

DISSENT AND NATIONALISM IN THE BALTIC STATES: THE HUMAN CHAIN

ELENA BERNINI

Candidate for the B.A. in Political science and International Relations

Collegio Nuovo – Fondazione Sandra e Enea Mattei, Pavia



THE BALTIC STATES: DISSENT AND NATIONALISM

- **1918 – 1939** Independence
- **1939** Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact → the Baltic States under the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet domination
- **1941** Operation Barbarossa → Nazi occupation
- **1944 -1990** Soviet domination
- **1990/1991** Independence

23 AUGUST 1989: THE BALTIC WAY

- A 600-km human chain stretching from Vilnius to Tallin
- 2 million people involved
- Powerful symbolism: opposite image of a concrete wall conveying a sense of solidarity



Source: <http://blog.europeana.eu/2013/08/the-day-holding-hands-changed-the-world/>



Source: Unesco Memory of the World Register. <http://www.unesco-ci.org/photos/showphoto.php/photo/5124/title/the-baltic-way-on-23-a/cat/960>

23 AUGUST 1939: THE MOLOTOV – RIBBENTROP PACT

- A pact of non aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union
- Division of spheres of influence



23 AUGUST 1989: THE BALTIC WAY

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21 February 2015: human chain in Oslo



Source: <http://rt.com/news/234463-muslim-rally-synagogue-norway/>

SOVIETIZATION: THE REPRESSION OF BALTIC DISSENT AND NATIONALISM

- Strong Baltic nationalism due to:
 - the feeling of injustice at having been annexed by the USSR
 - mass deportations, collectivization, sovietization of Baltic ethnic languages → fertile ground for nationalism
- «Nothing serves to unite and mobilize a people as memory of a shared victory or collective suffering» (

FEATURES OF BALTIC NATIONALISM

- Not chauvinist
- A strive for self-determination
- Led indirectly to the collapse of the Iron Curtain
- Highlighted the internal crisis of the USSR in the 80's
- Gorbachev's policy- perestrojka, glasnost, decentralization

CHALLENGES POSED TO BALTIC NATIONALISM TODAY

