenka and O.Kh. Merdinyan on April 7 to the adviser of the Polizai-Presidium R. Diels. He accused "Derop" and its branches of training personnel to combat the existing system and demanded to make fundamental changes in "Derop". First, to significantly reduce Soviet employees (there are about 50 of them in "Derop"), replacing them with the corresponding "national-minded" workers. Secondly, to put a German at the head of the personnel department, whose task will obviously be to clean up under the appropriate leadership of the "Derop" apparatus and to select the appropriate new personnel. Thirdly, it is possible (but not necessary) to second a commissioner to facilitate the implementation of the necessary measures.

Diels unequivocally alluded to the categorical nature of his demand and threatened to defeat "Derop" if his demand was not accepted. He pointed out, in particular, the possibility of arrest and deportation of the Soviet workers of "Derop" and the fact that it is extremely difficult for him – Diels – to restrain the attack of nationalist elements on Soviet institutions, even on the embassy and trade mission, and it is absolutely impossible to protect against further attacks, or rather, from complete defeat, "Derop".

On the same day, Weizer was visited by the prominent German industrialist P. Klöckner. During the conversation, he expressed the opinion that under the current situation, the best way out would be the sale of "Derop" with the simultaneous conclusion of a long-term contract for a number of years for the supply of Soviet oil products.

On the same day, Deputy Trade Representative A.S. Feinstein was visited by an official from the Ministry of Economy Mosdorf, who said that

it would be possible to preserve the “Derop” and ensure the sale of Soviet oil products in Germany either by selling “Derop” to the Germans, or by reorganizing “Derop” with the subordination of its personnel to a specially appointed German and with the cleaning of the Derop apparatus". From all this, Weizer posed two important questions to his leadership: "Are we going to reorganize «Derop» in the spirit proposed by Diels?" and "Are we going to sell «Derop»?" In view of the extreme urgency of the issue of “Derop”, he asked the management to give instructions immediately⁴⁰.

Weizer's note testified that, along with the SA stormtroopers, the German security department, the Ministry of Economy and large industrialists were involved in the fight against the activities of "Derop". This meant that a reaction at a higher level of power could follow from the Soviet side as well.

3.2. The beginning of the change in the position of the Soviet leadership regarding the process of ousting company “Derop” from the German market

The very next day, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs M.M. Litvinov suggested I.V. Stalin "Draft TASS⁴¹ report in connection with anti-Soviet provocations in Germany", which contained a mention of "Derop". It was published in central Soviet newspapers, including *Pravda*, on April 9, 1933⁴².

Since the events in this direction continued to develop on the rise, on April 15, the Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks⁴³ "About «Derop»" was adopted. This meant that the unofficial highest political body of the USSR would take part

⁴⁰ Moskva – Berlin: politika, pp. 10 – 17; “Pravda”, April 9, 1933.

⁴¹ TASS (Telegrafnoye agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuz) - Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union was established on July 10, 1925 on the basis of Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA). It was used, among other things, for the official statements of the Soviet Union on various international issues.

⁴² Moskva – Berlin: politika, pp. 17 – 18.

⁴³ Politbiuro CK VKP(b) [Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks] - the governing body of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the period between plenary sessions of its Central Committee. The Politburo included the most influential members of the Central Committee, who determined the policy of the party, and in the conditions of a one-party system – of the entire state, since, according to the Constitution of the USSR in 1936, the Communist Party was "the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system" and represented " the leading core of all organizations of workers, both public and state".

in deciding its future fate. The resolution consisted of 4 points. The first one involved the leasing of district offices to commission agents, who assumed the obligation to sell a certain amount of oil products, established for the area of operation of the relevant commission agent, and be guided by the Soviet price policy. The fulfillment of the first point was to be accompanied by a statement by the representatives of the German government about a favorable attitude towards the work of "Derop" and the commitment of the government that it would do everything possible to contribute to this reorganization and the creation of normal conditions for the work of "Derop". This was discussed in the second paragraph. The third one gave Deputy People's Commissar Weizer the right to appoint two influential Germans to the Supervisory Board of "Derop", if possible from the Reichswehr or large industrialists. The fourth point was rejected the proposition of the Germans about the sale of "Derop". On April 23, 1933, an extract of this decision was sent to the People's Commissars A.P. Rozengolts and M.M. Litvinov⁴⁴.

