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# Hostile Ideology: Challenges and Repercussions

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*Speeches delivered at the Seimas in 2023 during the conferences titled 'Communist Ideology and its Practice: Past and Present. Historical, Moral, and Legal Assessment of the Soviet Occupation of Lithuania' and 'Celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League'*

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## Communist Ideology and its Practice: Past and Present. Historical, Moral, and Legal Assessment of the Soviet Occupation of Lithuania

## In Commemoration of Antanas Terleckas and the 45th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League

# Practice of Communist Ideology in Modern World: Challenge to Democracy and Peace

*Prof. Dr Valdas Rakutis*

Why have I picked such an odd subject for my article? It would seem that we are at war with the shadows of the long-gone past. However, there are valid reasons for this article to appear: the shadows of the past persist, evolving and exerting influence in various guises, though not always overtly. The facade may change, but the essence remains. What truly matters is the substance within. Furthermore, understanding communist ideology is readily accessible to those who have lived under its rule. My teacher, one of the founding fathers of the Lithuanian merchant fleet, has once said that the most potent antidote to Bolshevism is Bolshevism itself. Those who have endured the realities of living under Bolshevism do comprehend its nature intimately. However, individuals born outside that era may struggle to grasp its current manifestations and may find it difficult to discern between Bolshevist methods and other ideologies. Moreover, they might persist in the spirit of Bolshevism unknowingly, living within the very same framework of communist ideology without even recognising it.

What is the essence of communist ideology? It might seem easy to define, but it is not that simple. The communist ideology is based on certain fundamental principles. The ideology came into existence at the end of the 19th century, at a time when industrialisation, factory

construction and unbridled capitalism caused a lot of controversy worldwide. In response to this controversy, the Marxist theory, which puts the blame on capitalism, was created. The theory posited that the dictatorship of the proletariat, rooted in class struggle, was essential. Furthermore, this dictatorship was envisioned not only at the local, regional, or national levels but also on an international scale.

'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' was the slogan adorning all Soviet newspapers. What is its meaning? This slogan encapsulates a globalist ideology that adheres to a specific principle, uniting left-wing forces worldwide. This is the crux of the matter. If we fail to understand or acknowledge it, we might unwittingly find ourselves serving the same golden calf under different guises. In particular, I would like to emphasize the later stages of this ideology, as it underwent evolution and never remained static, particularly as regards the vision for the future and communism. You might find yourself smiling at the mention of communism. However, at a closer look, you will notice echoes of that ideology not only in the future aspirations of contemporary China but also in modern Western ideologies. What held true for communism remains relevant for some modern Western ideologies today: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' These notions resonate with the aspirations of certain individuals and can manifest just as prominently in entirely modern ideologies.

A few words about the Russian strand of communism. Distinguished from generic communism or Marxism, the Russian variety of communism was a distinct system – a fusion of Russian imperialism and class struggle. Russian imperialism asserted its dominance with the time passing. The current events in Russia leave many in the West pondering why the entire population of Russia has ended up supporting an unjust war. To understand this, we must examine those who have primed the Russian population for conflict, particularly since 2008. We need to scrutinize the educational initiatives and ideological influences that have shaped their perspectives. The readiness of the Russian population for war underscores the notion that relentless efforts can yield a desired outcome.

Russian communism, morphed into imperialism, is, in essence, the architect of this post-communist world in the true sense of this word.

An interesting aspect of Russian culture is its embrace of collective education, a trait shared with China. However, this educational approach is particularly well defined in Russia, rooted in the fabric of rural communities composed of non-free individuals living in a closed environment and prioritising collective values over individual freedoms.

Such collectivism is alien to Lithuanians. Thankfully enough, Lithuania resisted collectivism. Unfortunately, collectivism underpins the cultures of the settlers, mostly coming from Belarus, but also from other Soviet republics, who settled in Lithuania during the Soviet period. These newcomers predominantly settled in villages across the Vilnius region subsequent to the departure of the locals. They also came to live around factories established in major cities, particularly Vilnius and Klaipėda. Their communities exhibit a collective consciousness that is closely intertwined with Russian imperialism and the operational patterns of Russian rural settlements. (This topic warrants thorough exploration, making it challenging to provide a concise summary). Their lives are shaped by the notion of *homo sovieticus*, stemming not only from external influences but also from inherent cultural traits. Without engaging in conversation with these individuals, one cannot fully grasp this mindset, yet this concept of collective consciousness aptly describes their circumstances. While other factors play a role, this cultural continuity remains prominently evident.

Information on the Chinese strand of communism is lacking, making it challenging to define it precisely. Chinese communism blends elements of traditional Chinese imperial ideology with communist principles, a fusion that proves effective. Moreover, Chinese communism aligns harmoniously with ancient Chinese cultural frameworks. In fact, the Chinese society is deeply rooted in collectivism and willingness to sacrifice for the greater good of the collective empire, traditionally governed by Mandarins. In contemporary times, the role once occupied by Mandarins is assumed by the Communist Party. To truly understand these dynamics, one must delve into the intricacies from within.

You might wonder about the Lithuanian version of communism. This strand of communism is rooted in a mansion culture, where there is the nobility and ordinary people. The ordinary people rely on nobility, and the nobles, in turn, depend on ordinary people. Lithuanian Communism

can be viewed as an extension of serfdom prevalent in rural communities. In urban areas, it rests on a different foundation. Notably, the foundation for Lithuanian Communism is not a very stable one in Lithuania. Despite the existence of serfdom farms, there has always been a presence of free individuals and a reverence for independent farmers in Lithuanian society. This is why our culture persisted and our nation managed to resist communism. If we try to trace our lineage, many of us would discover volunteers, free individuals, and perhaps even minor or major noblemen in it. In essence, there will always be traces of freedom within our ancestry. This is precisely why the Lithuanian variant of communism was swiftly dismissed as utter nonsense at its inception.

However, it is important to acknowledge that Lithuanian communist culture is influential when it comes to certain segments of society, as evidenced by the significant emigration of a million of Lithuanians who have chosen to live abroad. Why have they done so? Why did this nation, the first to proclaim independence from the Soviet Union, also become one of the most heavily affected nations in terms of emigration? If you examine the genealogical lineage of the emigrants, you will notice they are descendants of Lithuanian serfs who sought a better life under a more benevolent master. They often lack a sense of civic duty and may not even be eligible for military service due to their lack of a sense of freedom. They depend on a patron for support. The vast majority of emigrants originate from rural areas, which have been disproportionately impacted by emigration. This phenomenon cannot be attributed solely to the assertion that the living conditions there are unfavourable. Compared to the capitalist world, the post-communist countries are all generally inferior in every aspect. However, the significant emigration rate from Lithuania suggests that a segment of our society is afflicted by a mentality akin to that of slaves. Indeed, sometimes subservience stifles our ability to speak the truth openly, does it not?

I am very grateful to Jonas Burokas for his support. However, when someone is figuratively beheaded in a serious debate for expressing substantial arguments, it is a stark indication that we are affected by subservience to certain interests. This is alarming. A scholarly debate should be open to a diverse range of opinions. People need to find out what truly happened in the past. If we shy away from discussing

certain topics, we risk surrendering our freedom. We fought for a free Lithuania precisely to ensure the freedom of expression. Instead of dwelling on criticism, however, let us focus on what needs to be done to move forward positively.

Who were the opponents of the communists in Lithuania? It turns out that the opponents were our bastions. What are our bastions? These are free citizens who fought for a free and independent Lithuania, often associated with the era of President Antanas Smetona. Why is Antanas Smetona under attack today? Why are officers and others under attack? This is because they are an obstacle to the new form of communism. They were an obstacle in the Soviet era, and so they are now. You have seen all of these people here. Who are they? They are free people. They created a free and independent state called Lithuania under Smetona's rule. Smetona was not perfect. However, most importantly, he stands as our bastion, steadfast in its resistance against communism.

The second bastion is the Catholic Church. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Catholic Church was part of our identity and protected us from all varieties of Bolshevism. Who were the first to be elected to government once we regained independence? Christian Democrats. Who are Christian Democrats? The Christian Democrat ideology is an antidote to Marxist ideology. In fact, Christian Democrat ideology was developed in Great Britain, as the British were the first in line to deal with factories and the repercussions of wild capitalism. The British were the first to face Marxist rhetoric about the revolution. Christian Democrats, however, maintained that there was a need to find legal ways to build Christian and democratic communities to address the problems at hand in an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary manner.' That is who Christian Democrats are. Until recently, Christian Democrats have dominated a range of organisations and Western countries but are currently in a major crisis. Christian Democrats, along with the ideals of Lithuania under Smetona, serve as our bastions, currently facing threats. My focus is on the idea itself, rather than debating the reputation of Christian Democrats.

Young people are another matter, which, in my opinion, is very important. Young people do not understand what we are talking about. To them, the spectre of communism is the prerogative of the elderly.

Young people think the times of the spectre of communism travelling around Europe have long gone. However, new ideologies follow the same ideas. If young people fail to grasp the true nature of communism, they risk adopting similar beliefs and inadvertently becoming what the Soviet regime aimed to create: *homo sovieticus*, albeit in a slightly different guise. Who is *homo sovieticus*? He is an individual who lacks a sense of allegiance to the state or government; he is solely concerned with his own well-being. He drifts towards wherever conditions are more favourable, much like our past colonisers. He is driven by instinct rather than conscious choice. This is a dire predicament indeed. The remedy for this situation lies within our communities — strong, cohesive communities that stand firm against such nonsense. These communities can emerge within churches or elsewhere, forming and fortifying themselves in myriad ways. Numerous such communities exist in cities, symbolising resilience and unity. They are the building blocks, the foundation upon which the future can be constructed. These communities are modern, evolving to meet the challenges of today. While they may not mirror the past entirely, they possess the resilience to confront contemporary challenges. With robust structures in place, they can weather any storm.

Let me share a couple more considerations that are important. Ideological challenges require an ideological response. What is the ideology of this country? What is the ideology of 11 March? We have no answer. What is the ideological foundation of Lithuania, then? The pre-war Lithuania was guided by the effort to liberate Vilnius. What are we guided by today, now that Vilnius has been liberated? Vilnius seems to be gravitating towards conformity or capitulating to external influences, which is an extremely perilous trend. It is imperative that we maintain our sense of direction. If our collective ideology is solely focused on fostering a culture of individualistic convenience, it will lack the resilience needed to thrive. It will simply dissolve at the slightest hint of temptation. We need to think about the ways to solve the challenges of our time by using both our traditional methods and creating new ones. The best way to overcome communism is our national, cultural, old Lithuanian solution: let us move in the direction of the ideals that underpinned our actions on 16 February 1918 and 11 March 1990.

# Communist Party of Lithuania and Sovietisation of the Nation

*Dr Arūnas Bubnys*

The Communist Party of Lithuania (hereinafter: 'the CPL') was set up as an integral part of the Russian Communist Movement and was formed on the basis of the ideology, theories and organisational framework of the Russian Bolshevik Party.[1] Since its establishment in 1918, the CPL had consistently lacked an independent party agenda, strategy, and tactics. Instead, the CPL closely aligned with the ideology and policy postulates of the Russian Communist Party, or, since December 1925, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (hereinafter: 'the AUCPB'). From 1922 to 1940, the CPL operated as a branch of the Communist International (hereinafter: 'the Comintern'), adhering closely to the directives of its leadership. During the mid-1920s, when the Comintern fell under the political dictatorship and control of the AUCPB, the CPL became subject to the enforcement of AUCPB policies.

In Lithuania, the CPL worked as an anti-national and anti-state entity, serving as a puppet political organisation of a foreign state and representing the interests of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. Because of its anti-national and anti-state agenda as well as its illegitimate operational framework, the Lithuanian Communist Organisation garnered minimal social and political support during the period of its underground operation and remained a marginalised and non-influential establishment. On the eve of the Lithuanian occupation, the CPL counted 1 600 members. Based on the social status of its members, the CPL was made of workers (48 %), peasants (24 %), traders and artisans (24 %), and civil servants (4 %). Women comprised 10 % of the members, while men made up the remaining 90 %. In terms of ethnicity, 54.48 % of the CPL members were Lithuanians, 30.61 % Jews, 14.27 % Russians, and 0.63 % members of other nationalities.

[1] *Lietuvos komunistų partijos istorijos apybraiža (History of the Communist Party of Lithuania).* 1971. Vol. 1, 1887–1920. Vilnius: Mintis, pp. 5–8, 370–374.

Due to the method of Lithuania's annexation, the leadership of the AUCPB was motivated to keep its plans for the annexation and sovietisation of Lithuania concealed. Consequently, it curtailed the activities of the Lithuanian communists for a while, utilising the Comintern and Vladimir Dekanozov's group to restrict their active and public political involvement and expression.[2] Only after the Lithuanian sections of society and foreign envoys recognised the puppet government of Justas Paleckis, representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter: 'the USSR') began to openly defend communist forces and promote their activities. Mečislovas Gedvilas, Minister of the Interior, issued a decree to legalise the Communist Party of Lithuania on 25 June 1940. The Communist Youth Union of Lithuania was legalised on 28 June 1940.[3] Communists Mečislovas Gedvilas, Mykolas Junčas-Kučinskas and Karolis Didžiulis-Grosmanas were appointed members of the puppet government, and Antanas Sniečkus, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party (hereinafter: 'CPL CC'), was appointed Director of the Security Department. The presence of communists in the government enabled Dekanozov's group to exercise tighter control over the government not only externally but also from within, namely, through communist ministers. After the communists secured a majority in the Cabinet in early July, the government fell under communist control and adopted a Bolshevist orientation.

From the onset of the occupation, Lithuanian communists adhered to the directives of the USSR representatives and collaborated in the enforcement of occupation policies.[4] Members of the CPL CC Secretariat, in particular Icikas Meskupas and Chaimas Aizenas, facilitated

[2] Letter of 17 June 1940 from Georgi Dimitrov, Secretary General of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, to the LCP CC. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 3377, Series 58, File 714, p. 7 (in Russian).

[3] Letter of 25 June 1940 from the Press and Associations Division of the Ministry of the Interior. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 1771, Series 1, File 135, p. 1; Bagušauskas, J. R. 1999. *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas (Youth Resistance Against the Soviet Regime in Lithuania and Suppression of the Resistance)*. Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, pp. 28–29.

[4] *Lietuvos komunistų partijos istorijos apybraiža (History of the Communist Party of Lithuania)*. Vol. 3, 1940–1959. Vilnius: Mintis, pp. 34-43, 120–122.

