

STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS' RESISTANCE AGAINST THE SOVIET REGIME IN LITHUANIA IN 1944–1990*

Original scientific paper

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Abstract: In 1944 Lithuania was occupied, annexed, and became one of the 15 constituent republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The country underwent the programmed continuation of the far reaching and tragic destruction of Lithuanian education and culture. During the Soviet occupation Lithuanian professors and students not only had their fates determined by political changes but also had very few possibilities to survive in Soviet Lithuania. One of such possibilities was to resist the occupation and Sovietisation. By choosing the resistance of university students and professors against the Soviet rule as the subject of the research the Author poses two basic questions: First, what was the nature of Soviet policy of higher education? What were the forms of Sovietisation of higher education? And, second, what types of students and professors' resistance were observed?

Key words: Resistance, students, professors, sovietization, Soviet Lithuania, Cold War

THIS ARTICLE DWELLS ON THE ISSUES OF students and professors' resistance against the Soviet regime in the period of 1944–1990 when Lithuania and its citizens were under Soviet occupation. By

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choosing the resistance of university students and professors against the Soviet rule as the subject of the research the Author aims at analysing the goals and forms of resistance as well as revealing the expected assistance from the democratic West in the years of the Cold War. The article suggests that individual and collective, armed and peaceful, legal and illegal resistance against Soviet regime initiated by part of the academic community aspiring to preserve Lithuanian identity served as a stimulus to re-establish the country's independence in 1990. The article which is based on ample empirical material processed with the help of descriptive and document analysis methods poses two basic questions: First, what was the nature of Soviet policy of higher education? What were the forms of Sovietisation of higher education? And second, what types of students and professors' resistance were observed?

Features of the Soviet Policy of Higher Education

In 1944 Lithuania was occupied, annexed, and became one of the 15 constituent republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The country underwent the programmed continuation of the far reaching and tragic destruction of Lithuanian education and culture. According to Juozas Ambrazevičius, "The Bolsheviks were obsessed with destroying everything: the existing social relationships, order, institutions and people heading them" (Aleksandravičius 2006, 186). All private schools, universities, institutes and public organizations were destroyed together with the national system of education.

Soviet rule had substantial affect on the curricula of the institutions of higher education. The organisational system of education and its curricula were adjusted in accordance with the Soviet Communist ideology and principles. Compulsory courses included the theory of Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism (until 1956) and the history of the Communist Party. University and school curricula as well as the basic textbooks were supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education in Moscow. The Ph.D. theses were decided in Moscow; therefore, all doctoral theses had to be written in Russian, so that Moscow professors could read and asses them. The Russian language dominated in the majority of institutions and was ensured priority status in schools. The humanities were subjected to strong Soviet indoctrination. Many historians and writers in the national literary traditions were excluded from curricula. Their books were classified as reactionary nationalistic and were banned from all bookstores and libraries and stored in special library funds (*spetsfonds*) – the collections of forbidden materials. Scholars could gain access to these books only with special permits obtained from the Soviet authorities. In 1944–1951 600 thousands books were collected from libraries and destroyed.

42 | Among them were books by such historians as Antanas Alekna, Mykolas Biržiška,

Petras Klimas, Augustinas Janulaitis, Jonas Totoraitis and others (see: Anušauskas 1996, 402; Proskyna 1990, 195–205). Strict censorship was enforced.