This document testified that the unofficial radical course of the National Socialists to oust Soviet oil from the German market had borne certain fruit – the Soviet leadership had to make significant concessions on this issue. First, the proposal to reorganize "Derop" from a joint stock company into a partnership was rejected. Secondly, the retail trade in gasoline was to be transferred to private German hands, and finally, thirdly, the supervisory board was supposed to be strengthened by new influential members.

3.3. The political games of the German leadership around the "Derop" company and the attempts of Soviet diplomacy to defend its positions

However, diplomatic documents show that, despite concessions from the Soviet side, Hitler's unofficial policy of disrupting work and destroying the Soviet firm, "Derop", still tended to intensify. On April 26, Plenipotentiary Khinchuk sent a telegram to his superiors to the Foreign People's Commissariat about his meeting with Minister Neurath, to whom the Soviet diplomat declared a strong protest against the new excesses that occurred after the last conversation with him. What happened? This time, a search was carried out at the Deputy Trade Representative of the USSR Feinstein, another Deputy Trade Representative of the USSR in Germany and the chairman of the Soviet-German Transport Society "Derutra" Alberg was detained. A police raid was carried out on "Derop" and a discriminatory measure was

⁴⁴ Moskva – Berlin: politika, p. 19.

carried out – the first and only case in a foreign enterprise took place: the appointment of a commissioner.

Khinchuk told Neurath that the USSR would never accept the commissioner's recognition, but allowed the possibility of some reorganization, handing over regional offices in some places to commissioners, subject to guarantees of quantity and prices. On his part, it was a step towards the implementation of the first paragraph of the Politburo resolution. However, he immediately added that "given the current state of affairs in «Derop» we will not find respectable agents"⁴⁵.

Further, he proceeded to implement the second point, demanding that the German government would issue a favorable circular on the work of "Derop", undertaking a commitment to create truly normal conditions for its work, which would be a prerequisite for the government's actual assistance to this reorganization. Continuing the dialogue, he added: "Now we do not see this and, on the contrary, we see assistance in the complete disorganization of the entire work of «Derop», for in fact there was a confiscation of «Derop»".

Neurath was an experienced diplomat, a representative of the old school and long ago adopted the double standards of the Fuhrer's simple political game – in fact, to wage a merciless struggle aimed at ousting Russian gasoline from the German market, and in words to declare adherence to the policy of friendly relations with the USSR. Therefore, he again referred to the steps taken by the Ausamt and himself to settle and bring into the proper desirable norms of friendly relations with Moscow. According to him, this is exactly what he spoke with Hitler the day before. Then, according to the unwritten rules of the diplomatic game, he made it clear about his agreement with the interlocutor, making many promises. They say he knows that it is necessary to speed up this matter, that he agrees that the appointment of a commissioner in "Derop" does not contribute to this, that he has a negative attitude towards the action of the Prussian Minister of the Interior, the chief staff, with the rights of a board member, will talk with [Minister] Hugenberg about speeding up the resolution of Soviet economic issues. Finally, Neurath conveyed an apology from Hitler, who was summoned the next day at 12 o'clock to President Hindenburg, so he would be able to receive the Soviet diplomat on Friday, April 28 at 11 o'clock in the morning⁴⁶.

On April 28, the German Chancellor, in the presence of Neurath, actually had a conversation with Plenipotentiary Representative Khinchuk, who

⁴⁵ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, pp. 265 – 266.

⁴⁶ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, pp. 266 – 267.

voiced and handed him an official statement, where, among other things, discriminatory measures in “Derop” and “Derunaft” were noted⁴⁷. Hitler was very courteous and charming, accepted an official statement from him and promised that the activities of the government commissioner in the “Derop” company would be limited to personal matters. On April 29, at 11 o'clock in the afternoon, Khinchuk was supposed to go to Neurath to find out with him how to practically carry out this decision. However, at 10.30 in the morning, the chairman of "Derop" Yenka came to him and said that he had a meeting with the appointed commissioner Holman⁴⁸, who told him, among other things, that the creation of the board of "Derop" and "Derunaft", as well as the supervisory board would take place on the basis of the majority of German representatives, and all these bodies will be chaired by Germans. Documents, both monetary and others, will be issued with the signatures of representatives of both sides (German and Soviet).