Dekanozov's group in appointing compliant administrators as members of the puppet government and ministries, replacing officials of the Republic of Lithuania with communists and other trusted political appointees of the invaders. By mid-July 1940, almost 400 communists were employed in the Lithuanian government and administrative institutions.[5] The dismissal of loyal officials of the Republic of Lithuania and their replacement by communists created the preconditions to internally, through the communists employed in the administration, subordinate these institutions to communist control and use them for the implementation of the occupation policy. This marked the beginning of the bolshevisation of the Lithuanian administration, with the Ministry of the Interior being the first to undergo this transformation. The CPL CC Secretariat made it possible for the bulk of the communists released from prisons in June to get employment, primarily within internal affairs authorities and security institutions. In July, the communists assumed control of the Ministry of the Interior, converting it into a repressive arm of the occupying regime.

The Lithuanian Communist Organisation played a pivotal role in orchestrating and executing the annexation of Lithuania. Representatives of the USSR tasked the Lithuanian communists with organising the election campaign for the People's Seimas (Parliament). The CPL CC together with Vladimir Dekanozov selected the candidates for the Seimas, prepared the electoral programme of the Lithuanian Labour People's Union, formed the electoral commissions, and controlled the assembly of voters and the nomination of candidates as well as the activities of the electoral commissions. Most of the political campaigners were communists. USSR representatives and local communists coordinated the operations of the Seimas and enforced decisions of the occupying power upon it.[6] Through persuasion, psychological coercion, and the implicit threat of violence and physical repression, they compelled

[5] Lists of CPL communists in towns and counties, 1940. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 1771, Series 1, Files 172 and 173.

[6] Reports and memories shared at the meeting of former members of the People's Seimas in Kaunas on 30 August 1942. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 3377, Series 58, File 274, pp. 1–123; Minutes of the meeting of the former representatives of the People's Seimas of 13 June 1980. Ibid., File 43, p. 3.

members of the People's Seimas to acquiesce to the demands of a foreign state, namely, to abolish Lithuania's independence and dismantle the constitutional framework of the Republic of Lithuania.

Since the summer of 1940, the Lithuanian Communist Organisation actually functioned as a territorial branch of the AUCPB, but it was not formally the case. In order to put the CPL at the heart of the Soviet political framework, it was imperative to, first and foremost, integrate it into the structure of the AUCPB. On 8 October 1940, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the AUCPB incorporated the Communist Parties of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into the AUCPB.[7] The CPL transitioned into a territorial organisation of the AUCPB, functioning in the capacity of a regional territorial entity. Under the statutes adopted at the 18th Congress of the Communist Party, none of the regional territorial party organisations were able to deal with any political, organisational, staff-related and other matters independently. They were subordinate to and entirely dependent on the leadership of the AUCPB, which had all the levers in its hands to subjugate the Lithuanian Communist Organisation. By party directives and through their representatives in the Lithuanian Communist Organisation, the Political Bureau and the Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the AUCPB dictated and controlled the activities of the Lithuanian Communist Organisation, established its structure and lists of posts, formed the personal composition of its governing bodies, and allocated funds from party and state budgets for the party needs.

The leadership of the AUCPB aimed to establish the Lithuanian Communist Organisation as a pervasive presence across all segments and domains of social life, endeavouring to mould them in accordance with the party doctrine. As a result, the Lithuanian Communist Organisation was rapidly expanded. The unified structure and centralisation of the AUCPB meant that all territorial organisations of the Party adhered to and operated under the same organisational principles.

On 21 September 1940, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the AUCPB established the supreme authority for operational

[7] Extract from minutes No 21 of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the AUCPB CC of 8 October 1940. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 3777, Series 58, File 620, p. 3 (in Russian).

management of the Lithuanian Communist Organisation, i.e. the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist (Bolshevik) Party (hereinafter: 'the CPLB CC').[8] It consisted of Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary; Icikas Meskupas, Second Secretary; Kazys Preikšas, Third Secretary; and formal members, namely, Justas Paleckis, Chairman of the Presidium of the Provisional Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (hereinafter: 'the LSSR'); Mečislovas Gedvilas, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Aleksandras Guzevičius, Head of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and Daniilas Šupikovas, Head of the Organisational Instructors Division of the CPLB CC. In addition to the officially appointed Bureau members, the meetings were also attended by Nikolai Pozdniakov. Although not formally a member of the Bureau, he wielded a decisive vote and functioned as its *de facto* leader.

In October, the Bureau of the CPLB CC formed the party organisational committees of towns and counties and established the composition of 24 committees, submitting it to the CPLB CC for approval.[9]

The structure of the Lithuanian Communist Territorial Organisation was finalised between December 1940 and February 1941. At the reporting and electoral meetings of the Party Organisations during the political campaign, the structure of the Lithuanian Territorial Party Organisation was formalised and its governing and operational standing bodies were formed under the statutes of the AUCPB. The 5th Congress of the CPLB on 5–9 February 1941 set up the CPLB CC, consisting of 47 members and 16 candidates.[10] On 9 February, the First Plenum of the CPLB CC appointed the Bureau members of the CPLB CC who had been agreed behind the scenes and coordinated with the management of the AUCPB.[11]

[8] Extract from minutes No 20 of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the AUCPB CC of 21 September 1940. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 3777, Series 58, File 620, p. 4 (in Russian).

[9] Minutes No 9 of the meeting of the Bureau of the LCPB CC of 17 October 1940. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 1771, Series 1, File 15, pp. 2, 6–8 (in Russian).

[10] Minutes of the meetings of 9 February 1941 of the Vote-counting Commission at the 5th Congress of the CPLB. Ibid., Series 2, File 3, pp. 438–443 (in Russian).

[11] Minutes No 1 of the First Plenum of the CPLB CC of 9 February 1941. Ibid., File 23, p. 1 (in Russian).

Formally, the CPLB CC was expected to serve as the supreme body of collective leadership of the Lithuanian Communist Organisation tasked with setting the objectives and missions for the Lithuanian communists towards the sovietisation of Lithuania, devising strategies for the implementation of sovietisation policies, structuring the party framework, appointing key personnel to its governing bodies, and directing the party's political, ideological, organisational and other activities. However, the CPLB CC actually found itself wholly subservient to its Bureau, mandated with executing decisions of the leadership of the AUCPB and the Bureau of the CPLB CC whenever deemed necessary. Thus, in practice, the activities of the Lithuanian Communist Party were directed and organised by the Bureau of the CPLB CC, which set out the tasks and strategies of the Lithuanian sovietisation policy devised by the AUCPB. In adherence to the directives of the AUCPB, the Bureau formulated the guidelines for reshaping Lithuanian public life to meet the Soviet norms and outlined the responsibilities of the institutions within the LSSR and party structures tasked with managing those areas of public life. Modelled on the AUCPB, the Bureau of the CPLB CC served as a centralised body combining key political and administrative institutions to form a single political and administrative centre of governance of the LSSR and embodying the integration of the Communist Party with state authorities at the LSSR level. This integration facilitated the Party's coordination of all the institutions within the LSSR, directing them towards the implementation of the Party policies. The Bureau of the CPLB CC was the highest administrative authority of the LSSR, exerting control over all other administrative institutions. The Bureau operated under partisan doctrine, directing and controlling the activities of the said institutions in alignment with the Party's own interests and purposes. The heads of all the most important administrative bodies were appointed as members of the Bureau. That way, political and administrative sectors and functions were covered by a single political body. Consequently, the Bureau started duplicating the functions of existing administrative bodies and encroaching upon their prerogatives.

Each link in the chain of the CPLB CC apparatus was set up to manage and carry out specific political, ideological, organisational or other activities of the Party and to implement the AUCPB policy in specific

domains. Structural units (divisions and other units) were established within the CPLB CC to cover every domain of public life and to govern and control the institutions in charge of these domains. October 1940 marked the establishment of the Organisational Divisions for Instructors, Staff, Political Campaigning and Propaganda, Schools, Agriculture, Industry and Transport, as well as the Special and the Finance and Economy Units. The spring of 1941 saw the setting up of two new units, i.e. the Food Industry Division and the Military Division, while the Industry and Transport Division was reorganised into two separate units, one for Industry and one for Transport.[12]

The structure and functions of subordinate party bodies were modelled on the structure of the CPLB CC and its structural divisions. Town and county committees of the Party were the key local authorities that governed and controlled the activities of party and administrative institutions. Same as the CPLB CC, the town and county committees had their own staff, military, industrial, transport and other divisions.[13]

The post-war era in Lithuania was marked by a rapid reinstatement of a single-party political system characteristic of a totalitarian state, reminiscent of the structure established in the USSR back in 1940 and 1941. That political system consisted of political and state structures that sought to forcibly create a communist society in Lithuania. Within a short period of time, Lithuania was to become an integral part of the USSR. In order to establish their power, the communists introduced a totalitarian regime targeted at politicising and ideologising society, controlling all domains of public life, and creating a social pillar of the communist regime. Political, ideological and repressive measures were used for delivering these goals.

The Soviet Union's political and state apparatus established in Lithuania (with the occupaying administration composed of USSR citizens and local collaborators) was relentless in its efforts to eradicate any

[12] Minutes No 9 and No 17 of the meetings of 19 March 1941 and 23 April 1941 of the Bureau of the CPLB CC. Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 1771, Series 2, File 75, p. 2; File 99, p. 7 (in Russian).

[13] Minutes No 7 of the meeting of 7–8 March 1941 of the Bureau of the CPLB CC. Ibid., File 69, p. 2 (in Russian); Minutes No 9 of the meeting of 19 March 1941 of the Bureau of the CPLB CC. Ibid., File 75, pp. 1, 3 (in Russian).

semblance of independence in Lithuania, systematically dismantling the nation's civic spirit, traditions, and spiritual values. These endeavours extended to disassembling the social and economic framework of society, particularly evident in rural areas. Furthermore, the apparatus eliminated the most politically active and independently-minded segments of the population, perpetuating control through coercion and violence. The Lithuanian nation did not yield to those measures and resisted them. Therefore, in 1944–1953, the Soviet Union reintroduced the repressive policy from the pre-war era, which manifested itself in various forms of state terror and organised genocide. Once again, Lithuania found itself imposed with the status of a republic of the Soviet Union devoid of any aspects of independence.

Formally, the Soviet government consisted of the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. However, under totalitarian regime, the principle of separation of powers was fictitious. The Communist Party wielded absolute power, its dictates shaping the course of action in all state and social institutions. The only political organisation that existed in the Soviet Union was the Communist Party that came to power in an illegal and violent way back in 1917. Its political status was legitimised by the USSR Constitution, which also established the setup of the totalitarian state. In this setup, there was no place for political competition between several parties. The Communist Party (AUCPB) and its constituent parts, namely, the communist parties of the Soviet republics, were highly centralised and worked based on unconditional obedience and subordination. This setup had many layers, including the Political Bureau of the AUCPB CC, as the supreme authority of the USSR, at the top, and local party cells (organisations) established by a handful of communists, at the bottom. The All-Union Party consisted of the communist parties of the Soviet socialist republics. They acted, in fact, as communist territorial organisations unconditionally subordinate to the central bodies, namely, the AUCPB CC and the Political Bureau of the AUCPB CC, and personally to Joseph Stalin. However, the Communist Party of Russia never existed in the Soviet Union. The Kremlin never needed it, as the Russian AUCPB was to cover the entire USSR.

In Lithuania, the CPLB was formally the only political structure at the core of the Soviet political system and formed the nucleus of the

occupying regime. The CPLB was a territorial organisation of the AUCPB with the status of a regional body. During the post-war years, the CPLB was neither a national organisation nor a political party in the true sense of the word due to its organisational structure and dependency on the AUCPB CC. In fact, the CPLB was the most important administrative institution in Lithuania under occupation, since it controlled and governed the activities of all state authorities and the social sector.

In addition to the CPLB as a branch of the AUCPB, Lithuania also had other political organisations of the USSR that were active in the post-war Lithuania. They included the Lithuanian Bureau of the Central Committee of the AUCPB and the Leninist Young Communist League of Lithuania (the Komsomol). These organisations actively contributed to the sovietisation of Lithuania, fought against the resistance movement, and organised and participated in repressions and genocide.

Communist terror in Lithuania was carried out by repressive agencies, namely, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Ministry of the Interior) referred to as the NKVD (MVD abbreviated from Russian: Narodnyy komissariat vnutrennikh del (Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del)) and the People's Commissariat of State Security (Ministry of State Security) referred to as the NKGB (MGB (abbreviated from Russian: Narodnyy komissariat gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti)). These institutions formally were part of the Lithuanian executive in the form of a group of commissariats (ministries) of the soviet socialist republics of the Soviet Union. However, they acted in fact as divisions of a respective People's Commissariat of the USSR and were directly subordinate to Moscow. The Public Prosecutor's Office, in its capacity as the law enforcement authority, functioned analogously. It was subordinate to the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Soviet Union and authorised the majority of repressive measures, including acts of genocide. Notably, the heads of the repressive bodies of the LSSR held high positions within the top leadership of the CPLB. They included Juozas Bartašiūnas, Aleksandras Guzevičius, Dmitrijus Jefimovas, Nikolajus Gorlinskis, Piotras Kapralovas, and Piotras Kondakovas, who were all members of the Bureau of the CPLB CC. Thus, all their criminal acts were perpetrated in the name of the Communist Party and were guided by the cause of establishing communism.

Citizens of the formerly independent Lithuania employed in Soviet institutions, including the Lithuanian Communist Organisation, obliged their compatriots to obey and carry out the will of the invaders. Thus, they became collaborators or, in other words, assistants of the invaders. As they had more knowledge about the country and its residents, they proposed their own means and ways to accelerate the sovietisation of Lithuania and break the armed resistance. They despised Lithuania's independence, endeavoured to justify the destruction of the Lithuanian nation, and worked to involve the broadest possible range of Lithuanian society into collaboration with the invaders in order to justify their status as collaborators.

1. In his research on the activities of Soviet political bodies in Lithuania during the second Soviet occupation, Dr Vytautas Tininis made the following conclusions.

2. Between 1944 and 1953, the CPLB had no authority and wielded no political clout needed to remain in power without the help of the military and repressive bodies of the USSR. Lithuanian society saw the CPLB as an alien organisation hostile to the Lithuanian nation. Any communist was usually associated with the betrayal of the aspirations of the Lithuanian nation. Therefore, the communists who fell into the hands of the partisans were usually shot on the spot. Most members of the CPLB were poorly educated. The ignorance of communists and their contempt for Christian ethical and moral values was conducive to their immoral behaviour, which manifested itself in meaningless cruelty.