During the several post-war years a number of prolific professors having the greatest experience in different fields of education were expelled from the Lithuanian universities and institutes of higher education. They were accused of opposition to the Soviet authorities, Lithuanian nationalism, bourgeois background, apoliticality, absence of ideology, promotion of Western culture and participation in anti-Soviet actions. In 1944 Lev Karsavin, a renowned Russian philosopher, was dismissed from Vilnius University and later in 1946 was expelled from the State Art Institute of Lithuania. In 1949 Lev Karsavin was arrested and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment at penal labour camps for his “criminal relations with pro-monarchistic emigrants by the consent of international bourgeoisie as well as possession and dissemination of anti-Soviet literature”.¹ In February 1945 a group of Vilnius University scientists were accused by the Soviet security service of formation of the anti-Soviet committee for the liberation of Lithuania. The arrests of Professor A. Žvironas, A. V. Jurskis, and Associate Professor T. Zaleckis followed. They were sentenced to 10 years in concentration camps. In the midst of the mass deportations of 1948 102 professors from Lithuanian universities were accused of anti-Soviet activities, arrested, expelled from the universities and sentenced to imprisonment. Among them was Jonas Boruta, senior lecturer at the Faculty of Mechanics at Kaunas University, sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment for the appeal to the UNO *Regarding the Illegal Incorporation of Lithuania into the USSR* and Vytautas Andrius Graičiūnas, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Civil Engineering who was dismissed from the university on the grounds of his background, studies, and work in the US prior to 1933. In 1951 he was charged with collaboration with the US intelligence service and anti-Soviet propaganda and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment in the concentration camp of Olzheras (Kemerovo region) where he died in 1952. In 1950–1951 lecturers J. Alekna, J. Kochas, V. Maknys, V. Martinkėnas and B. Pacenkaitė were dismissed from Vilnius Pedagogical Institute on the grounds of the lack of political confidence. In December

1 Professor L. Karsavin died on July 19, 1952 in the concentration camp of Abezo (Vorkuta, Siberia). It should be noted that Professor was exiled twice. First time he was deported from his native Russia and the second time – from Lithuania. From 1916 to 1921, i.e. until his exile from Soviet Russia by the Bolsheviks, Lev Karsavin held professorship at the Petrograd Institute of History and Philology (in 1920 was appointed rector) and delivered lectures on general history. Besides, in 1911–1921 he lectured at the Advanced Women's Courses at St Petersburg / Petrograd University and in 1921–1922 was the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Petrograd University. In 1922 Karsavin settled in Berlin and from 1922 to 1925 worked as a professor at the French-Russian Institute of Science in Paris. In 1928 he was elected as an ordinary professor in the Department of General History at the University of Lithuania and held the office until 1939. (See: Janužytė 2005, 273–277).

of 1956 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania passed a decree urging the heads of the institutions of higher education and the primary organizations of the Communist Party to “decisively combat professors who disseminate bourgeois philosophy even by means of their dismissal”. As a result, in 1958 Rector Juozas Bulovas and lecturers Meilė Lukšienė and Vanda Zaborskaitė from the Department of the Lithuanian Studies were expelled from Vilnius University. In 1977 Jurijus Radovičius was dismissed from the position of the lecturer of social sciences at Vilnius Civil Engineering Institute for the submission of 20 amendments to the project of the constitution of the USSR. Attempts to amend the project of L. Brezhnev constitution were viewed as unheard-of impertinence (see: Nakas 2008, 103–106, 110, 131, 155, 171, 190–191).

Since the Soviet occupants’ plan did not provide for any possibility of the restoration of the independent state they started the extermination of the Lithuanian nation by annihilating its cultural and political elite. The most active and educated part of the society – the political, cultural, and economic elite – underwent repressions and was deported. Mass deportations continued from 1944 until Stalin’s death in 1953. Antanas Tyla believes that “the Soviet Union realized very well that a state cannot be destroyed without destroying its political, economic, educational and cultural elite” (Tyla 1992, xviv). For this reason, a large number of professors, school teachers, and students were imprisoned and exiled. During 1940–1953 some 132,000 Lithuanians were deported to the remote areas of the USSR: Siberia, the Arctic Circle zone and Central Asia, and another 200,000 people were thrown into prisons (150,000 of them were sent to concentration camps. (See: Kuodytė and Tracevskis 2007, 5). Among them were 7918 political, economic, educational and cultural professionals, 1892 students and 370 priests (Anušauskas 1996, 402). Jonas Pranas Aleksa, Juozas Jankevičius, Lev Karsavin, Petras Klimas, Marija Mašiotaitė-Urbšienė, Jokūbas Stanišauskis and others were among the deported educational elite. They were sent to concentration camps and subjected to violence and humiliation, served as cheap labour force, suffered from hunger and faced death. For example, Petras Klimas was arrested by the Soviets on September 19, 1945. Receiving a 10-year sentence he was deported to the concentration camp at Chelyabinsk (Southern Ural) where he was interned until 1955. Marija Mašiotaitė-Urbšienė was arrested on July 16, 1940 and was imprisoned for 13 years in various Russian prisons at Tombov, Saratov, Moscow, Kirov, Gorki and others until 1956. Professor J. Aleksa was deported to Tomsk district (Siberia) where he died in 1955. Associate Professor J. Jankevičius was deported to the concentration camp in Vorkuta (Siberia) and died there in 1945. (See: Janužytė 1997, 162; Nakas 2008, 22).

