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**EDWARD SOŁTYS. *BLACK RIBBON DAY*.
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A black ribbon is a symbol of grief not only in European cultures but also in many others. In the late 1980s, a new movement was born in many different countries, a movement which added a new meaning to the black ribbon. It became a symbol of remembrance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact from 1939 and its tragic outcomes for millions of people. Since 1987, Black Ribbon Day has been commemorated around the world on August 23, the anniversary of the signing of the pact. On that day, various forms of protests and demonstrations take place, involving hundreds or thousands of people, featuring speeches by politicians, emigration activists, dissidents, and other people persecuted by totalitarian states. Academic sessions, discussions, and press conferences are also held, focusing on the pact that resulted in World War II, border changes, a new division of Europe, and tragedies of millions of people. The events pinpoint that due to the pact the three Baltic countries, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, were forced, for several decades, to be the part of the USSR, while countries at the centre of the continent came under the strong influence of the aforementioned totalitarian regime. Black Ribbon Day also features secular and religious ceremonies commemorating the victims, prisoners, deportees, displaced persons, and refugees, all of whom were victims of totalitarian regimes.

The initiative that spurred all these actions and the movement condemning both Nazi and Communist crimes was born in 1985 in Canada. Its originator was Markus Hess, a Canadian of Estonian origin. In a couple of years, he managed not only to get the members of the Estonian diaspora in Canada involved in the initiative, but he also encouraged people of other ethnicities (mainly Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian) and Canadians to take part in these actions. The idea of Hess gained support of the Canadian libertarian

movement, National Citizen's Coalition. This Toronto-based organisation has been in operation since 1967 and specialises in political lobbying for the realisation of electoral ideas (31). David E. T. Somerville, a Canadian of Scottish-English ancestry, who was the leader of this organisation in the mid 1980s, became, along with Markus Hess, the creator and motive force of Black Ribbon Day. Thanks to enthusiasm, dedication, and engagement of the two figures and volunteers who followed them, National Citizen's Coalition managed to gather funds for the organisation and publicity of the first Black Ribbon Day demonstrations. They took place on August 23, 1986, i.e. on the forty-seventh anniversary of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The biggest demonstration was held in Toronto, in front of the City Hall and—to great surprise of the organisers—as many as six thousand people took part in it. Smaller demonstrations were organised that day in Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and other smaller cities, like Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo and St. Catharines. Different kinds of protests were also organised in the USA (e.g., in New York, with the participation of American senators in front of the seat of the UN; Seattle and Los Angeles) and in Australia (Perth, Melbourne, and Adelaide). Smaller scale demonstrations took place in several cities of Western Europe (most notably in London, Paris, and Stockholm). Preparations for all these actions gained much publicity and coverage in the media, especially on the radio, TV stations, and in the press. Subsequent anniversaries of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact were also accompanied by demonstrations of growing impact, with more and more people participating in them. Members of other groups troubled by totalitarian regimes joined: Romanians, Bulgarians as well as Cubans and Nicaraguans.

The demonstrations in 1989, on the fiftieth anniversary of signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, were special as they also took place in Poland, Baltic SSRs, several Ukrainian cities and, remarkably, even in Moscow and Leningrad. It is worth mentioning that the Black Ribbon Day Movement gained many supporters among Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians as early as 1987. Two years later, the movement contributed to the formation of an impressive, six hundred-kilometre long human chain, known as the Baltic Way, which connected Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn for fifteen minutes at 9 p.m. The organisers estimated that almost two million people took part in the event. This demonstration was one of the most prominent actions of the movement, which reminded public opinion around the world, including the elites, of the atrocities of totalitarian regimes and contributed to the non-violent liberation of Baltic nations and the formation of independent Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Black Ribbon Day by Edward Soltys is devoted to this subject. The twelve chapters include a synthesis of the most important stages of the Nazi-Soviet cooperation during the interwar period: an analysis describing why the two states got closer together, the aftermath of the Pact, and the creation of Black Ribbon Day in the context of changes in Central Europe and Russian *perestroika*.

Sołtys's work elaborates on the beginnings of the movement in Canada, subsequent stages of its development, the ideas and emotions of its members and creators, and their most notable achievements. There is an abundance of quotations from the recollections of members as well as from the declarations read out aloud during protests and speeches, made by both the members of the movement and different politicians who voiced their support for the movement. The author recalls the programs of the actions, demonstrations, and most important conferences, as well as the coverage of those events. Apart from the index, which makes the book research friendly, and the list of references, the work in question also contains a substantial, sixty-four-page appendix featuring full versions of the most interesting documents of the Black Ribbon Movement, letters sent and received by the activists, and the copies of posters and programs of the organised events. Another interesting section of the appendix is a collection of photographs which definitely add value to the whole book. It consists not only of archival photos representing the signatories of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact but also of a collection of pictures providing evidence of the actions carried out by the members of the Black Ribbon Movement.

Edward Sołtys's intensive research and his ability to analyze and represent the complex movement in the world history in an accessible way make the publishing project outstanding. The monograph is an exemplary case of reference literature, enriched with introductions, explanations, and comments that permit to understand the ideology and scope of the activity of the Black Ribbon Movement. The author also includes rare materials, systematizes them, shows relations between facts, and hence he thoroughly explores the topic which makes the book a tangible evidence of the power of universal ideas of justice and democracy. The history of the movement shows that these ideas can overcome even the most fearsome and brutal regimes and that they can abolish oppressive political structures. It is worth mentioning that the book reconstructs and recalls an interesting social movement which began in Canada and which, although focused on the past and on areas very distant from Canada, managed to inspire and mobilize thousands (actually, at some point, even millions) of people around the world to take part in peaceful demonstrations. The phenomenon of the Black Ribbon Day Movement showed that cooperation between neighbouring nations of Central-Eastern Europe is possible, as it is possible to overcome past grudges, conflicts, and problems that divide people. The specific time of these ground-breaking changes influenced this process, but the openness and experience of Canada's multiculturalism and multicultural policy, exemplified by the Black Ribbon Day Movement, cannot be underestimated.