3. Lithuanians formed a minority in the CPLB (in 1947, Lithuanians accounted for 18 % and, in 1953, for 38 % of the CPLB members). Almost all party events were held in Russian. Moreover, all documents and the majority of party print material were only available in Russian. The CPLB was at the heart of Russification of Lithuania.

4. The CPLB mainly functioned to achieve unconditional implementation of the directives of the AUCPB CC, the Political Bureau of the AUCPB CC, and Stalin. The CPLB's proposals were only taken into account when they aligned with the Kremlin's interests, namely, when they aimed at sending the families of the partisans into exile, transferring experts from the USSR to Lithuania, etc. The main tasks and objectives of the CPLB were to ensure the sovietisation of Lithuania,

consolidate the communist regime in all walks of social life, organise the fight against the national underground movement and pursue its dissolution, as well as implement the Stalinist staffing policy.

5. The main task of the party bodies was the daily search for and organisation of repression of the so-called enemies of the people, or class enemies. There were four categories of people or social groups that fell prey to the repressive policies of the AUCPB and the CPLB in Lithuania. They included 1) partisans and members of underground organisations, as well as their supporters (referred to as the bourgeois nationalists); 2) farmers (referred to as the kulaks); 3) civil servants, teachers, intellectuals, former politicians and former civil servants of the independent Lithuania, soldiers and other officials of the independent Lithuania (referred to as the politically and socially unreliable elements of society); and 4) Catholic priests (referred to as the reactionary Catholic clergy). The people who fell under these categories were all being arrested, imprisoned, deported and murdered. This was also the largest and most important area of criminal activity of the CPLB. In various other domains, including the orchestration of coerced elections, policies promoting Russification, spiritual oppression, aggressive atheism, persecution of religious adherents and clergy, prejudiced legal practices, and anti-Semitic actions, the activities of the CPLB were marked by political discrimination, often crossing into criminal territory.

6. All the policies of the Communist Party in consolidating the Soviet regime in Lithuania were conducted under a veil of secrecy. Not only were planned repressions or acts of terror kept in secret, but even fundamental aspects of daily life were shrouded from public view. Surveillance extended beyond public domain to intrude upon the private lives of individuals.

7. Under the auspices of repressive structures, the CPLB established itself in Lithuanian towns within just a year (1944–1945). Expanding its network to rural areas proved harder, though. The party organisers appointed there became the highest local political authorities. They initiated and organised local repressions and excelled in brutal and anti-human behaviour as well as immoral lifestyles. In 1948, they were replaced by secretaries of party organisations.

8. During wartime, the Lithuanian portion of the CPLB had high hopes for a lenient policy of the AUCPB in Lithuania. However, in response to the emergence of national resistance, the Kremlin further increased the level of repression. In fact, the representatives of the AUCPB CC began to blackmail the leadership of the CPLB CC, making threats about their supposedly hesitant and complaisant position vis-à-vis 'nationalists' or, more precisely, intellectuals. Subservience, fear of the new government and ideological motives made most Lithuanian communists adopt a nihilistic approach to their own nation, traditions, and values. Hence, they acted hypocritically. In retaliation to acts by partisans, Lithuanian communists fully supported the inhumane measures against the Lithuanian people, namely, forced exile, acts of terror, and political repression. Participation in Stalinist crimes became the norm for Lithuanian communists and they had no scruples. None of them showed any remorse for their criminal activities later on. Notably, a small share of communists within the executive branch, especially the intellectuals, tried to slightly mitigate the measures used by the Stalinist forces, helped their relatives, rescued their acquaintances, and criticised some of Moscow's decisions. However, these were rare exceptions to the general rule. Generally, the communists in the executive had no political influence on the Stalinist regime and the criminal activities of the Communist Party.

9. In the first post-war years, Moscow demanded from the CPLB to speed up the sovietisation and tighten the grip of repressive policies. In order to intimidate the communists of Lithuania, especially the ethnic Lithuanians, the AUCPB CC adopted three resolutions between 1944 and 1946 strongly criticising the CPLB for insufficiency of effort to ensure the sovietisation of Lithuania. The implementation of these resolutions was controlled by the Lithuanian Bureau of the AUCPB CC and the Bureau of the CPLB CC. Between 1944 and 1953, they issued decisions and resolutions of the Bureau and the Plenum of the CPLB CC, containing serious and numerous human rights violations. The documents specified the groups of people and layers of society that were allegedly hostile to the Soviet government (the bourgeois nationalists, the kulaks, the reactionary clergy, the socially unreliable elements of society, etc.). The decisions provided for the use of repressive measures against these categories of people.

10. In order to monitor the implementation of the decisions of the AUCPB CC, various commissions and inspection brigades were sent to Lithuania on missions. They were ruthless even towards the local communists, with some of the communists being dismissed from office and others being demoted for inefficient work and lack of zeal. This helped the AUCPB CC to gain full control over the management of the CPLB and guide it in the desired direction. As a rule, Lithuanian communists had made every effort to meet Moscow's expectations. Therefore, no repressive measures were taken against the leading Lithuanian communists (except for Juozas Vaišnoras).

11. Since the end of 1944, in order to improve the control of implementation of the directives of the AUCPB CC, almost all branches of the CPLB had ethnic non-Lithuanians appointed as second secretaries of the Party Committees (in 1952, only 2 % of them were Lithuanians by origin). They oversaw the work of the first secretaries, who were of Lithuanian origin, as well as monitored the general political situation in the controlled territory and shaped the staffing policy. The existence of the second secretary position was a key feature of the political control and oversight of local communists pursued by the AUCPB CC in post-war Lithuania.

12. Stalinist staffing policy was introduced in Lithuania alongside the Soviet political framework. This policy led to the formation of party nomenclature, which helped the Communist Party to expand and strengthen its control over all state, economic, cultural and other institutions quickly. The nomenclature people, heads and experts of party and Soviet administrative institutions of the LSSR, were a privileged class of Lithuanian officials. The AUCPB CC and the CPLB CC unofficially regulated their appointment. In total, there were over 42 000 nomenclature positions in Lithuania in 1952. Half of the nomenclature staff were non-Lithuanians, mostly Russified settlers of various ethnicities coming from various regions of the USSR and appointed by the AUCPB CC.

13. The staffing policy based on the alleged credibility and political and professional qualities of the employees was anti-democratic, anti-national, discriminatory and criminal in nature (political distrust could lead to being sent to prison). In the party committees,

nomenclature appointees were delegated to or removed from office in secret, with the public knowing nothing about it. Every appointee to a nomenclature position was coerced into following all party instructions. The party nomenclature and the repressive bodies became the crucial pillars of support to the Soviet regime in Lithuania.

14. The process of nomenclature formation was accompanied by serious human rights violations. The AUCPB CC and the CPLB CC organised mass campaigns of removal from office of mainly ethnic Lithuanians on political motives. Thus, Lithuanians were being dismissed, deliberately obstructed from getting a job elsewhere, arrested, interrogated and often imprisoned. In 1945, a total of 7 128 people were fired from various institutions, of which over 4 000 were laid off for political reasons. In 1946, these figures accounted for 6 639 employees fired and 2 535 dismissed for political reasons, respectively. According to the data of repressive institutions, 6 267 civil servants were arrested throughout the post-war years (1944–1953). Most arrests took place during the staff dismissal campaigns. In 1945–1947, the number of arrests peaked at 5 190. Self-defence and defence of labour rights of individuals against political persecution in court was rendered impossible by judges, who were also on nomenclature lists and followed the orders of the local party committees.

15. The most important structure of the CPLB CC apparatus was its Bureau. Apart from being in charge of repression (for example, achieving the objective of crushing resistance and sending people into exile), it also worked on a number of economic, social and other administrative matters concerning the LSSR, although the main political decision-making in 1944–1947 was centred in the hands of the Lithuanian Bureau of the AUCPB CC, directed by Mikhail Suslov and Vladimir Shcherbakov. These two, along with other representatives of the AUCPB CC, also attended meetings of the Bureau of the CPLB CC to steer its agenda in accordance with directives from Moscow. The resolutions adopted by the Bureau of the CPLB CC were binding on all party and state bodies of the LSSR.

16. There were a number of Stalinist-minded Lithuanian communists in the Bureau, including Antanas Sniečkus, Vladas Niunka, Kazys Preikšas, Genrikas Zimanas, and Juozas Bartašiūnas. A slightly more

moderate line was followed by Justas Paleckis and Mečislovas Gedvilas, although the latter directly organised repressions and participated in them. Members of the Bureau displayed a notable lack of tolerance towards individuals with differing viewpoints. Particularly radical were the settlers from the USSR, namely, second secretaries of the CPLB CC, state security ministers, and Vasilij Pisarev, the longstanding First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR, among others. While political decisions were made in Moscow, members of the Bureau, as enforcers of Moscow's directives, are equally politically liable for the consequences of the Soviet occupation in post-war Lithuania.

17. Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary of the CPLB CC, was the founding father of the Soviet system in Lithuania, the most important Lithuanian collaborator, and a loyal representative of Moscow's interests in Lithuania. Guided by communist ideals and educated by the Bolshevik Party, he remained a life-long supporter of Marxist dogmatism, obedience, and intolerance to people with a different viewpoint. In 1944–1953, his name was associated with the forced sovietisation and Russification of Lithuania, organisation of the fight against the national underground movement, mass deportations and imprisonment of innocent people, persecution of unlike-minded people and the Catholic Church, and destruction of national culture. This is attested by his reports made at party meetings and his personal signatures validating the implementation of repressive policies. Sniečkus was awarded with six medals for his commitment and consistent implementation of the political course of the AUCPB CC in the post-war years. After Stalin's death, however, Sniečkus mellowed and modified his agenda to match the political conjuncture. Albeit with certain reservations, he started to show respect for Lithuania's interests, yet always remained loyal to the traditions of Bolshevism.

18. Repressive bodies were among the most important pillars of the communist regime in the USSR. They included the NKVD (MVD), the NKGB (MGB), the Public Prosecutor's Office, and special courts. In post-war Lithuania, these bodies gained considerable influence in carrying out the tasks of the AUCPB CC and central repressive agencies of the USSR. The Soviet government and, in particular, the Communist Party in Lithuania heavily depended on their activities, namely, their daily fight against the resistance of the Lithuanian nation.

19. In Lithuania, same as across the Stalinist USSR, the repressive bodies were formally subordinate to the Communist Party. However, the CPLB did not govern these institutions administratively. The LCPB CC had no political power to rule over the entire repressive apparatus, although it sought to do so throughout the entire post-war period. All the repressive agencies were directly subordinate to the central departments of the USSR in Moscow. They hand almost no ethnic Lithuanians in their staff, as Lithuanians were considered untrustworthy. The leadership of the CPLB made every effort to expand its influence and staff the repressive bodies with more ethnic Lithuanians as well as to create Lithuanian-staffed military-repressive units, but Moscow was bent on resolving the problem of armed resistance by its military-repressive apparatus alone. To those Lithuanians who were obedient, Moscow only allowed to formally legalise the communist regime. Although the Bureau of the CPLB CC adopted many anti-partisan resolutions, the CPLB had mainly marginal party-based ideological influence over the governance of repressive structures.

The decisions of the Bureau and the Plenum of the CPLB CC authorised the repressive bodies to reinforce the Soviet regime and implement the state terror policy. However, the respective tiers of the CPLB had no control over the functioning of the repressive structures. Throughout the post-war years, the CPLB and the security forces continued to fight over the means and methods to sovietise Lithuania and break the resistance movement. The two institutions would exchange letters criticising each other, wherein the party men and the security men would accuse each other of a number of alleged infringements as well as of appeasing the so-called enemies of the people and condoning alcoholism, robbery, murder, etc. The leaders of repressive bodies often openly ignored the party committees, sometimes shunned sharing operational intelligence on the underground movement or repressive actions in the pipeline with communists, and were generally insolent. The security men spread the word that one of the reasons for the protracted fight against the underground movement was the fact that the leadership of the CPLB was sufficiently tolerant to the so-called nationalists and that some Lithuanian communists, for example, Justas Paleckis and employees of the apparatus of the Presidium of the Supreme Council

of the LSSR, were nationalist-minded themselves. Conversely, the leaders of the CPLB put the blame on the repressive bodies for all the failures associated with the suppression of the resistance movement. The CPLB leaders accused the security people of gross violations of 'socialist legitimacy', including arrests of unarmed and innocent people, killings, robberies and alcoholism, and of withdrawal from an active fight against the partisans. Most outrage directed towards the security men was for ignoring the party.

20. However, by and large, the divisions between the CPLB and repressive bodies were insignificant. All of these administrative institutions of the occupying regime were governed by Moscow and worked on the same task to destroy the Lithuanian nation. Disagreements between them spurred only occasionally and were mostly caused by rivalry and personal ambition (for example, the relations between Antanas Sniečkus and Dmitrijus Jefimovas, Piotras Kapralovas and Ivan Tkachenko were sour).

21. The communist regime was immoral in that not only ordinary citizens, but also senior government officials, namely, ideological communists and collaborators, were under covert surveillance. Compromising information about them was secretly gathered and used for fabricating criminal cases. In 1950, the MGB of the LSSR compromised 32 senior officials of the LSSR, mostly communists, alleged of being politically unreliable. Later, other prominent Lithuanian communists fell prey to the security men, but managed to avoid repression. In the opinion of the contemporaries, Antanas Sniečkus put in a good word for them.

In 1944, the leadership at central and local government institutions of the occupying administration of the LSSR was formed not by the invaders but by former Lithuanian citizens. These appointees were predominantly communists. They supported the Soviet Union due to their ideological beliefs, career ambitions, or selfish interests. They volunteered to cooperate with the invaders and were granted administrative authority to compel their compatriots to follow Moscow's orders. At that time, Lithuanian communists opposed an independent Lithuania and favoured a united and indivisible Soviet Union instead. Antanas Sniečkus, Mečislovas Gedvilas, Justas Paleckis, Aleksandras Guzevičius,

Vladas Niunka, Kazys Preikšas and many other prominent communists became the most important implementers of Moscow's political and ideological directives and organisers of repression. Instead of defending Lithuania's interests, they prioritised the interests of the USSR. As a result, their activities are viewed as criminal cooperation, assistance or collaboration with the invaders.[14]

Article 120 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania provides for criminal liability for collaboration. Any citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, who, under the conditions of occupation or annexation, helped the illegal government to consolidate the occupation or annexation, suppress the resistance of the Lithuanian population or otherwise assisted the illegal government in acting against the Republic of Lithuania, is punished by imprisonment of up to five years. Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who collaborated with the Soviet government during the years of the Soviet occupation and annexation can no longer be prosecuted. This is because the relevant provision was only added to the Criminal Code in 1998 and does not have retroactive effect.[15] However, the crime of collaboration still demands a clear moral and political assessment. After the restoration of independence of the state of Lithuania on 11 March 1990, attempts were made to do so, but they were not successful. The CPL has not yet been declared a criminal organisation, despite the evident role it played in orchestrating crimes against the Lithuanian state and nation. Over the three decades since the restoration of independence, the Seimas has failed to evaluate the CPL's collaboration with the Soviet occupying government or to clearly define the crime of collaboration to the public. This represents a significant gap in the legal consciousness of both the Lithuanian government and its citizens.[16]

In 2000, the International Public Tribunal in Vilnius passed a judgement defining the crime of collaboration. The college of judges stated

[14] Tininis, V. 2008. *Sovietų Sąjungos politinės struktūros ir jų nusikalstama veikla. Antroji sovietinė okupacija* (*The Political Structures of the Soviet Union and Their Criminal Activities. Second Soviet Occupation*). Vilnius: Margi raštai, pp. 67–73.