44 In fact, during the Soviet occupation Lithuanian professors and students not only had their fates determined by political changes but also had very few pos-

sibilities to survive in Soviet Lithuania. One of such possibilities was to resist the occupation and Sovietisation. Analysis of professors and students' individual and collective resistance against Sovietisation in the occupied Lithuania can be divided into two stages.

The first stage was the armed anti-Soviet struggle in 1944–1953. In the first days of the second occupation Lithuanians fought for democratic and independent Lithuania. In 1945 around 30,000 partisans led by former officers, students, and teachers hid in forests. 37 percent of all regional commanders were former officers, 10 percent were teachers, 10 percent – policemen, 10 percent – students and others (Kuodytė and Tracevskis 2006, 22; Gaškaitė-Žemaitienė 2006, 35). They hoped that Western democracies would ally against the USSR and help liberate Lithuania from the Soviet occupation. The hope of restoring independent and democratic Republic of Lithuania was related to the end of World War II and the principles set out in the Atlantic Charter. Among them was Juozas Lukša, student of architecture of the Faculty of Civil Engineering at Kaunas University. J. Lukša was one of the renowned partisans who strived to establish connections with the West. He joined the Lithuanian Partisan Movement (hereinafter – LPM) in 1946 and held the posts of the head of the organizational department, head of the press and propaganda department of *Geležinis Vilkas* (“Iron Wolf”) group of Tauras district, editor of partisans’ newspaper and adjutant to the Commander-in-chief. In 1946 he legalized himself adopting the name of J. Adomaitis and entered Vilnius Art Institute yet continued his partisan activities. In January of 1947 the convention of district commanders appointed J. Lukša commander of Birutė brigade of Tauras district in Kaunas and the head of the district’s department. In March Juozas Lukša together with Jurgis Krikščiūnas, student of the Faculty of Civil Engineering at Kaunas University, were delegated by the leadership of the LPM to go to Poland and try to establish connections with the West. At the end of 1947 Juozas Lukša and Kazimieras Pyplys, student of the Faculty of Medicine at Vytautas Magnus University, were sent abroad once again visiting Poland, Sweden, West Germany and France on their mission. In 1948–1950 J. Lukša studied at French intelligence school in Paris and later attended American intelligence school in West Germany. On October 3, 1950 J. Lukša together with other trained partisans returned from Munich to Lithuania. He made attempts to establish Lithuanian intelligence centre but was killed in an NKVD ambush on September 4, 1951. J. Lukša was posthumously awarded with the highest symbol of homage to partisans – Freedom Fighter Hero’s Name of Honour. The abovementioned student of the Faculty of Medicine at Vytautas Magnus University Kazimieras Pyplys and Petras Bartkus, student of Kaunas Higher Technical School, were among the 8 most prominent Lithuanian partisans awarded with the said symbols of honour (see: Nakas 2008, 79–86). The analysis of the partisan war on the international

level suggests that it not only helped West European countries and the US continue their policy of non-recognition of Lithuania's incorporation into the Soviet Union but also encouraged the dissemination of impartial information regarding the occupation of the Baltic States, deportations and other repressive means employed against their citizens and their anti-Soviet resistance via the media and other channels. This implied that despite the Iron Curtain the occupied Baltic countries would be supported in their struggle against the Communist ideology. On the other hand, Lithuanians themselves realized that due to the changes in the geopolitical situation armed resistance had lost its efficiency in the strive for independence. The change in the tactics and means of resistance was essential, as well as the establishment of new contacts with the West.