In this regard, during a meeting with Neurath, Khinchuk had to point out to the latter, among other things, that the new working conditions at “Derop”, as set out by Commissioner Holman, in no way corresponded to the essence of Hitler's decision. Having familiarized Neurath with Holman's new requirements, Khinchuk accurately restored in the minister's memory what proposal was made to Hitler and the latter's consent was obtained, namely: Holman's role is personal matters. All other practical work (financial, administrative, commercial, etc.) must belong to the representatives of the Soviet side. Moscow agrees to have two Germans on its board and supervisory board. Neurath confirmed the correctness of this formulation, which is quite consistent with Hitler's statement made by Khinchuk. Further, the Soviet plenipotentiary pointed out to Neurath that Moscow would not accept any ultimatums from Holman, that the latter's demand was tantamount to the confiscation of this enterprise. Neurath said that there was a misunderstanding and that he would instruct Meyer to clarify the matter.

Hitler, according to Neurath, had summoned Göring and the senior official Grauert by telephone the day before and announced that their task was to help increase sales of Soviet oil products through “Derop”. In addition, on the issue of economic negotiations, Neurath, on behalf of Hitler, talked with

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 272 – 274.

⁴⁸ Holman was appointed by the German government as the so-called Commissioner for “Derop” on April 24, 1933, which made the normal operation of the society impossible: its branches were boycotted, oil products were illegally confiscated, supply contracts were terminated, warehouses and dispensers were closed. – *Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR*, p. 815.

Hugenberg, and the latter is to enter into negotiations with Khinchuk next week⁴⁹.

In other words, the Fuhrer continued to implement an uncomplicated scheme – in words he promised in every possible way to contribute to the activities of “Derop” in increasing the sales of Soviet gasoline, but in fact all possible steps were taken in order to complicate this activity with the help of various kinds of delays and create unbearable working conditions for the company. To the question of how true this statement is, only time could give an answer.

More than three weeks passed and on May 29, 1933, during the visit of the Soviet People's Commissar M.M. Litvinov to Germany, he had a conversation with Minister Neurath in the presence of Khinchuk and the German ambassador to Moscow, Dirksen. When Neurath asked whether all the incidents had been settled, in particular about “Derop”, the Soviet plenipotentiary indicated that the economic negotiations, which, according to Hitler, should have been started with Hugenberg, had not yet begun. Neurath feigned surprise and said that he would immediately contact Hugenberg on this matter⁵⁰.

On the same day, in a conversation with the latter, Khinchuk, among other things, said that sales of “Derop” had dropped by almost half over the past 4 months and said that it would be nice to settle the issue with “Derop”. Firstly, to finally resolve the organizational issues, and secondly, as promised, to ensure the sale of “Derop” products by issuing a special government circular to the local German municipal and government bodies⁵¹.

Hugenberg, diligently pretending to be sincere, declared that it seemed to him that the question of “Derop” was more or less settled in Comrade Khinchuk's conversation with Hitler and in recent events. Khinchuk calmly objected to Hugenberg that the situation was somewhat different, namely, the issuance of a special circular on promoting the sale of “Derop” products was still delayed for unknown reasons. The competent people with whom Khinchuk talked about this issue believed that the circular should be issued, but there is still no circular. In the meantime, the work of “Derop” is significantly disorganized, and great efforts are needed on the German side to direct this work back on the proper track.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 281 – 282.

⁵⁰ *Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR*, pp. 321, 327.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 328.

Deputy Commissar Weitser, who was present at this conversation, added that the circular should now be drawn up in a much more energetic and decisive tone than it could have been before, bearing in mind the damage that had already occurred in the work and sales of "Derop". Hugenberg said that he himself believes that this matter needs to be hurried, and is ready to do everything in his power, but he personally leaves Berlin by June 7, and meanwhile, for the circular you need not only his signature, but also the signature of the Minister of the Interior. Therefore, he does not object to the issue of the circular being the first point of negotiations on Thursday, June 8, when the whole complex of Soviet-German economic issues should be discussed⁵².

4. THE FINAL STAGE OF THE FIGHT FOR "DEROP" AND ITS SALE

However, even after that the German side continued to delay the resolution of the problem in essence. In accordance with the annual report of the USSR plenipotentiary mission in Germany for 1933, negotiations with the Soviet side were conducted by the so-called Mosdorof Commission, whose activities were "fruitless". By the fall of 1933, after lengthy negotiations, an order was finally issued by the ministers of economy and internal affairs, recommending the purchase of Soviet oil products to state and communal enterprises"⁵³. However, the hostile atmosphere around "Derop" has effectively put this company in the position of a boycotted firm⁵⁴.