[15] Šličytė, Z. 'Kolaboravimas Nullum arbitrum dėl LKP' (Collaboration. Nullum Arbitrium for the CPL), *XXI amžius*, No. 83 (1868), 17 November 2010.

[16] Ibid.

that the content of the crime of collaboration encompasses officials of the central and local government who served as collaborators in the puppet regime and coerced citizens to comply with the political will of the invaders. The crime of collaboration has three aspects, namely, the legal, political and moral aspect. The legal aspect encompasses the efforts of the collaborators directed against the state and entails criminal liability. The political aspect involves the conscious and selfish intention of the collaborators to pursue their political, economic or ideological goals with the help of the invaders. The moral aspect encompasses the actions of collaborators aimed at justifying the occupation. The judges of the Tribunal went on to elaborate that subjects of the crime of collaboration were the officials and civil servants of the puppet regime who forced citizens to obey the political will of the invaders.[17]

The crimes committed by the CPL during the occupation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union have not yet been assessed from the legal, political or moral standpoints. This is due to the fact that the communist nomenclature has established itself under different guises within the authorities of the restored Republic of Lithuania.

The concept of the crime of collaboration is contained in Article 120 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, yet it has never been applied to anyone and has not reached the legal consciousness of the authorities and citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

1. As for the proposals that could be made to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in order to remedy the existing situation, they are as follows:
2. Adopt a resolution recognising the CPL as a criminal organisation that collaborated with the Soviet occupation authorities, which conducted a coup d'état in 1940 and committed crimes against the independence and constitutional order of the state of Lithuania. The latter also included organising mass repressions (genocide) within the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, deporting and imprisoning civilians of the occupied state, persecuting the Church and believers, and destroying and pillaging cultural heritage during the period of Lithuania's annexation (1940–1990).

[17] Ibid.

3. Provide a clear and universally understandable political and moral assessment of the role of the CPL in Lithuania.

Change the wording of Articles 99, 100, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 114, 115, 118, 120 and 122 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania and state that not only citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and other natural persons, but also legal persons are liable for the crimes listed therein.

# Dissemination of Communist Ideology in the face of the Occupation of Lithuania: Navigating the Line between Sympathy and Collaboration

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Lithuania has recently celebrated the 33rd anniversary of its independence. This coincided with the sad anniversary of the large-scale invasion of Ukraine launched by Russia, which sent shockwaves across Lithuania and worldwide. Many wanted to believe that the horrors we hear about Bucha, Borodianka, Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities were simply impossible and were only a distant shadow of the tragic past. For many worldwide, this is primarily the shadow of the atrocities of the Third Reich. For us, in Lithuania, and in the surrounding countries of the region, it is also the shadow of the communist Soviet terror. Seeing how this evil successor of the evil empire behaves in modern times, there is no doubt that we need to scrutinise the complicated history of our country even more closely and concentrate on 1940, which is by far its saddest chapter. That year marked an interruption in the existence of the modern Republic of Lithuania, which was undoubtedly not ideal, but had a period that was creative and full of growth.

Since ancient times, the arrival of an invader has brought pain, despair, and torment to the inhabitants of any conquered land. Before 1940, Lithuania had endured suffering from foreign oppression and engaged in defensive wars, some successful and others less so. However, the occupation of 1940 was exceptional in many respects. Its key feature was the particularly aggressive stance taken by Russia, Lithuania's longstanding geopolitical opponent. The aggression was driven by a dystopian experiment in global history: the victory of the communist revolution in Russia.

As mentioned earlier, invaders throughout history have brought looting, massacre, and cultural violence. However, the occupation of Lithuania by the communist USSR was distinct due to its totalitarian nature – a meticulous and pervasive effort to control every aspect of

life in the invaded country. This can be considered a form of spiritual genocide, accompanied by clear signs of physical genocide that other historians have uncovered and will continue to reveal.

Emphasising spiritual genocide is crucial. This perspective is essential when discussing the phenomenon of collaboration, which leaves the deepest scars in the lives of individuals, families and the history of an entire nation. These scars are often universal and felt even subconsciously. In the 13th century, Dante, a devout Christian, reserved the last circle of hell in his Divine Comedy for traitors, including Brutus and Cassius, who betrayed Caesar – a pagan. Why should we, as Christians, be concerned about this betrayal from so long ago? I believe Dante's choice was deliberate. It highlights the profound betrayal inherent in collaboration.

An enemy may be understood as an adversary, someone who has evolved in their own environment, shaped by a different information bubble, to put in modern terms. However, a traitor and collaborator are much worse than any enemy. Lithuanian partisans used the term 'degenerate' to describe collaborators, a term that underscores the profound distrust and contempt held for such individuals.

When dealing with such complex matters, historians have a spiritual duty to avoid being 'armchair philosophers' who judge people from the comfort of peaceful conditions, especially when their judgment is based on hindsight and information from sources unavailable to those being judged. Therefore, in this article, I will focus on several examples from the past epoch, highlighting the differences and exploring boundaries that, unfortunately, are not always as clear-cut as we would like them to be.

While ensuring the potential defence of Lithuania today, we scrutinize any citizen who appears disloyal. However, as a democracy, we cannot afford to descend to the level of totalitarian states like Russia or China: the boundary is not always clear between actions that are clearly anti-state, on the one hand, and the lifelong frustrations accumulated during a failed life and public statements made in a state of insobriety, or even mental illness, on the other. Drawing a line between right and wrong, as well as identifying and holding accountable the real perpetrators is a challenging task for appropriate competent authorities to undertake. At least this is what should happen in a democracy.

However, the author of this text, as a historian, supports the position that history tends to repeat itself in one form or another. Thus, history is a source of knowledge. Therefore, it makes sense to scrutinise the contexts and try to highlight certain boundaries retrospectively, as it helps us understand the boundaries today.

Let us go back to Lithuania in the 1930s, when the statehood was on its path to adolescence. In Kaunas, its temporary capital, tremendous posh modernist buildings were being erected. Then, suddenly, the world was shocked by a series of successive events. The spectre of the economic crisis arrived from the other side of the Atlantic. The victors of World War I – the British Empire and France – eyed each other warily, simultaneously hoping to avoid another major confrontation. This led to a strong surge of pacifistic sentiment.

Meanwhile, countries disillusioned by the outcomes of World War I sought fundamental reform. In Germany, the National Socialists, led by Adolf Hitler, came to power. In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin was focused on purging internal enemies, consolidating power, and tightening ideological control. He also rapidly industrialised his backward country. Notably, while the economies of all countries were declining, the Soviets, due to their initial backwardness, significantly accelerated their economy by effectively utilising their terror apparatus – a cost that was prohibitively high for other countries to shoulder. However, those who did not grasp the reality of the situation in the Soviet Union were under the impression that the communist system was, indeed, functioning well.

The rise of unpredictable Adolf Hitler and his party to power forced Western countries to acknowledge the marginalised USSR and reintegrate it into the realm of international politics, recognising the country as the successor to the Russian Empire and a potential ally.

All of these changes happened very rapidly, and it was not always easy to grasp what was unfolding. The spirit of the epoch also swept up many Lithuanians. Poland, a former partner of Lithuania under the Union of Lublin, was first viewed as the biggest threat to the establishment of the nation-state of Lithuania. The loss of Vilnius as its capital to Poland was mourned by Lithuania for a long time. However, in the 1930s, the perception of threat fundamentally shifted. In 1934,

the Lithuanian Armed Forces were removed from the demarcation line with Poland to the Nemunas River. The following year, planes of the newly established Luftwaffe brazenly crossed the Lithuanian border, flying from East Prussia to Lithuania. By 1937, the Lithuanian military headquarters began considering Germany to be the main threat to the country. Consequently, this led to a rising number of efforts to find a possible agreement and even compromise with Poland, however uncomfortable that might have seemed.

As early as in the 1920s, in an effort to counterbalance Poland geopolitically, Lithuania looked to the East for help from the USSR, which often made grand promises but rarely fulfilled them – a trait common to all powers. In 1923, following the successful operation of Klaipėda's accession to Lithuania, a special Soviet envoy established contact with Antanas Smetona and Augustinas Voldemaras. The two of them were aggrieved that the Western states took a wise stance to never dispute the Lithuanian affiliation of Klaipėda, but recognised Vilnius as part of Poland. With the special envoy, they discussed the possibility of a similar uprising in Vilnius, with potential assistance from the Red Army. Naturally, for the USSR, this was primarily an opportunity to leverage Lithuania for its own benefit.

This kind of behaviour was not solely intrinsic to the Tautininkai (Lithuanian Nationalists). In 1925, the Christian Democrats approved plans proposed by Juozas Purickis and Matas Šalčius regarding the aforementioned Vilnius uprising. Once again, a significant role was to be played by Soviets potentially providing support for the uprising. Naturally, the most criticism for this in 1926 was directed at the Peasants' Government led by Mykolas Sleževičius. Influenced by his right-hand man in the Armed Forces, Kazys Škirpa, Chief of General Staff, Sleževičius even signed a so-called gentlemen's agreement with Moscow, which obliged the military to exchange information not only about Poland, but also about the actions of Latvia and Estonia. Škirpa, a straightforward man, asked the Soviet military attaché whether the Russians would come to help if Józef Piłsudski attacked, and how long it would take.[1]

[1] For more, cf.: Jazavita, S. 2022. *Kovok! Kazys Škirpa ir Lietuvos likimas Antrajame pasauliniame kare (Fight: Kazys Škirpa and the Destiny of Lithuania in World War II)*, Vilnius: MELC, p. 28.

Although the coup d'état ensued afterwards, and its organisers mocked the former government for its alleged pro-Soviet stance, including the episode mentioned above, they nevertheless refrained from changing their course of action for a long time. This same course of action continued for the purposes of political struggle. The well-tested model was effective in Moscow, while Lithuanians were still in search of the key to Vilnius. Therefore, the occupation of 1940 came as a huge shock to the vast majority of diplomats, politicians and officers of Lithuania who were truly patriotic, genuinely honest and had done much for their homeland. This can be illustrated by several interesting quotes from people whose loyalty to Lithuania is unquestionable.

Take, for example, Mykolas Sleževičius, the founding father of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and author of the legendary call for volunteers. In December 1936, during a meeting with young people, he remarked that the USSR was following the path of a true democracy and served as a counterweight to the German cult of a single leader. This statement was made in response to rumours about the creation of a 'Stalin's Constitution.'[2] Mykolas Römeris, a renowned Lithuanian lawyer, also supported this Constitution and made extensive favourable comments about it in his booklet on the absurdity of the Sovietisation of Lithuania. For Römeris, this was an interesting and ambitious social experiment.[3]

Sleževičius could be regarded as a leftist, Römeris as centralist, and Antanas Maceina as a right-wing thinker. The latter, in his book 'The Fall of the Bourgeoisie', also expressed his distaste of the existing system and while highlighting the anti-Christian nature of Communism still noted that communism had many good elements and was destined for great achievements and multifaceted growth.[4] In other words, even such an alternative seemed better to him. Of course, the above-mentioned people did not have true awareness of communism at that time,

[2] Tamošaitis M. 2010. *Didysis apakimas. Lietuvių rašytojų kairėjimas 4-ajame XX a. dešimtmetyje* (*Going Blind. Lithuanian Writers Become Leftist in the 1930s)*, Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis, p. 38.

[3] For more, cf.: Römeris M. *Sovietų naujoji 1936 m. konstitucija* (*Soviet New Constitution of 1936*). *Kultūra*, 1937, No.11 and 1938 No. 2.

[4] Maceina A. 1940. *Buržuazijos* žlugimas *(The Fall of the Bourgeoisie)*. Kaunas: Sakalas, p. 68.

so they cannot be considered collaborators. Sleževičius died shortly after learning about the cost of regaining Vilnius. Some say this news accelerated his death. Römeris was also overwhelmed by the troubles of World War II. Meanwhile Maceina left for Germany and became one of the most prominent critics of Lithuanian communism.

Despite all the differences between these individuals, they lived in an era where such an approach to the USSR was common. Lion Feuchtwanger,[5] a German writer, went to Moscow and perceived only positive changes there. Similarly, Romain Rolland, a Nobel Prize winner who considered himself a seeker of truth, believed Joseph Stalin to be the greatest figure of the time. In 1931, another Nobel Prize winner, Irish writer George Bernard Shaw, travelled to the USSR to celebrate his birthday. Conversely, Knut Hamsun, an equally famous Nobel Prize laureate who glorified Nazism in his old age, was tried after the war at the age of 88. Norwegians still strive to separate his literary legacy from his late-life political activities.

The paradox of the epoch was that writers who pondered on human freedom and choices, and who managed to cultivate complex psychological human characters and their background in their works seemed to lose their critical thinking abilities when faced with a tyrant and a social experiment that destroyed millions of lives. This may illustrate the complexity and ambiguity of human nature. Nevertheless, the greatest minds of the time set the tone, so Lithuanian intellectuals also endeavoured to follow suit.

In this context, real collaborators existed too. Chief among them were the so-called bearers of Stalin's sun – those who went to Moscow to seek the incorporation of Lithuania into the USSR. Many of these individuals had something in common: they participated in the activities of the Lithuanian Association of Friends of the Soviet Union. Due to its pro-Soviet foreign policy course and particularly because of the Vilnius issue, the Lithuanian government did not restrict the Association's activities, even in 1936, when the activities of most associations

[5] The latter's trip to Moscow is also described in detail in Lithuanian: Schloegel K. 2013. *Teroras ir svajonė. Maskva 1937*, (*Terror and Dream. Moscow 1937)*. Vilnius: Tyto Alba, pp. 99–113.

and political parties were severely restricted. Interestingly enough, the State Security Department, recognising negative aspects of this association, repeatedly suggested restricting its activities. However, in order not to provoke a large country deemed useful, these suggestions were not acted upon. Following the signing of the Mutual Assistance Agreement in the autumn of 1939, the possibilities for Soviet diplomats to operate through this organisation were further strengthened.