The second stage covered the period of unarmed anti-Soviet resistance in 1953–1990. The stage was characterized by both legal opposition including the writing of petitions, formation of ethno-cultural circles and establishment of hikers and environmentalists' clubs as well as involvement into the Lithuanian Movement for Restructuring *Sąjūdis* and illegal yet peaceful means of resistance such as formation of underground organizations, publication of underground press, and participation in the manifestations, protests, and dissident movement. The article will focus on the students and professors' activities in underground organizations and participation in protests.

Underground Organizations and Groups

The conditions for the unarmed anti-Soviet resistance were set up in 1950s and 1970s. The most active part of the society was professors, students, and priests. The first form of unarmed anti-Soviet resistance was participation in various underground organizations and groups. In 1954–1972 some 205 different underground organisations and groups totalling more than 1190 members were active in Lithuania. More than a half of the participants were under 18. Collaboration and conformism with the Soviet regime were unacceptable to the younger generation. This is obvious from the fact that in 1954–1972 80 percent of the members of underground youth organizations were school and university students (Anušauskas and Burauskaitė 2003, 14–15). The main activities of the organizations were built upon the main stages of the anti-Soviet resistance.

During the armed resistance stage the main objective of underground organizations and groups was to fight for the right to self-determination. For example, in 1950–1952 there was in active operation underground organization Unified Labour Union which comprised Vilnius and Kaunas students. 15 students from Vilnius and Kaunas institutions of higher education who had graduated from Ariogala gymnasium and a teacher who was in touch with the underground par-

tisans formed the hard core of the organization. One of its members J. Petkevičius explains that the organization's title was determined by the belief that only conscious, creative, and well educated individuals can ensure the future of the Lithuanian nation. The prime aim included struggle against the Soviet occupation and restoration of freedom and democracy in Lithuania. Members of the organization believed that two political conditions could make the restoration of statehood possible. The first condition was related to the beginning of the Cold War, i.e. it was believed that the possible conflict between the West and the East would facilitate the liberation of the Baltic States from Soviet occupation. The other condition was related to the election of the parliament, i.e. if the representatives of well educated younger generation formed the parliament, it would be easier to implant the ideas of democracy, justice, and publicity and destroy the totalitarian regime. However, the latter condition was regarded as unrealistic. Underground press which helped resist the spiritual genocide, get involved into ideological resistance and develop national identity was viewed as one of the basic means to restore Lithuania's independence. Members of the Unified Labour Union reached out to the partisans of Kęstutis district and the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters. They would provide latest information on political situation in Lithuania and the world, publish articles and poems. For example, Algirdas Bitvinskas published a few poems in the partisan press under the pen-name Keranas. Besides, they would read and distribute among high-school students underground newspapers, such as the *Laisvės varpas* ("The Bell of Freedom") and the *Laisvės žvalgas* ("The Scout of Freedom") received from the partisans. The organization was exposed by the KGB aided by its agent Vytautas Murauskas, 4th-year student of the Faculty of Law at Vilnius University.² In 1952 all members of the organization were arrested and convicted. The 15 members of the Unified Labour Union included: Juozas Petkevičius and Adomas Lukaševičius, 4th-year students of the Faculty of Law at Vilnius University, Kazimieras Vaišvila, Jonas Bersėnas, and Liudas Gaižauskas, 4th year students at the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy, Vytautas Bukauskas, Vytautas Kaminskas, Tadas Jagelavičius, Jonas Kreimeris and Alfonsas Urbonas, 4th year students at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, Algirdas Bitvinskas, Pranas Čižas, Jadvyga Žukauskaitė-Petrauskienė, Bronislava Kryževičiūtė and Celestinas Ajauskas, 4th year students at Vilnius Pedagogical Institute and Kazimieras Banys, teacher at Pagojukas primary school in Betygala district. They were said to have been plotting to overthrow the Soviet regime and restore capitalism with the help of foreign imperialistic powers and sentenced to 25 years of imprison-

2 J. Petkevičius claims that V. Murauskas graduated from the Faculty of Law at Vilnius University, continued post-graduate studies in Moscow and was rewarded with the degree of the Candidate of Philosophic Sciences. Later he worked in the Department of Marxism-Leninism at the Institute of Medicine in Kaunas. Committed suicide in 1962 or 1963 (see: Bukauskas 1995, 19).

ment in penal labour camps (5 years of deportation with confiscation of property and 5 years of suppression of civic rights). The court decision was unappealable.