During the period of the commission's activity, the policy of the German authorities regarding "Derop" was of the previous discriminatory and destructive character. For example, on June 30, Plenipotentiary Khinchuk, in an interview with Minister Neurath, mentioned, among other things, the intolerable situation of Soviet organizations in Germany, in particular, "Derop", which had developed as a result of the actions of the German authorities⁵⁵.

These actions were of such a large scale that only the Soviet embassy in Berlin, according to a report for 1933, sent to the German Foreign Ministry "217 notes, not counting countless oral presentations". These materials were most fully reflected in *the consolidated memorandum* presented by the

⁵² Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 329.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 836.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 815.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 383.

plenipotentiary L.M. Khinchuk to German Foreign Minister K. von Neurath on September 26, 1933. It, among other things, noted that in the period from January to September, the German authorities carried out 39 illegal arrests of Soviet citizens, 69 searches of apartments, not counting numerous arrests and searches in the street; that the repressions of the German authorities were aimed at disorganizing and undermining the economic activities of the trade mission of the USSR and the Soviet-German joint-stock companies, in particular, "Derop"⁵⁶.

Regarding the position of the German side in connection with the Soviet protests and demarches, the above-mentioned report of the plenipotentiary mission for 1933 said:

The countless notes and protest statements made during this period by the USSR plenipotentiary mission in Germany, in the overwhelming majority of cases, were left without any satisfaction. Lawlessness and atrocities in relation to Soviet institutions and organizations continued in the same volume until September, when the decisive behavior of the USSR in the journalistic conflict forced the German government to seriously think about the consequences of its behavior and drastically change its attitude towards Soviet institutions and citizens in Germany⁵⁷. Having suffered a visible defeat in the journalistic conflict, the German government exerted some pressure on local authorities, as a result of which the wave of atrocities and outrages in relation to Soviet institutions and Soviet citizens began to subside noticeably and at the end of the year almost disappeared⁵⁸.

Although direct outrages against Soviet citizens and institutions had almost ceased by the end of 1933, however, the activities of the joint-stock company "Derop" still did not have the opportunity to fully engage in the implementation of its activities in the sale of Soviet oil products. In this regard, the Soviet side had to enter into a negotiation process for the sale of the company "Derop", which by the beginning of the spring of 1934 reached their peak.

⁵⁶ *Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR*, p. 813.

⁵⁷ In response to discriminatory measures on the part of the German authorities against Soviet journalists that took place during the winter – summer of 1933, the Soviet People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs decided to recall Soviet journalists from Germany and expel German journalists from the USSR, about which within 24 – 26 September officially notified the German Foreign Ministry. The German side officially asked to suspend these measures, promising to stop discrimination against Soviet journalists, which was subsequently carried out. – *Ibidem*, p. 536 – 540.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 815.

March 9, 1934 People's Commissar A.P. Rosengolts reported to Stalin that the negotiations had reached a stage where they needed to be completed, otherwise significant amounts of currency could be lost.

We will receive about 5 million rubles for the property and for the firm “Derop”. The sale of “Derop” is connected with our obligation to supply oil products, therefore I ask you to urgently authorize “Soyuznefteexport”⁵⁹ when selling “Derop” to conclude an agreement for the supply of 175,000 tons of gasoline annually within the next three years (1935–1937)⁶⁰.

The Politburo made a positive decision on this issue and the “Derop” joint stock company was sold⁶¹. By the spring of 1934, the Hitlerite authorities had taken an important step in their policy of ousting Soviet oil products from the German market.

4.1. The additional evidence of plans for a “crusade” against the USSR

Taking into account information from a declassified document of Soviet intelligence about the negotiations of Chancellor von Papen in the summer of 1932 and the plans of influential Western circles to begin a "crusade" against the USSR, the policy of the Hitlerite authorities in relation to the Soviet oil sales company "Derop" during 1933 – spring 1934 looks quite logical. The ousting of Soviet oil products from the German market was in the interests of Western oil traders – first of all, the largest tycoon Sir H. Deterding. However, it would be good to strengthen the data of the above document with additional materials. In this connection, the question arises – is there still documentary evidence of this kind of plans, intentions?

This question can be answered in the affirmative – yes, such documents exist. As one of them, we can consider certain provisions of the so-called memorandum of Minister Hugenberg, presented in June 1933 on behalf of the German delegation to the chairman of the Economic Commission of the Conference in London. One of the paragraphs contained a direct call on the part of the German delegation to representatives of other powers to jointly put an end to the “revolution and internal devastation, which found their starting

⁵⁹ “Soyuznefteexport” – a state-owned enterprise that had a monopoly on the sale of Soviet oil products on the foreign market. It was established in 1931 through the reorganization of the “Nefteindicat” enterprise.