One of the most zealous members of the Association, elected as its Deputy Head several times, was Justas Paleckis, a journalist from the Peasant Populist Party youth organisation. He eagerly participated in trips to the USSR, where efforts were made to present a highly distorted view of reality. The relatively low royalties for articles and books in Lithuania and the financial incentives from the USSR, a country they worshiped, further motivated the journalist to focus on totalitarian states. Lithuanian intellectuals returning from business trips to the USSR followed in the footsteps of the aforementioned Westerners, distorting facts. They failed to see the people under repression. Antanas Venclova even tried to emphasise that religion in the USSR was not forbidden and the ones who wished to practice were free to do so.[6]

It should be noted that this article deliberately refrains from referring to prominent figures such as Antanas Sniečkus or NKDV agents such as Eusiejus Razauskas and Boleslovas Baranauskas, who wrote books in English during the Soviet Occupation about the Lithuanian underground movement. The latter agents were known as connoisseurs of archives, to whom 'facts spoke for themselves and attributed guilt to true perpetrators.' They were in fact anti-state-minded marginal figures, often imprisoned and involved in underground activities, consciously choosing to collaborate because they never valued the Lithuanian state.

In contrast, the works of Justas Paleckis and Antanas Venclova were published in the contemporary press and earned royalties. Petras Cvirka's works were even awarded prizes and paradoxically featured in recommended reading lists for the military, in the dedicated magazine *Kardas* (Sword). This was paradoxical, considering

[6] For more, cf.: Tamošaitis M. *Didysis apakim*as... pp. 83–101.

the allegedly inhumanely brutal regime of the Nationalists under Antanas Smetona.

However, certain failures and the growing efforts by the Nationalists to consolidate power in Lithuania contributed to the wider dissemination of left-wing ideas. The young writers, known as the Third Front participants, gained the support of a most discrete person, a big fish in the ocean of our culture. I am referring to Vincas Krėvė, a prominent writer and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University. Judging Krėvė's activities objectively is challenging, especially for someone who was born and spent his first 25 years living on a major avenue in Kaunas named after Krėvė. The effort and contribution of Krėvė to the development of Lithuanian culture was immense, surpassing that of all the aforementioned individuals put together. Therefore, concluding whether he was a collaborator is a complex task, with opinions ranging from unconditional support to categorical criticism. His case is particularly interesting for understanding the transformation of certain ideas.

Krėvė was a known Slavophile. While still living in Azerbaijan, he was a member of the popular movement of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SR) of the Russian Empire. He faced communist aggression in Azerbaijan and initially had no illusions about the USSR's intentions. He knew what the Bolsheviks had done in Azerbaijan,[7] which had tried to build a nation-state. However, upon returning to Lithuania and becoming a leader of the Riflemen's Union, Krėvė contributed to the organisation of the Klaipėda Uprising. Alongside Antanas Smetona and Augustinas Voldemaras, he almost became a leader of the Nationalists and was first contacted by Soviet diplomats. Incidentally, Krėvė's frequent interactions with Soviet diplomats far exceeded those of Smetona and Voldemaras. His close relations and personal conversations with poet Jurgis Baltušaitis, Lithuania's envoy in Moscow and a Soviet sympathiser, further reinforced these connections.

In 1924, Krėvė told Soviet diplomats that Lithuania was too small to preserve its independence and suggested that joining the USSR

[7] For more, cf.: Gamzajevas M. *Vinco Krėvės sugrįžimai iš Baku ir jo „Nusiminimo aidai"* (*Returns of Vincas Krėve from Baku and his 'Echoes of Sadness'*), Metai 2019, Issues No. 11, 12, 2020, Issue No. 1, 2.

was the only solution for Lithuania to prosper, following the example of Belarus.[8]

Krėvė's relations with Smetona evolved from close friendship to total distrust. Krėvė became one of the most visible and prominent critics of Smetona. There was, of course, personal ambition involved. The distrust was fuelled by the desire to recover Vilnius through the help of the USSR and secure guarantees from other states. The relations between Krėvė and the USSR went so close that, by the 1930s, Krėvė became a frequent visitor of the Soviet Consulate, where he often played chess. He also enticed former Third Front participants and communist-prone figures. By actively acting both in the Association of Friends of the Soviet Union, which he led for a number of years, and by publishing left-wing publications, such as the famous *Literatūra* (Literature) publication, he provided shelter and involvement opportunities for a number of young radical students.

It is clear that Krėvė was not a communist, though for various geopolitical, personal and ideological reasons, he was increasingly sympathetic towards the USSR. Following the Soviet aggression against Poland, when the Red Army had already taken control of Vilnius, Krėvė accompanied Paleckis to meet with the Soviet envoy Nikolai Pozdniakov. During the meeting, Krėvė eloquently expressed his belief that a glorious era for Lithuania had begun, being even more fervent and outspoken than Paleckis.[9] At that time, such a stance was not unusual. The underground press featured articles, signed by Krėvė under a pseudonym, where he referred to Smetona as 'the blood-stained Antanas.' Were these views uncommon among intellectuals? No, but some were more prescient. For instance, Mykolas Biržiška, a signatory of the Lithuanian Independence Act of 16 February 1918, became notably disillusioned with the Soviet regime following his visit there in 1935, gradually distancing himself from the Association he had once led and once was actively engaged in. He likely had a premonition of impending troubles.

[8] Tamošaitis M. 2012. *Vinco Krėvės politinė biografija. Rašytojo tragedija politikoje* (*Biography of Vincas Krėvė. Writer's Tragedy in Politics*). Vilnius: Gimtasis žodis, p. 98.

[9] Ibid., pp. 168–169.

This trend was also observed by the State Security Department at the time. Its Director, Augustinas Povilaitis, along with many honest officers, later faced brutal retribution from the invaders for their loyalty. Despite repeated appeals from Povilaitis and other senior officials, neither the President nor the Government took any decisive action, leading to a deteriorating situation. As ultimatums became frequent, press control was tightened to avoid offending representatives of the USSR and Germany. The Central State Archives of Lithuania contain numerous straightforward and arrogant statements from representatives of the USSR and Germany, slamming the increasingly harsh tone in the Lithuanian press during the final years of Lithuania's independent existence.[10]

It is not surprising that, with situation spiralling out of control, praise for the USSR became overabundant. In this context, Petras Cvirka was particularly active. He continued publishing his impressions from his trips to the USSR, extolling the state's internal system and its strong international reputation. His writings contained peculiar observations: he claimed that communist funds were used to restore churches and monuments to past heroes, drew parallels between patriotism and internationalism, and even suggested that Ukraine enjoyed considerable autonomy within the USSR. He also frequently mentioned that a completely new generation of Russians had emerged, aiming to appease readers who distrusted the USSR possibly due to their memories of Tsarist repression under the Russian Empire.

Cvirka was not alone in his efforts to appease audiences. After Lithuania regained Vilnius, he expressed gratitude to the Soviets on behalf of all writers, openly publishing his thanks. Just before the occupation, a cartoon appeared in the press depicting Cvirka and Liudas Gira next to a Russian prison guard with a whip. The magazine *XX amžius* (20th Century) which published the cartoon was fined, but the Government

[10] Valentinas Gustainis, a prominent Lithuanian public figure, 15 years later imprisoned in Soviet camps, shared some observations in his memoirs that the Lithuanian authorities, under coercion from the Soviet government, fined several daily newspapers. However, these fines were often quietly repaid from a special prime minister's fund. Source: Gustainis V. 1989. *Be kaltės* (*Without Guilt*). Vilnius: Mintis, p. 39.

did not make a fuss about it. However, this incident was already a sign of active interference by the embassy of the USSR in Lithuania's internal affairs. Only a few months later, Cvirka and Gira were free to express their views without any restrictions.

When it comes to Liudas Gira, his case is probably one of the saddest among Lithuanian intellectuals. A founding father of Lithuanian intelligence, Gira had a complex personality. In 1918, as the Bolsheviks approached the capital, Gira was serving as the military commandant of Vilnius. He suddenly fell ill, a suspicious occurrence, leading to his replacement by Kazys Škirpa, the first person to raise the tricolour flag of Lithuania. Over time, Gira's positions fluctuated significantly. However, by the late 1930s, his pro-Soviet stance reached an unprecedented low.

You may recall the shameful phrase he uttered in 1939 about turning the clock to sync with Moscow time and his declaration after the Soviet occupation that everyone's dream was to enter the Kremlin and shake Stalin's hand. Although life is not black and white, such active complicity with the Soviets makes it difficult to appreciate even his previous positive contributions. Interestingly, the enthusiasm of some individuals was even criticised by their closest relatives, regardless of how challenging it is to criticise one's own family. For example, the educator and translator Merkelis Račkauskas, whose sons-in-law were Cvirka and Venclova, confided in historian Zenonas Ivinskis shortly after the occupation that the conversations of his sons-in-law send shivers down his spine.[11] The latter writers were at least consistent in dreaming to take up the imperial Soviet identity in exchange for dropping the idea of Lithuania's statehood. Historian Timothy Snyder, speaking of our region, mentioned that the worst type of collaboration was double collaboration. Such collaborators often have a lot to lose, so they do their best to improve their profile upon the arrival of a new invader.[12]

Another example of shifting allegiances is Bronys Raila. In his youth, he, alongside Cvirka and others, belonged to the Third Front organisation. Later, he became sympathetic to the Nationalist authorities, likely

[11] Tamošaitis M., *Didysis apakimas...*, p. 170.

[12] Snyder T. 2019. *Juodžemis. Holokaustas kaip istorija ir perspėjimas* (*Black Earth. The Holocaust as a History and Warning*). Vilnius: Jotema, p. 156.

driven by personal triggers rather than by an ideological change, as evidenced by subsequent events. Like many right-wing youngsters, Raila grew dissatisfied with Smetona's cautious policies during the ultimatums era, desiring a more active and determined stance. After Lithuania's occupation, Lithuania's envoy to Germany, Kazys Škirpa, actively engaged with activists like Raila in forming the anti-Soviet Lithuanian Activists Front (LAF). Raila joined Škirpa and contributed to several LAF statements, including drafts now hotly debated, such as those attributing collective guilt to Jews for collaborating with the Soviets. In one of the statements, Raila declared:

*'The Lithuanian nation will have to be cleansed of those villains, traitors, and degenerates who, being Lithuanians, still joined the communist party without consideration and offered their services to the invader. The behaviour of those timid people who bowed to any threat of the invader and rushed to show their joy at the rise of Stalin's sun shall never be forgotten'*.[13]

This text is astoundingly cynical. When writing about the timid, Raila might as well have referred to himself: in June 1940, before fleeing to Germany, he wrote a number of poems slandering the interwar Lithuanian regime, praising the Red Army, thanking it for the 'liberation' of Lithuania, and promising his help to the Red Army against the shared enemies.[14] These poems remained unpublished, as a friend warned Raila that he would not be welcomed by the Soviets. Aware of these compromising poems, Raila sought to improve his standing with Škirpa by exhibiting extreme radicalism in his writings. Notably, a subservient person is never truly at ease. It is reported that in order to be on the safe side, Raila, like some other LAF members, had solicited help from the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, hoping to leave Lithuania while the U.S. was still neutral towards the USSR. Col. Škirpa's was known for his categorical mind-set. Therefore, Fearing Škirpa's wrath, Raila kept this in secret from the LAF leader. Ironically, after the war while living in the

[13] Draft statement of 10 May 1941 by Raila B., *What are activists fighting for*, Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock 648, Series 2, File 582, p. 259.

[14] Manuscript of the poem of 17 June 1940 by Raila B., *Dėkui tau, radonarmieti! (Thank you, Soldier of the Red Army)*, Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Manuscripts Division, Stock 192, File 169, p. 2.

U.S., Raila switched sides again, actively joining the liberal Lithuanian movement in exile, thus changing ideological camps once more.

Interestingly, in historiography, there is a debate about the sincerity of Krėvė's absolution from the Soviets. Fans of the writer both in German-occupied Lithuania and in exile tended to forgive his mistake simply because he did not remain in Lithuania in 1944. However, the actions taken by Krėvė as a public figure misled the expatriate community and our diplomats. Documents he signed urged diplomats to return to Lithuania when the NKVD had already set a trap for them. Fortunately, the diplomats were cautious, having learned about the puppet government in Lithuania. Ultimately, judging this case remains a matter of personal belief and conscience, and a common denominator is unlikely to be found.

*An even more intriguing turn of fate befell another famous writer of our nation, Kazys Boruta. Known as an adversary to all authorities, Boruta began his career as a participant in the Third Front and even coined the infamous term 'Stalin's sun' after the Soviet occupation. However, Boruta atoned for his actions. His criticism of the Nationalists was genuinely rooted in the empathy for visible injustices, a sentiment easily exploited by invaders to sow discord among the populace. During the Nazi occupation, Boruta helped hide Jews, and after the Soviets returned, he interacted with Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė (someone who also underwent a similar transformation) without reporting her anti-Soviet activities led by the renowned Jonas Noreika. Boruta was eventually convicted in this case, suggesting he redeemed his earlier faults. Despite being forced by the totalitarian regime to confess errors and ask for an amnesty, Boruta, unlike Raila, was not a conformist, but a man of sensitive character. He strayed down wrongful paths, yet his conscience allowed him to recognise his errors. Like many others, he was forced to navigate in an extremely difficult period.*

*Only a few prominent cases have been discussed in this article. My aim was not to provide a definitive answer to the reader. Communism seeks collaboration in various forms: it appeals to those disillusioned with democracy, to those empathetic to the lack social justice, to conformists eager to join the 'winning camp', to utopians believing change can be imposed through top-down approach and radical reforms, and*

*to those seeking 'lesser evil' when it comes to an ideology or state. These methods are well developed, and we must remain vigilant in recognising them. Moreover, it should always be remembered that perennial emotional disputes over historical evaluation of personal activities could fuel hybrid warfare operations, fostering confrontation and distrust and dividing nations from within.*

# The Soft Power of Communism in the Modern World

*Regina Statkuvienė*

Lithuania has raised a new generation that has never seen the images of Lenin, red flags, or communist slogans in textbooks or on city streets. We have removed nearly all communist symbols from public spaces. Nevertheless, it is important to discuss the ideology of communism, as its manifestations persist in our society. Recognising and identifying these remnants, and taking steps to prevent their recurrence, is essential to ensuring that totalitarianism never returns in any form.