J. Petkevičius and V. Bukauskas were exiled to Vorkuta camp (Siberia), K. Banys, L. Gaižauskas, V. Kaminskas and J. Bersėnas – to Inta camp (Komi ASSR), P. Čižas, A. Bitvinskas, J. Kreimeris and T. Jagelavičius – to Vikhorevka camp (Bratsky district), C. Ajauskas – to Jezkazgan camp (Kazakhstan), A. Urbonas – to Kengir camp (Kazakhstan), J. Žukauskaitė-Petrauskienė and B. Kryževičiūtė – to Tayshet camp (Krasnoyarsk district). In 1956 following the review of political cases by the commission of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, the majority of them were released from the concentration camps. Upon their return to Lithuania part of the members of the Unified Labour Union continued and finished studies started prior to the arrest. For example, Adomas Lukaševičius graduated from the Faculty of Law at Vilnius University thanks to Kęstutis Domaševičius, the Dean of the Faculty, and Juozas Bulavas, Vilnius University Rector (Rector Juozas Bulovas allowed 188 students subjected to repressions to re-enter the University); Jonas Kreimeris finished his studies at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute in 1957 thanks to its Rector Professor Kazimieras Baršauskas; Bronislava Kryževičiūtė could re-enter and graduate from Vilnius Pedagogical Institute only after sending a letter to Nikita Khrushchev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR; Liudas Gaižauskas was allowed to continue his studies and in 1958 graduate from the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy thanks to its Rector Jonas Čygas. Some of them successfully defended Candidate of Sciences (post-graduate) dissertations though outside Lithuania. J. Kreimeris defended his dissertation of the Candidate of Technical Sciences in Kiev. In 1973 K. Banys finished his post-graduate studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture but due to his prior conviction was not allowed to defend his dissertation at the Academy. Thanks to Professor L. Kadžiulis he was allowed to defend the dissertation at Tartu University in 1974. There was an appeal to the Higher Attestation Commission against the results. The dissertation was handed over to experts but as no shortcomings were detected K. Banys was awarded the degree of the Candidate of Agricultural Sciences in 1976. Some of the members of the Unified Labour Union, including V. Bukauskas, P. Čižas, and V. Kaminskas failed to re-enter the institutions of higher education and continue their studies. Later, in 1968 V. Bukauskas graduated from Kalinin Polytechnic Institute (Krasnodar district) and P. Čižas finished Bookkeeping College in Vilnius (see: Bukauskas 1995, 3–5, 7, 11, 14, 22–24, 43–44, 57, 87–89, 91, 160–161, 167, 177–178, 210–211), 216, 225, 244–245, 252, 275, 280, 286, 288).

48 | During the period of unarmed resistance the main aims of underground organizations and groups were as follow:

1) To constantly remind the Lithuanian society about occupation in order to preserve nationality and native language. For example, in 1956 students of the Lithuanian Conservatory inspired by the Hungarian Uprising formed the secret society called “Jaunlietuviai” (“Young Lithuanians”). 6 students were listed as its members: Virgilijus Juodakis, Algimantas Burdulis, Benediktas Algirdas Būbnelis, Konstantinas Petrauskas, Ričardas Skripkus and Antanas Venckus. They were aggrieved with the distortion of Lithuania’s historical past, restricted contact with visiting foreigners, compulsory communication with visitors in the Russian language and usage of the said language in the majority of documents issued by ministries, factories, and other institutions. They believed that Russians and other Russian-speaking people who permanently lived in Lithuania had either to learn Lithuanian or leave for their native land (Nakas 2008, 162–163).