⁶⁰ Moskva – Berlin: politika, pp. 536 – 540.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 540.

point in Russia”, that is, a call for war against the USSR. In addition, the entire context of this paragraph implied Germany's demand that she be given the territory of the Soviet Union for colonization. In this regard, Plenipotentiary Representative Khinchuk was forced on June 22 of the same year to hand over an official protest to the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry B.W. Bülow⁶².

No less eloquent testimony is contained in the telegram of the Soviet Plenipotentiary in Germany to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on July 19, 1933. It spoke about the intention of the German government to get closer to France and Poland at the expense of the USSR due to the impossibility of organizing intervention outside of France and the growing foreign policy isolation. It was mentioned that in connection with the signing of the Pact of Four on July 15 in Rome, the comments of the German press were often devoted to the propaganda of the need for Franco-German rapprochement. They spoke of a sympathetic attitude towards the proposal of the British Ambassador to Yugoslavia N. Henderson about the desirability of a meeting between Hitler and Daladier. It was reported about the upcoming trip of Papen to Paris and the conversation of a prominent National Socialist with a Berlin diplomat, where it was directly stated that for Germany the only way out of internal difficulties is an expedition to Ukraine and that a million army is enough for the Germans⁶³.

In 1933, the world press also reported on the Nazis' plans of conquest in relation to Soviet Ukraine. Some of these messages were published with appropriate comments on the pages of Soviet newspapers. In particular, according to these reports, on February 13, 1933, Göring visited the French ambassador in Berlin, François-Poncet, and offered him assistance to Germany in order to tear Ukraine away from the USSR if France, for its part, would support Germany in the issue of the “Polish corridor”. On May 5, 1933, the British newspaper *Daily Telegraph* published an interview given by Hitler to its Berlin correspondent, in which it was said that Germany would be entirely occupied with the search for "living space" in Eastern Europe.

On the same day, the head of the foreign policy department of the Nazi party A. Rosenberg arrived to London with the aim of obtaining from the British ruling circles the support of Hitlerite Germany in her struggle against

⁶² Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, pp. 359 – 360.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 458.

the "threat of Bolshevism" and with the plan of exchanging the "Polish corridor" for Soviet Ukraine⁶⁴.

The plans to sever Soviet Ukraine from the USSR in 1933 were also discussed in the pages of the German press. In particular, the Soviet memorandum to Germany of September 26, 1933 on this matter said: "Influential German organs, such as the «Volk und Reich», published not without government subsidies, again publish articles about the separation of Ukraine from the USSR"⁶⁵.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the goal of this study can be considered fulfilled – a detailed, one might say, provided with the smallest details picture of the ousting from the German market of the Soviet oil suppliers of the firms "Derop" and "Derunaft". It took place in the period 1933 – March 1934, was accompanied by gross violations of the rights of Soviet citizens, employees of the firms "Derop" and "Derunaft" and was coordinated by the Nazi power structures.

As diplomatic documents testify, one of the inspirers of this process can be considered the large oil magnate Sir H. Deterding, who, along with H. Göring, was the initiator of the arson of the Reichstag. Having accused the communists of this act, they received a pretext both for their political persecution and for a formal pretext for removing Soviet oil products from the German market as supplied by the communist regime.

Deterding needed to oust Soviet oil suppliers from the German market, among other things, firstly, in order to monopolize the German oil market himself and start supplying oil products. Secondly, it promised him unheard-of profits, given the impending involvement of Germany in the so-called "crusade" against the USSR. After all, with the outbreak of hostilities, the consumption of petroleum products would have increased significantly, increasing its income.

Along the way, on the basis of materials from Soviet intelligence, it was possible to find out the composition of the participants in the "crusade" discussed in the summer of 1932 against the USSR – these are Germany, France and Poland, as well as England and Japan. The latter two were to seize oil fields in the Caucasus and Sakhalin, respectively. The inspiration for this

⁶⁴ "Pravda": March 12, 13, May 11, June 17, 1933; "Izvestiya": May 10, 11, 17, 1933; Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 817.

⁶⁵ Dokumenty vneshnej politiki SSSR, p. 817.

scheme, in accordance with the materials of Soviet intelligence, was the Vatican, and its guide and coordinator was the Pope's secret chamberlain, the then Reich Chancellor von Papen.

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