In today's world, much like decades ago, communist ideology exerts influence through soft power, albeit using different methods and tools than those employed during the era of its inception, when totalitarian ideology was created and the attempt was made to implement it through armed coercion and global revolution. The evolution of these methods and tools makes the ideology harder to recognise, yet it remains equally destructive.

Many people believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union signified the automatic failure of communism. This assumption stemmed from the post-World War II association of communist ideology with a specific entity, namely, the Soviet Union. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it seemed that the ideology had vanished as well. After all, the planned economy was replaced by a market economy, people began to travel, create businesses, publish books that had previously been banned, and join political parties. Repressions ceased.

After Lithuania regained independence, the surreal nightmare of 50 years of occupation ended, and the country was revitalised with new life. People simply began living again. The older generation made every effort to reclaim the time lost: some travelled to Siberia to retrieve the remains of deceased relatives, ensuring they received proper mourning and burial in their native land. Others published memoirs of their years spent in deportation. Meanwhile, young people were eager to see the world and plan their futures, focusing on education, building homes,

and starting businesses. The ideology of communism and the reality it had created seemed to have deteriorated, scattered, and virtually disappeared. However, the complete list of KGB operatives was never fully disclosed, and the Communist Party was never officially declared a criminal organisation. Despite this, the sentiment of *never again* appeared to apply equally to both fascism and communism, even though there has never been an equivalent legal condemnation of communism.

As we witness the resurgence of communism in China and Latin America today, it becomes essential to reassess our recent history and analyse how communist ideas find ways to act in the modern world. We need to get rid of our usual stereotypes about communist society. The example of China demonstrates clearly that a communist state can master technological progress and be economically competitive. Moreover, with the revival of Marxist ideas among some voters in Western democracies and the defence of Russia's aggression in protests, we can reasonably question whether communist ideology is truly not functioning. It appears that this ideology continues to intersect with the Western world, exploiting the opportunities offered by democracy.

Many people who have never studied history and have never taken interest in communism are no longer able to recognise communist ideas, when they are made relevant for today's contexts and presented by using trendy modern terms and symbols. That is why I would like to look at several aspects of how communist ideology is spread even in the old democracies through the application of soft power tools.

During the Soviet era, individuals were treated as the property of the regime, which was evident in various coercive measures. These included separating infants from their mothers, mandatory vaccination and forced treatment of certain diseases, travel restrictions, and penalties for 'inappropriate' outfits or hairstyles. In a totalitarian society, an individual's loyalty was measured by their obedience to regime rules, and the benefits they received were directly tied to their loyalty.

Today, this is particularly visible in the Communist China, which has a social credit system in place. Until recently, this country enforced a one-child policy that included even forced abortions. Additionally, Uyghurs still lack access to basic human freedoms.

The Western world comfortably chose to turn a blind eye to what was going on in the communist country of China. Using cheap products was more convenient than condemning totalitarianism. Heads of state speaking about human rights and freedoms from their rostrums refused to meet with Dalai Lama in person because production of communist factories was and remains more important than the issue of the occupation of Tibet. Nobody cared about the situation of human rights and freedoms in the world's largest factory.

It is true that the concept of human dignity and inviolability in the Western world received a serious blow during the pandemic, as the virus originating from China began to exert control globally, using methods reminiscent of Chinese governance. By turning a blind eye to communism in China, we failed to notice its repercussions coming back to haunt us. We must dare to ask ourselves: how did it happen that Chinese totalitarian methods influenced our pandemic response as well as the actions of other countries that have never experienced communism on their soil? The vaccine passport neither protected anyone from spreading the virus nor from getting infected, but rather served as a tool to reward supporters of government decisions and to punish sceptics. All of this happened in the 21st century!

If the mistakes of this day and age are not recognised and lessons are not learnt, a risk coming closer to Chinese type of governance even while we declare we are hostile to China's political course. Digitalisation opens up unlimited possibilities for this.

Another manifestation of the communist approach to people in our lives today is the seemingly noble idea of legitimising the default donation of organs. Interestingly, it is no coincidence that the Catholic Church, a staunch adversary of communism, supports organ donation in general but rejects this specific model because it reduces humans to mere objects and tools. In this case, people are no longer regarded as individuals.

There is another trait of Soviet ideology flourishing today: the portrayal of ideology as science in the fight against religion, tradition, and even common sense. During Soviet times, labelling ideological clichés with scientific terminology – despite having nothing to do with science – was an effective tool to silence and marginalise opponents of

the regime. This approach was used by the Soviets, for example, to propagate the notion that people were blank slates without pre-defined characteristics, open to ideological manipulation. Similar tactics were employed in agriculture, where experiments were conducted under the assumption that it was possible to alter natural processes, such as forcing rivers to flow against their natural currents. These ideological assertions were also used to promote atheism, famously claiming that 'Gagarin flew into space and did not see God there.'

Unfortunately, similar methods are sometimes employed today. For instance, pseudo-scientific disciplines are introduced in Western universities under the guise of 'discovering' social constructs with the aim of creating a new kind of individual. Even venerable institutions like Vilnius University have succumbed to this trend: they recently coined the word 'žmoga' to denote a genderless person and have recommended its use. Furthermore, freshmen are asked to indicate their preferred pronouns – whether they prefer to be addressed as he, she, or they.

When speech is regulated by entities or frameworks other than culture, politeness, or etiquette, it opens the door to another form of communism: control of free speech and the introduction of newspeak.

The new word 'žmoga' remains merely a recommendation from the university. However, the adoption of the so-called hate speech law could open the door to, among other things, persecution of people for their beliefs, religious sermons, or simply for using traditional forms of address like 'Mr' and 'Mrs.' This is already happening in Scandinavian countries and Canada where such laws have been introduced. Although the law on hate speech is not identified as a communist law, its consequences are the same as those of communist laws. By the way, in the Soviet Union, the 'Mr' and 'Mrs' were also eliminated in favour of the address 'comrade' instead of the recently coined neologism 'žmoga'. That is all the difference.

It is clear that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, communism did not disappear. On the contrary, it spread throughout the world by masquerading as 'freedom'. The ideologists of communism have learned their lessons and no longer threaten to shoot you or send you to a concentration camp. Instead, alleged hatred will be criminalised.

The brutal idea of a bloody revolution is replaced by soft power.

There is no hatred; everything is done for your own good, safety and well-being. However, both in the old communist world and in the new one it is up to the system, and not an individual, to make decisions. Science knows better, right? A good citizen has nothing to hide from the government, right?

It was only by miracle that Lithuania did not adopt another law haunted by the spectre of communism, which would have allowed banks to collect and store the most personal data about each of us. I believe this was not a conscious desire of our legislators to revert to the communist past, but rather a result of their lack of historical knowledge leading to the inability to reflect on and perceive the associated threats.

Another critical issue that opens the door for the return of communist ideology is the absence of a coherent policy on history. Devoid of our historical foundation, we are unable to shape the goals for the future. History answers three key questions: who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. After all, civilisation and culture represent a link between different generations. If we have no knowledge of our roots, we have no leverage and this makes it hard for us to design our future. Therefore, policy on history is crucial. We need to decide who our heroes and antiheroes are and what mistakes cannot be repeated.

I very much hope that we, who still feel the wounds of communism and the pain that they have caused, can recognise this ideology not only when it comes clad in Soviet quilted cotton jacket, but also when it appears under the guise of progress and prosperity. History must not be forgotten – we must learn from it.

# The Soviet Genocide: Examining Responsibility for its Perpetration[1]

*Vidmantas Valiušaitis*

'Although Soviet communism has collapsed, disinformation and its secret international apparatus are alive and well', Mihai Pacepa and Prof. Ronald J. Rychlak claim in their book, entitled 'Disinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism'[2]. Pacepa was the head of *Securitate,* the secret police in communist Romania. He took part in joint operations with the KGB and carried out its direct assignments. He later retreated to the West, wrote a book and left a valuable testimony of the criminal methods used by the secret services of communist states against Western societies.

Russia's dirty and bloody war in Ukraine, as well as Goebbels-style propaganda flooding the country's information channels confirms Pacepa's testimony: despite the collapse of communism, disinformation remains an essential tool for imperialist expansion. 'The highly classified disinformation textbook, according to which I lived as a member of Soviet intelligence, on the front page, in capital letters, reads: 'If you manage to spread disinformation, everything else will succeed,[3]' Pacepa writes. As far back as two decades ago, in May 2005, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, the Russian President's Special Representative

[1] The article read out in Hall of 11 March of the Seimas on 13 May 2023 was drafted on the basis of a presentation made at a conference hosted by the Committee on National Security and Defence of the Seimas of the Republic, entitled Communist Ideology and its Practice Yesterday and Today. Historical, Moral and Legal Evaluation of the Soviet Occupation of Lithuania.

[2] Pacepa I. M.and Prof. Rychlak R. J., 2018 *Dezinformacija. Slaptas ginklas: laisvos visuomenės* griovimo metodai (D*isinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism)*, translated into Lithuanian by Stanaitytė-Karsokienė A. Vilnius: Briedis, p. 25.

[3] Ibid. p. 102.

for relations with the European Union, said at a press conference in Moscow that the concept of occupation was not suitable for describing the events in the Baltic States between 1940 and 1945. He claimed that 'if we are guided by the use of the term 'occupation' in international law and follow historical facts, it is impossible not to conclude that there could not have been any talk of the occupation of the Baltic States.' A similar statement was repeated by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[4] Has Lithuania reacted to this? I have not noticed any response from Lithuania.

Shortly after Yastrzhembsky's statement, in 2006, the Moscow-based publishing house 'Europa' (*sic!*) published a book entitled 'Lithuanian Tragedy: 1941–1944. A Set of Archival Documents on the Crimes of Lithuanian Collaborators during World War II.' The book claims to unveil archival documents on Nazi 'death factories' in Paneriai and other areas of Lithuania for the first time in history. It allegedly covers 'the contribution made by Lithuanians who supported Hitler's cause to Nazi death factories' (a summary that reflects the scale of the libel!). In this publication, Russian propagandists disguised as historians ask: 'What did the Soviet authorities do in merely a year from 1940 to 1941 in Lithuania to earn so much hatred that Lithuanians started a bloody fight as soon as the first German soldiers arrived?' They go on to write in the foreword to the book: 'The answer is obvious. It is impossible to explain what happened in Lithuania by using logic. Lithuania was transformed into a factory of death. The reasons for this need to be explained by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts rather than historians.'[5] No proper reaction by Lithuanian institutions has been observed, although I believe it was necessary. After all, this foreword attacks the very political foundation of the Lithuanian state with defamation. Mind you, Poland reacted very fiercely when a legend was spread internationally about the 'Polish' concentration camps.

Pacepa offers a response regarding the Kremlin's disinformation technologies: 'Disinformation is a secret intelligence tool designed

[4] *BNS*, 5 May 2005.

[5] ТРАГЕДИЯ ЛИТВЫ: 1941–1944 годы. Сборник архивных документов о преступлениях литовских коллаборационистов в годы Второй мировой войны, Москва, Издательство «Европа», 2006, p. 4.

to give a Western, uncontrollable shade to government lies. [...] It is more important to successfully spread disinformation – so that there is a grain of truth in the created story that gives the appearance of credibility.[6] [...] Slander must look like it is aimed at evil. To make a lie convincing, two things are needed: falsifications must appear to have been disseminated by authoritative Western information sources, and it must contain a grain of truth, so that at least part of the credibility of a story can be guaranteed, and rumours must in no way be silent. Thus, after the war, the Soviets used a proven method of portraying their enemies as supporters of the Nazis at every occasion. [...] The most effective way Stalin used at the time was to portray a person as a supporter of the Nazis – a terrible crime during World War II.'[7]

Why? The authors explain: around the world, foreign intelligence primarily collects information aimed at helping its state leadership conduct foreign policy. However, according Pacepa, this task has long been relatively insignificant in Russia, and later in the Soviet Union and its satellite states called People's Democracies. The main goal was, and remains, 'not to gain knowledge of the past, but to manipulate the future. In particular, efforts are made to fabricate a new past narrative of the target enemies in order to change the world's attitude towards them.'[8]

Alexander Sakharovsky, a Soviet general who founded the Romanian political police *Securitate* in 1949 and subsequently acted as its soviet chief adviser and *de facto* chief, told his Romanian subordinates that World War III was not directed against the American people, but rather against the 'Zionist bourgeois and its militaristic sharks' trying to trade

6 Pacepa I. M. and Prof. Rychlak R. J. 2018. *Dezinformacija. Slaptas ginklas: laisvos visuomenės* griovimo metodai (D*isinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism)*, translated to Lithuanian by Stanaitytė-Karsokienė A. Vilnius: Briedis, pp. 56, 59.

7 Pacepa I. M. and Prof.. Rychlak R.J. 2018. *Dezinformacija. Slaptas ginklas: laisvos visuomenės* griovimo metodai (D*isinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism)*, translated to Lithuanian by Stanaitytė-Karsokienė A. Vilnius: Briedis, pp. 75, 105.

8 Ibid., p. 25.

their weapons. According to Sakharovsky, 'World War III was conceived as a war without weapons: the Soviet bloc was supposed to win without firing a single shot. It was a war of ideas. It was an intelligence war that launched a new powerful weapon called disinformation. Its purpose was to spread truth-like denigrating information so that defamation seemed aimed at real evil.'[9]

In her article 'Bolshevics Falsify the History of Lithuania,' historian Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė reviews 'Geschichte der Völker der Sowjetunion' (History of the Soviet Union) published in Switzerland, prepared by the Soviet Academy of Sciences and adapted to the German-reading audience. She writes: 'Our enemies are vigilant. They are diligently using the archives important for Lithuania's history, which are now almost inaccessible to us.' Sruogienė makes the following conclusion about the approach to Lithuania portrayed in the Soviet book she reviews in her article. 'All Moscow-led wars and invasions of Lithuania were justified by Ivan III's address to the envoys of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in Moscow: 'The lands of Lithuania and Latvia are the lands of my parents, given to us by the will of God long ago.' (Vol. II, p. 31). '[...] the entire so-called history of Lithuania is simply the result of failure of the russification efforts by the Russian Tsar Ilovaysky. Lithuania, geographically situated among the peoples of the Soviet Union, is now submerged not only in the Slavic sea but also in the Mongolian sea, with its history following that of the peoples of Central Asia.'[10]

Under the guise of a liberator of nations, the Soviet Union claimed throughout the five decades of occupation that the Baltic States had 'voluntarily joined the family of Soviet Peoples." Andrejus Vyšinskis (1883–1954), Soviet representative and former Soviet prosecutor, kept repeating this at the United Nations in reply to the Memorandum of the Baltic States on Soviet Aggression. Andrejus Vyšinskis was in fact the 'Dekanozov of Latvians.' He orchestrated the dismantling of the Latvian state and its incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940. When he

[9] Ibid., pp. 118–119.