2) To face down the Soviet propaganda and ideology by publishing and disseminating illegal publications and anti-Soviet proclamations. For example, in 1955–1958 the organization “Laisvė Lietuvai” (“Freedom for Lithuania”) at Pandėlis secondary school published 6 issues of the newsletter the *Laisvės Balsas* (“The Voice of Freedom”) enumerating the major objectives of the organization: 1) to strive for Lithuania’s independence; 2) to seek the withdrawal of the Soviet army; and 3) to organize free elections and create democratic system. In 1958 eight most active members were sentenced to terms of 7 to 8 years of hard labour in exile (Anušauskas and Burauskaitė 2003, 18). Quite frequent were isolated cases when students would draw the symbols of Lithuanian statehood in public places, raise the national flag, write anti-Soviet slogans or destroy Soviet symbols. For example, in 1973 R. Čekelis, student of J. Tallat-Kelpša Music School in Vilnius, was sentenced to 3 years in strict regime concentration camp in Mordovia for the dissemination of anti-Soviet proclamations on the eve of the 16th of February (see: Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1976, 137–138). On January 23, 1977 Vilnius University students R. Grigas, S. Marcinkevičius, V. Šinkūnas and G. Stankevičius and Vilnius Civil Engineering Institute students P. Skardžius, R. Augustinavičius, D. Nainys, A. Veršelis and R. Kuprionas were arrested and accused of stripping Lenin’s bas-relief off the wall of Vilnius Central Post Office and throwing it over the Green Bridge into the Neris river. R. Grigas, S. Marcinkevičius, V. Šinkūnas and G. Stankevičius were excluded from the Komsomol and expelled from the University, whereas P. Skardžius, R. Augustinavičius, D. Nainys, A. Veršelis and R. Kuprionas were strictly reprimanded (Nakas 2008, 189–190);

3) To establish underground Catholic seminaries to eliminate the shortage of Catholic priests in the country.³ For example, in 1948 Algirdas Kavaliauskas

3 The Catholic Church was particularly persecuted in the Soviet times. Priests were banned from carrying out their duties, professors who taught their students to be firm supporters of the Church and who were brave enough to criticize the anti-clerical policy of the Soviet regime were expelled from

attempted to establish the illegal Catholic University of Lithuania (The Gate of Dawn College) for former ordinands, now students of Vilnius University and Vilnius Pedagogical Institute, to train priests for partisan units at Vilnius University. However, it was not until around 1970–1972 that the secret Priest seminary, which was in operation until 1989, was founded. 27 priests who graduated from the seminary served not only in Lithuania but also in Belarus and Ukraine. A. Jakubčionis believes that the establishment of the secret priest seminary “not only meant a full-scale confrontation with the Soviet regime but also was a unique phenomenon in the Catholic world in the mid-20th century” (Jakubčionis 2007, 14–15).

It should be noted that legal ethnographic, literary, and tourist clubs at the institutions of higher education were also persecuted by the Soviet authorities. Their activities were regarded as nationalistic as the members of the clubs held discussions on contemporary world literature, collected and preserved objects of ethnic tradition, cultural heritage, and historical memory. Ethnographic clubs were particularly popular among students, young people, and intellectuals in Kaunas and Vilnius. In 1967 about 200,000 young people took part in walks, folk festivals, and other events (Anušauskas and Burauskaitė 2003, 22). The Communist Party and the KGB imposed restrictions on the activities of the most popular clubs of regional studies. In 1971 the club of ethnographic studies “Romuva” and “Žygeiviai” (“The Hikers”) section at Vilnius Tourist Club at Vilnius University were suspended. On March 27, 1973 about 100 activists from Vilnius, Kaunas, and Riga were arrested in the course of the KGB campaign against Lithuanian and Latvian ethnographic clubs. They were accused of anti-Soviet activities and charged with the formation of an underground organization intended for the dissemination of information about the offences of the Soviet authorities against the Lithuanian nation, distribution of proclamations related to the commemoration of the 16th of February, preparation of underground publications and possession and distribution of illegal literature. Part of the students and professors were convicted and expelled from the institutions of higher education. For example, in 1974 the Supreme Court of the LSSR sentenced Antanas Sakalauskas, lecturer of the German language at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, to 5 years of strict-regime imprisonment, Viktoras Kruminis, 4th-year student at the Polytechnic Institute, and Šarūnas Žukauskas,

Kaunas Priest Seminary. Among them were the Rector of Kaunas Seminary A. Vaitiekaitis, professors J. Grubliauskas, A. Kruša, and others (Streikus 2006, 100, 102). Some of lecturers and students were discriminated, persecuted, and expelled from universities for their religious convictions or for active practises in the Catholic faith. For example, in 1973 Bronė Pupkevičiūtė, a candidate for the postgraduate degree in education who had been working as a senior fellow was expelled from the Institute of the Scientific Research of Pedagogy; Elena Šulinauskaitė, assistant in the Department of History, had to resign office at Vilnius University; in 1976 A. Patackas, lecturer at the Academy of Agriculture and a candidate for the postgraduate degree in mathematics, was dismissed for the “observance of religious prejudices” (Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1978, 69).