[10] Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė V. 1954. *Bolševikai falsifikuoja Lietuvos istoriją (The Bolsheviks Falsify the History of Lithuania). Lietuva*, Issue No 6, pp. 155–157.

served as Prosecutor General under Stalin, seven million people were condemned to death and killed 'for the sole purpose of making his boss the only deity of Russia.'[11]

On 25 October 1947, the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (SCLL), along with its Estonian and Latvian counterpart organisations, presented a Memorandum on the Biological Destruction of the Baltic Nations to the United Nations. This Memorandum urged the democratic world to establish ways and means to end the genocidal policies of Soviet Russia and to allow Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians deported to the depths of Russia to immediately return to their home countries. Until this could be accomplished, the Memorandum suggested that international organisations and institutions defending human rights take these people under their patronage.

The Memorandum quoted specific figures: thirty seven thousand Lithuanians were killed or deported within several months until the end of 1944. In the summer of 1945–1946, about twenty thousand Lithuanians were killed in the fight against the Soviet NKVD. This included Lithuanian soldiers mobilised to the Soviet army and forced to fight against Germany. Every month, two to three thousand Lithuanians were regularly arrested and deported to the depths of Russia. Deportation particularly affected the clergy and farmers. By September 1947, the second Soviet occupation claimed more than two hundred thousand Lithuanians. According to the document, the potential of the Lithuanian population decreased even further due to 'the repatriation of about a hundred thousand people from Lithuania to Poland'.[12.]

Documentary evidence for the size of arbitrary and brutal crackdown on the residents of the occupied Lithuania is the order of the NKVD Commissioner Juozas Bartašiūnas of 15 February 1946. This document defines opponents of occupation and freedom fighters as German Nationalist Gangs in Lithuania, labels them bandits condemned to liquidation, and orders the arrest and deportation of the families of

[11] Pacepa I. M. and Prof. Rychlak R. J. 2018. *Dezinformacija. Slaptas ginklas: laisvos visuomenės* griovimo metodai (*Disinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism)*, translated to Lithuanian by Stanaitytė-Karsokienė A. Vilnius: Briedis, p. 71.

[12] Terror Plans are Still Underway. *Vienybė*, 16 July 1948, p. 1.

'bandits' and 'bourgeois national organisations' who have not surrendered to the NKVD.

What is more, persons suspected of assisting the 'bandits' and holders of any information on the resistance effort yet failing to notify the authorities 'shall be treated as bandits.' According to Bartašiūnas, 'a large part of the bandits repent for their crimes against their Soviet homeland (the Soviet Union) by honest work,' in other words, are deported to Siberia for slave labour. Bartašiūnas boasts that 'almost all gangs and illegal anti-Soviet bourgeois nationalist organisations have been crushed in most counties with the help of the heroic Red Army' (this indicates that regular army units were involved in the suppression of the resistance effort) and the so-called people's defenders. Nevertheless, he admits that the struggle is far from over and the Soviets need to resort to 'drastic measures' in order to eradicate the partisans for good. These measures, according to General Bartašiūnas, include open incitement to uncontrolled arbitrary actions against the Lithuanian population. 'No person who kills the commanders of gangs or ordinary bandits interfering with their surrender will be held accountable.'[13]

In early 1948, the US State Department released a collection of documents discovered in Berlin. They focus on the relations between Soviet Russia and Hitler's Germany. The collection is entitled 'Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939–1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office'. On 27 October 1948, Bronius Kazys Balutis (Lithuania), Kārlis Reinholds Zariņš (Latvia) and Augustas Torma (Estonia), Extraordinary Envoys and Plenipotentiary Ministers of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in London, presented a Memorandum on the Destruction of the Baltic Nations to Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, President of the United Nations General Assembly. The letter was signed by three organisations in exile representing the three nations and their cause for freedom. 'The policy of Genocide in the countries of the Soviet Union is twofold: (a) systematic physical destruction of the population; (b) their cultural and moral destruction. The first aspect is manifested by killings, arrests and deportations to forced labour camps in the arctic regions of Russia. The second aspect is evident in the efforts of the occupying

[13] Ibid.

bodies to break the morale of the inhabitants of the Baltic States with the terror of the secret police, the suppression of press and youth education, and the persecution of the Church. These measures also are accompanied by the destruction of farm life, the forced collectivisation of farms and placement of settlers from the depths of Russia for living in those areas.'[14]

In addition to the above-mentioned and rather widely known Soviet atrocities, the document of the representatives of the Baltic States to the UN mentions utilisation of forced marriages, a fact largely underreported, at least in Lithuanian historiography. The memorandum substantiates the fact that in cases where one of the spouses lives abroad and refuses to return, their marriage is officially dissolved. Next, the wife living in her homeland is forced to marry a colonist of a foreign race resettled to the Baltic States to replace the forcibly deported Estonians, Latvians or Lithuanians. The letter sent by the Scottish League for Freedom to the Archbishop of Canterbury states: 'Among them are the men who fled the Russians, but whose wives had to stay. The Soviets have now issued a decree dissolving the marriages of all such individuals. The wives are being forced to marry semi-wild settlers relocated by Russia from the Far East, who have been settled in the homesteads of the rightful owners, and are compelled to bear their children. If this does not stir the conscience of the world, nothing will. It is the duty of the churches to lead the opposition movement.'

On 21 November 1950, Povilas Žadeikis, Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister of Lithuania in Washington, presented Nasrollah Entezam, President of the Session of the United Nations General Assembly, with another memorandum illustrating the extent of the Soviet genocide in Lithuania. In particular, the case of the Lukša family was highlighted. Farmer Lukša, aged 75, had five sons. He and two of his sons, student Jurgis (aged 25) and Stasys (aged 20), were murdered by communists in 1947. Two other sons, Antanas (aged 30), who worked as a teacher, and Vincas (aged 40), a farmer, were sentenced to 30 and 10 years of forced labour, respectively, and deported. Information about the fifth

[14] Letters from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to the President of the United Nations Organisation. *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*, 21 December 1948, p. 9.

son is missing. Lukša's cousins, Juozas and Antanas Stravinskas, were murdered in 1946. Juozas Stravinskas' family was deported to the Komi Republic. Two other cousins, Matas and Andrius Banionis, were also deported. Andrius Banionis died in deportation. Kurtinis, a close relative of Lukša, was deported along with his son and other inhabitants of their village in 1944. Lukša's another relative, Jonas Markūnas (aged 30), was deported to the Komi Republic. Lukša's uncle Vilkas was deported in 1946, and two cousins were deported in 1948. Lukša's close relative Varkala was deported with his entire family, and his son Algis Varkala was murdered in 1947. Lukša's relative, Danutė Dičpinigytė, Sister of Mercy, was murdered in 1946, and her mother was deported.[15]

'Lithuania's Invaders Engage in Rape and Murder', read the headline of a press release issued by Lithuanians abroad. The press release was based on the information on the bloody crackdown on Lithuanians conducted by Soviet soldiers near Kaunas in late 1948 and early 1949. The information was collected by ELTA, a SLL information agency. The press release reads: 'The Bolsheviks installed an airfield in Linksmakalnis, Pakuonis parish. Russian soldiers stationed in the airfield are roaming the villages non-stop. One evening, in the village of Laukiškiai, Juozas Drulia was visited by an aviation chief who demanded the owner's daughter Anelė Drulytė to go with him. When she refused and tried to escape, the Russian shot the owner's brother, the housewife, a four-year-old child, and wounded the younger daughter, Marijona. He then captured the latter as she was trying to escape into the garden, raped her and shot her to death in the head. Four days later, Juozas Drulia hanged himself out of sorrow. All the dead are buried in the cemetery in Išlaužas parish.'[16]

There are hundreds of such stories published in various media, not only in foreign Lithuanian press. 'The Red liquidators are putting an end to Lithuanians', 'The Minister in Exile calls for putting an end to terror' were the headlines in Chicago Daily Tribune after Povilas Žadeikis, a Lithuanian envoy in Washington, presented the 'terrible document'

[15] *Appeal to the United Nations on Genocide*. 1951. Germany: Lithuanian Foreign Service, pp. 67–71.

[16] Lithuania's occupiers engage in rape and murder. *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*, 11 February 1949, p. 1.

to the United Nations requesting that the Lithuanian nation be rescued from the massacres conducted by the 'Russian liquidators'. 'Although the government under Žadeikis is still recognised by the United States, which have never recognised the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian minister has little hope of gaining due attention to his appeal,' the Chicago daily wrote. 'A year ago, Žadeikis had already submitted a document of similar content to the United Nations. The World Peace Organisation will make a regular summary without mentioning the charges raised by the authors, and will hand it to the Human Rights Commission.'[17]

The New York Herald Tribune also included a report on the SCLL memorandum presented by Minister Žadeikis to the United Nations: 'Lithuanians accuse Russia of genocide. Minister Žadeikis, who is still recognised by the US, has submitted charges to the United Nations.[18] 'In a statement from Bern, the Vatican's L'Osservatore Romano reports on Russian colonisation of Lithuania and on the 'dire situation of Lithuanian deportees in Siberia, especially in the Vorkuta camp. There are about a hundred thousand Lithuanians in the latter camp and most of them have been deported recently.'[19] The major Swiss newspaper Gazette de Lausanne published an article, entitled 'The Disaster of the Baltic Nations'. 'The Communist manipulations in Eastern Europe, part of the Soviet Union, have provoked public outrage from free nations. The events in the Baltic States have not yet garnered the same level of attention. However, the new Soviet Baltic republics are being assimilated into communist ranks much faster and in a more devastating way than those Eastern European states that are at least formally sovereign' the publication states. A memorandum by the SCLL presented on 6 November to Trygve Halvdan Lie, Secretary-General of the United Nations, highlights the dire situation in the Baltic States. This document accuses the Soviets of systematically destroying the Baltic nations, especially Lithuanians.[20]

17 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 November 1947.

18 *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 November 1947.

19 *L'Osservatore Romano*, 15 November 1947.

20 *Gazette de Lausanne*,17 November 1947.

Darbininkas, a Lithuanian newspaper in New York, cites a review article 'Facts from the worst civilizational crisis' from The Register weekly of Colorado State. The latter article reads that 'Russians use two methods to destroy enslaved nations: killings and colonisation by Mongols and Russians (in Lithuania, East Prussia, Ukraine and Balkan countries)'. With reference to Lithuanians, the American weekly newspaper adds: 'The horrible crime of genocide, the criminal race-based killing that Hitler applied to hundreds and thousands of Jews, today falls on the communists who do the same with **Lithuanians** (emphasis added by the newspaper), Ukrainians and others.' The Darbininkas adds: 'What do the United Nations do? The UN Charter reads that the UN will protect the freedom of nations, freedom of race and freedom of confession. What purpose does the UN serve if it breaks its own decisions and communicates with those who are soaked in the blood of innocent people?'[21]

Stalin's regime remained unaffected by the memoranda of the Baltic States appealing to the United Nations regarding the genocide committed by the Soviets in their respective countries. Nevertheless, the public opinion was formed and the efforts were not entirely in vain. On 9 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Genocide Convention. Dr Raphael Lemkin (1900–1959), professor of international law at Yale University, originally from Hrodno, was the legal adviser of the Convention and the author of the term 'genocide.[22] Back in 1939, when the Germans and the Soviets suppressed and divided Poland among themselves, Prof. Lemkin found patronage in Lithuania and even learned a little Lithuanian. Later, he moved to America and tirelessly worked to have the act of genocide declared an international crime. Engaged in the process of drafting the Convention, Professor Lemkin followed the process of ratification of the Convention with great dedication. 'He, as an official adviser, has consistently pointed out Lithuania as an example of genocide and called on the delegations in doubt to sign the Convention.'[23]

[21] Blamed for killing Lithuanians. *Darbininkas*, 31 March 1950, p. 1.

[22] Genocide is a compound word made up of the Greek word *genos* (tribe, nation, race) and the Latin word *side*, *cedere* (to kill); modelled on the word *homicide* (murder).

[23] Lithuania at the United Nations. *Mūsų Lietuva*, 29 October 1949, No. 22(48), p. 15.

The Convention entered into force on 12 January 1951. Prof. Lemkin, 'one of the main authors of the Convention', as well as 'his close co-operators, namely the staff of LAIC[24] 'were invited to the celebrations in the United Nations.' The Chicago Lithuanian daily Draugas notes that LAIC of the American Lithuanian Council and the Congress of American Ukrainians have turned out to be 'the best helpers and supporters of Prof. Lemkin.'[25]

The United Nations Genocide Convention sparked certain hopes among the enslaved nations. In late 1951, organisations of eight ethnic groups, representing more than twelve million Americans of Polish, Lithuanian, Czech, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Latvian, Estonian and Greek descent, handed a joint letter to the United Nations through Dean Gooderham Acheson, US Secretary of State. They demanded 'an investigation into the destruction and killing of peoples by Soviet Russia and its agents on the basis of Articles 2, 3 and 8 of the Genocide Convention, adopted by the United Nations and ratified by many states, including the Soviet Union. The document was signed by the Lithuanian Council of American Lithuanians on behalf of the Lithuanian nation and contained testimonies on 'mass manslaughter' and 'killing of millions' by the Soviets.

The document submitted to the United Nations states that 'over a million people have already been liquidated in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. More than two million have disappeared in satellite states. That liquidation is being continued. An overwhelming number of people have been killed in Ukraine, and millions of Ukrainians have been deported to Siberia to die. The brutal killings of people are taking place in Hungary and other communist-controlled countries. More than twenty thousand Greek children and thousands of children from other enslaved countries, including East Germany, have been abducted from parental care and deported. They are educated with foreign influences and turned against their own nation and culture. More than ten thousand clergymen are already missing from the lands occupied by the Soviets after 1939.[26]

[24] *Lithuanian American Information Centre* (LAIC) set up by the Council of Lithuanian Americans (ALT).

[25] The Treaty on Genocide enters into force. *Draugas*, 16 January 1951, p. 8.

[26] Twelve Million People Stand Against Genocide. *Draugas*, 28 November 1951, p. 3.