6th-year student at the Institute of Medicine in Kaunas – to 6 years in strict-regime prison and A. Mackevičius, student at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute – to 2 years of normal-regime imprisonment. Albinas Jonkus, student at the Faculty of Civil Engineering Plumbing, were expelled from Kaunas Polytechnic Institute and Levija Mozerytė, 5th-year student, and Remigijus Morkūnas, lecturer at the Department of Surgical Dentistry, were forced to leave Kaunas Institute of Medicine (see: Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1975a, 128, 136–137; Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1981, 247; Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1975b, 188). In 1973 Vilnius University students M. Božytė, V. Jasukaitytė-Ašmontienė and E. Stankevičius and post-graduate students E. Norvaišas and J. Trinkūnas were interrogated by KGB regarding their trips to the Urals, Siberia, and the Caucasus. They were required to explain why they had visited concentration camps and socialized with Lithuanians in exile. The security agents accused them of attempts to establish connections with Armenian, Georgian, and other nationalists while in the Caucasus. The students under interrogation were scolded for their interest and idealization of the past which led to the dissemination of nationalist ideas. The questions were as follows: “Why do you sing exceptionally Lithuanian and partisan songs? Why do you collect data about the partisan movement? Why do you keep in touch with Lithuanians in Belarus, supply them with Lithuanian books and newspaper subscriptions and encourage their children to attend Lithuanian schools?” However, the essential question was how the activities of regional-studies clubs attracted such numbers of young people. (Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1974a, 262–263; Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1974b, 261–262). It was feared that the informal ethnographic and tourist clubs might escalate to wholesale informal social networks covering not only the Baltic countries but also the rest of the Soviet Union.

Protests

The second form of unarmed anti-Soviet resistance was participation in various protests. The first protests and encounters with the Soviet militia occurred on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in the cemeteries of Kaunas and Vilnius as the only monuments and national symbols related to independent Lithuania that escaped Soviet demolition were preserved in the cemeteries of cities and towns. The very first public protest took place on November 2, 1955 in Kaunas. The conflict with the Soviet militia was provoked by the militia themselves as they tried to force the people who came to honour the fallen for the independence of Lithuania in 1918–1919 and light candles on their graves out of the cemetery. The protests which occurred in 1956 were related to the Hungarian Revolution. At that time students would disseminate anti-Soviet leaflets, deliver speeches, and encourage to follow the example of the Hungarians, thus, publicly declaring their sympathy

and support for the Hungarian nation. This led to the spontaneous manifestations of professors and students on All Soul's Day (November 2), 1956 in Vilnius and Kaunas. They demanded freedom for Lithuania and expressed support for the Hungarian rebels. In 1956 85 people were arrested in Kaunas, among them were 81 students: 44 – from the Academy of Agriculture, 22 – from Kaunas Polytechnic Institute and 15 – from Kaunas Medical Institute. The students were accused of antisocial behaviour concealing the political motives. For example, in 1956 two students Arūnas Tarabilda and L. Valiukevičius from the State Art Institute were accused of “denigrating and smearing the Soviet regime and distorting the Party's national politics” and thus expelled from the institute and Komsomol (see: Nakas 2008, 111, 172). All attempts to disrupt the commemoration of All Saints' Day in 1957 failed in both cities. Some 2,000–3,000 people gathered to lay flowers and lit candles on the graves of national heroes in the cemetery near Vytautas avenue in Kaunas. While the militia were trying to push the crowd away from the monuments to the victims of the war of independence, a skirmish broke out and the crowd attacked the militia with stones and flowed into the street. 102 protestors, including 11 students, were arrested. The students as well as other protestors were accused of disorderly conduct and sentenced to 15 days' detention (Anušauskas and Burauskaitė 2003, 23). In Vilnius Rasos cemetery candles were lit on the grave of Lithuanian patriarch Jonas Basanavičius and those of soldiers fallen in the battles for Vilnius, Lithuanian anthem and other patriotic songs were sung. Some 200–250 students participated in the action. According to a KGB official, nationalistic speeches were delivered by Professor Jonas Dagys, Rimantas Gibavičius, Albinas Bernotas and Arūnas Tarabilda (Nakas 2008, 144). Despite various repressive measures, smaller-scale commemorations of the All Saints' Day and All Soul's Day took place in various places throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Massive students' protest against the Soviet regime emerged in Kaunas on May 18 and 19, 1972 following the self-immolation of Romas Kalanta. The nineteen-year old night-school graduate set himself on fire in protest against the Soviet system and conformist society in the square near Kaunas Musical Theatre opposing the municipality building on May 14, 1972. His last words were “Only the system should be blamed for my death. Freedom for Lithuania!” R. Kalanta's self-immolation evoked protests among young people. On May 18–19 several thousand young people, including school and university students and workers took part in the rallies. The protests against the Soviet regime were explicitly nationalistic in character, including chanting for Lithuania's freedom, singing of the national anthem, and attacks on the symbols of the Soviet regime. The protestors confronted the Soviet militia and over 400 people were detained. After protests 50 were punished under administrative law, 10 were put on trial and 8 were sentenced to imprisonment from 1 to 3 years. They were charged with public nuisance and disorderly conduct

which disturbed the peaceful life of the city and its citizens. In a couple of days the press and the radio informed that R. Kalanta was suffering from a mental disorder and that hooligans and tramps were ramping around the city. For example, on May 26 TASS (Information Telegraph Agency of the USSR) reported that social elements were rioting in Kaunas, the young man who set himself on fire had mental problems and no political motivation was underlying the incident (Anušauskas and Burauskaitė 2003, 25) The West learned about the events in Kaunas from Western journalists in Moscow who broadcast the memorandum to the Secretary-General of the UNO regarding R. Kalanta's self-immolation and the unrest in Kaunas all around the world (Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios 1972–1973, 16). The same spring 15 more people set or tried to set themselves on fire. Summing up, it is noteworthy that R. Kalanta's death in the spring of 1972 marked the end of active youth protests and the beginning of a new period of underground press and public struggle for the rights of Lithuanians which lasted until the initiation of the national movement *Sąjūdis* in 1988.

Conclusions

Summarising it can be said that after the Soviet occupation the country underwent the programmed continuation of the far reaching and tragic destruction of Lithuanian education and culture: all private schools, universities, and institutes were destroyed together with the national system of education; the organisational system of education and its curricula were adjusted in accordance with the Soviet Communist ideology and principles; university and school curricula as well as the basic textbooks were supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education in Moscow; the Russian language dominated in the majority of institutions and was ensured priority status in schools; the humanities were subjected to strong Soviet indoctrination, i.e. many historians and writers in the national literary traditions were excluded from curricula. Their books were classified as reactionary nationalistic and were banned from all bookstores and libraries and stored in special library funds (*spetsfond*s) – the collections of forbidden materials; strict censorship was enforced; a number of prolific professors having the greatest experience in different fields of education were expelled from the universities and institutes; and the most active professors underwent repressions and were deported to the remote areas of the USSR: Siberia, the Arctic Circle zone, and Central Asia. They were accused of opposition to the Soviet authorities, Lithuanian nationalism, bourgeois background, apoliticality, absence of ideology, promotion of Western culture and participation in anti-Soviet actions.

In fact, during the Soviet regime Lithuanian professors and students not only had their fates determined by political changes but also had very few possibilities

to survive in Soviet Lithuania. One of such possibilities was to resist the occupation and Soviet rule. Thus, in 1944–1990 part of universities students and professors actively participated in the struggle against the Soviet Communist ideology by means of armed and peaceful, legal and illegal, individual and collective forms of resistance including the formation of underground organizations, printing of illegal publications and organization of protests and rallies. Despite the after-effects of the Cold War decisive position of Western politicians regarding the non-recognition of the occupation of the Baltic States helped the Lithuanians understand that their strive for freedom is legitimate and supported by Western democracies. This bore fruit – on March 11, 1990 Lithuania became an independent state.

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