The United Nations did not have the means to influence the Soviet Union. Today, the Organisation still has no effective means of influencing Putin's Russia and preventing its malicious activities in Ukraine. Dr Domas Krivickas, a Lithuanian expatriate lawyer, points out that 'The Genocide Convention fails to uphold the universal principle of preventing and punishing the crime of genocide as effectively as some other conventions, such as the convention on combating piracy and counterfeiting of money.' He adds: 'Moreover, the Convention has another flaw which is of a much more fundamental nature. The Convention obliges the Parties to the Convention to adopt appropriate regulations to punish the perpetrators of genocide, conspirators, instigators, assassinators, and their associates. As noted by the French representative, the Convention is overly focused on national laws prohibiting genocide. This is relatively ineffective, because genocide can only be carried out with the collaboration of the government. Genocide is impossible without government's collaboration or at least its tacit approval. The danger of genocide stems not from acts of individuals, but from the system organised or tolerated by the government.'[27] This is the right moment to ask: has an independent Lithuania, which regained its independence in 1990, managed to draw up 'appropriate regulations to punish the perpetrators of genocide, conspirators, instigators, assassinators, and their associates', as the French representative of the United Nations had called for?

I am not a lawyer. Therefore, I am not going to make an informed judgement on that. However, I wish to note that, on 9 April 1992, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania adopted a law on liability for the genocide of the Lithuanian population. However, soon afterwards, quite alarmingly, prosecutor Kęstutis Milkeraitis said: 'the Special Investigations Division of the Prosecutor General's Office has initiated criminal proceedings for the killings committed by the Nazis, the Soviets, and Armia Krajowa. This conflicts with the Resolution of the Supreme Council on the procedure of application of the Law on Responsibility for Genocide of Residents of Lithuania, which provided for setting up of a commission to investigate the crimes of genocide

[27] Krivickas D. Genocide and the Genocide Convention. *Lietuva*, 1952, Issue No 2, pp. 123, 126–127.

in Lithuania, and the establishment of a documentation centre to collect and summarise material on the crimes of genocide committed in Lithuania during the occupation and annexation of Lithuania by Nazi Germany and the USSR. The government has been tasked with concluding agreements on legal support with states that can assist in the investigation of crimes of genocide. However, this has not been done so far. [...] This clearly reflects a poor organisation of the investigation into crimes of genocide. It appears to have been deliberately conceived to avoid investigating the activities of the ideologists and politicians behind genocide. It is not the job of investigators to carry out historical and legal assessments of the structures used for genocide. However, without such assessments, the liability of individuals cannot be established.'[28]

Rimvydas Valentukevičius, Chief Prosecutor of the Special Investigations Division of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, said[29] in spring 1999 that more than 70 criminal cases have been initiated in connection with genocide and war crimes committed in Lithuania. Five cases have been closed and transferred to court, including two related to Nazi crimes and three related to Soviet genocide. The court has issued a final ruling in one case, resulting in the sentencing of three NKVD men in Zarasai district. Preliminary investigation is being conducted in eight criminal cases: five on genocide and three on various war crimes, including deportation and killing of civilians. Thus, seven years after the adoption of the law, only one sentence has been passed, and even this was on minor perpetrators.

Seven years later, the weekly Veidas wrote with bitter disappointment: 'A total of three hundred and fifty thousand people fell prey to communist repression in 1941–1957. This amounts to more than a third of the population of Lithuania. Twenty thousand of them were killed. This included 5.000 civilians. A hundred and fifty thousand were deported, tens of thousands were imprisoned, terrorised or tortured. There are people, even our relatives, behind each of these figures. Their lives were destroyed, not for committing any crimes, but simply

[28] Milkeraitis K. *Who Opposes the Investigation of Genocide Crimes? Lietuvos aidas*, 25 June 1993.

[29] Statement of V. Valiušaitis to Radio Free Europe. 2 April 1999.

because they wanted to live in an independent Lithuania.'[30] The magazine went on to say that '16 years ago the crackdown was defined as a genocide of the nation and crime against humanity.' The journal quotes Dr Arvydas Anušauskas, historian and Director of the Genocide and Resistance Research Department of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, who claimed that the genocide in Lithuania was organised and committed by more than fifty thousand people, including over eighteen thousand NKVD men. Veidas adds: 'Thus, there are tens of thousands of perpetrators, hundreds of thousands of victims, and the justified expectation would be to have justice restored.' However, between 1990 and 2006, only 213 criminal cases of genocide and crimes against humanity were filed across all prosecutors' offices in the country, according to the data collected by the weekly magazine. Out of all these cases, only 17 were referred to the courts involving 26 defendants. The courts that examined them found seven persons guilty and sentenced them to prison, of whom only three were or are currently incarcerated. Others were released from a custodial sentence on grounds of amnesty or illness.

The magazine provides examples of many cases where both the names of the executioners and the victims are known, yet there have been no consequences. The Veidas magazine concludes: 'Criminals are subject to minimum sentences or are eventually relieved of them. Most often, the lowest-rank perpetrators go to trial. The question arises: where are the organisers of the genocide?' They are known, the weekly newspaper names them: 'The main Lithuanian organisers of deportations, killing of partisans and torture of their relatives are the following persons: Antanas Sniečkus, Danielius Todessas, Mečislovas Gedvilas, Aleksandras Gudaitis-Guzevičius, Piotras Gladkovas, Juozas Bartašiūnas, Kazys Preikšas, Alfonsas Gailevičius, Bronius Pušinis and all heads of the LSSR NKVD, NKGB, and MGB. Have they gone on trial? No, because they are dead. Thus, the case of none of them has even gone to court. Have their genocide 'merits' been properly assessed by the current leaders of Lithuania – the President, Speaker of the Seimas,

[30] Sarafinas G. *Genocido Lietuvoje nebuvo? (There was no Genocide in Lithuania?) Veidas*, 8 March 2007.

and Prime Minister? No. Have they been internationally condemned? No. Have the political parties demanded that these executioners be named by their real names? No. Have they been cursed by society? No. On the contrary, conferences about Sniečkus as an excellent, economically wise leader and custodian of the Lithuanian spirit are held more often than events condemning him as an organiser of crimes against humanity.[31]

On 12–14 June 2000, the International Congress 'Assessment of the Crimes of Communism' was held in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. It was attended by historians, lawyers, politicians, public figures, as well as witnesses from 23 countries – Lithuania, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, Chechnia, Estonia, Italy, Israel, USA, Japan, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, Hungary and Germany. During the Congress, the Vilnius International Public Tribunal was held, headed by lawyer Vytautas Zabiela. The Tribunal adopted a ruling based on oral and written testimonies of victims and witnesses and handwritten and printed material. Two volumes of historical and documentary material have been released, which in sum amount to nearly a thousand pages.[32] This has not helped. Communist criminals have still not been punished. They have not even been publicly named as such. Mao Zedong would be proud of it. He is famous for saying that a lie repeated a hundred times becomes true.

31 Ibid.

32 Anti-Communist Congress and Vilnius International Public Tribunal on Assessment of the Crimes of Communism. 2000. The first part (*Anti-communist Congress*) prepared for printing by Dr Arvydas Anušauskas; the second part (*Vilnius International Public Tribunal on Assessment of the Crimes of Communism*) prepared for printing by Vytautas Zabiela and Vytautas Raudeliūnas. Vilnius: Ramona, p. 922.

# Grounds for Recognising the Communist Party of the Soviet Union-the Communist Party of Lithuania As a Criminal Organisation

*Prof Dr. Habil. Alfonsas Vaišvila*

Various NGOs undertake initiatives to achieve recognition of the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union-Communist Party of Lithuania (CPSS-CPL) as a criminal organisation. The pertinent draft law is being developed by the Members of the Seimas Audronius Ažubalis and Laurynas Kasčiūnas. This necessitates reconsidering the activities of the CPSS-CPL from the legal point of view in an effort to update the arguments for the draft law and to respond to the voices opposing this law. Lawyer Dainius Žalimas has recently publicly stated *a priori* and without any evidence that 'there is no reason to term the activities of the CPL as criminal by law.' He does not see the participation of the CPL in the annexation of Lithuania and in deportation and killing of hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, nor the numerous scientific studies revealing the scope and forms of CPSS-CPL crimes as sufficient evidence. Others consider the CPL merely as a division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; yet others say that it was not even a party... These arguments are intended to justify those individuals who belonged to the allegedly non-existent party, held its membership cards, and participated in its crimes in one way or another... Some argue that recognising the CPSS-CPL as a criminal organisation will supposedly mean that each member of the CPL, along with its nomenclature, will be treated as a criminal.

Some of these arguments are very similar to those used today by the Kremlin propaganda to distort or deny obvious facts. Other arguments result from the aspiration to highlight the positive contribution of individual CPL members to the efforts of *Sąjūdis* and, later, the Supreme Council in declaring the independence of the State of Lithuania. This attempt is aimed at extending these contributions over the entire CPL, including the part of the CPL led by Mykolas Burokevičius, by conflating

its predominantly criminal activities with isolated instances of patriotism.

This trend is also reflected in inadequate and contradictory decisions of the Seimas on the matter. On 27 June 2017, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Resolution on Assessing the Criminal Activities of the Communist Party of Lithuania. The Seimas opted for a resolution rather than a law for formalising this legal assessment. Alas, resolutions are not binding on anyone in any way and merely state the opinion of the Seimas. In the Resolution concerned, this opinion is stated in vague and contradictory terms. In the beginning of the text, the activities of the CPL are seen as criminal, and forms of multiple crimes committed by the CPL are listed in rather great detail. In the final part though, as if in denial of the above, it is postulated that the activities of the CPL have only 'elements of alleged criminal activities'. The key message is that the activities of the CPL may or may not be viewed as criminal.

The law passed by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 16 July 1998 follows similar logic and contains the same legal paradox. In that law, the KGB is regarded as a criminal organisation. Surprisingly, the CPSS-CPL is not similarly designated despite having founded and managed the KGB; having commissioned the KGB to commit grave crimes of deportation of thousands of Lithuanian people to certain death in Siberia; and having given instructions to torture and kill the arrested people and defile the remains of the Lithuanian partisans.

Either consciously or unconsciously, this situation seems to uphold a medieval principle *princeps legibus solutus* (the prince is not bound by the laws). Under this rule, only subordinates – the KGB and the NKVD in this case – are considered capable of committing crimes, while those who instruct subordinates to commit crimes – the CPSS-CPL in this case – are absolved of any culpability. The former may be found guilty and convicted by law, while the latter are immune from justice, because they belong to a higher caste of masterminds and superiors who issue orders for crimes. Thus, the steps taken by the latter must officially always seem lawful and fitting. Following this logic, all virtues are derived from the exercise of power leading to acquittal and justification rather than from adherence to the law. On 17 March 2023, when

defending Russian President Vladimir Putin from legal persecution, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China urged the international community to continue living under the following rule of the Middle Ages: 'Heads of State enjoy immunity from international law.'

This flies in the face of the fact that our civilisation has already moved away from the 15th and 16th centuries and lives in the 21st century with the rule of law, rather than the rule of force, officially in place and with all people, irrespective of their social status, being equal before and equally subject to civilised law. It was the strong resolve of civilised states that led the International Criminal Court in The Hague on 17 March 2023 to condemn the attempt by Russia and its lawyers to continue living under the said rule of the Middle Ages and issue an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin with a view to arresting and prosecuting him as a mastermind, organiser and superior who ordered his subordinates to commit grave crimes against Ukrainian people, including massive killings, kidnapping of children, and the destruction of the Ukrainian civilisation.

Regardless of whether Putin is ultimately arrested and convicted or not, this decision of the International Criminal Court sets a critical legal precedent by overturning the medieval tradition that had continued so far and by reinstating the rule of law not only in domestic law but in international criminal law as well. This approach stems from the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal back in 1946, that is, from prosecution of the German Government and its individual members specifically for the crimes of a similar nature, because criminal liability extends to both a superior ordering a crime and an executor of orders. In practice, the decision of the International Criminal Court restores the validity of the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal in the context of the 21st century.

The decision of the International Criminal Court is a significant methodological legal basis (guideline) for the Lithuanian Seimas in its efforts to designate the CPSS-CPL as a criminal organisation functioning in the same way as the Nazi German Government in its day. Failing to align with this precedent would mean that the Lithuanian Seimas, by recognising the KGB as a criminal organisation yet continuing to regard the activities of its founder and superior – CPSS-CPL – as lawful,

continues to recognise the said medieval rule, rejects the decision of the International Criminal Court and the principle of the rule of law, and indirectly expresses solidarity with the Kremlin and Beijing in seeking to make the world of the 21st century to live under medieval rules.

The adoption of the said law is of utmost importance because until the activities of the CPSS-CPL are not recognised as criminal by law, the CPSS-CPL must be officially considered as having acted lawfully and the mass crimes committed by it must not be considered as crimes.

The abbreviation CPSS-CPL, instead of CPL, should be used in the proposed law for emphasising that the CPL committed and was in a position to commit major crimes against the statehood of Lithuania and the Lithuanian nation only in its capacity as a subdivision of the CPSS. Rather than being an independently functioning party of Lithuania, it was a collaborative body that consciously and proactively served the Soviet invaders. Devoid of its links with the CPSS, which subjugated Lithuania, the CPL would have been unable to commit any crimes because it would not have had the power – a tool for committing crimes – in our country.

Importantly, attention should be drawn to the basic evidence proving that the CPSS-CPL was a criminal organisation.

First of all, it should be acknowledged that, from the very beginning of its establishment, the CPL deliberately and systematically acted against the strategic goal of achieving freedom and independence of the Lithuanian nation and pursued imperial interests of the Communist Soviet Union instead. That was a primary target of all the ideological and practical activities of the CPL. The CPL portrayed Lithuania's independence as the aspiration supposedly pursued by a single bourgeois class merely for self-interest with a view to exploiting common people. Similarly, our partisans were depicted not as freedom fighters, but as bourgeois nationalists allegedly attempting to regain manor lands to oppress the common folk. This portrayal was intended to compromise the very aspirations of independence by making them seem lacking appeal, value and meaning for the majority of the people to fight for. The intention also was to trick the people into thinking that well-being was possible only within the Soviet Union, that is, under foreign rule. The nation was pressed to develop a complex of cultural

inferiority and feel immature for independent political life. The aim was to prepare the nation ideologically to live under the conditions of the Soviet occupation and annexation so that it would lose its will to seek statehood. It was probably the most dangerous course of action against the Lithuanian nation.

This was the principal crime against the Lithuanian nation that gave rise to all other CPSS-CPL crimes: arrests, killings, forced labour camp imprisonment and deportation of innocent people, persecution of believers, recruitment by espionage agencies, forced collectivisation, rewriting of the Lithuanian history, and the systematic use of lies... All these were purely strategies and measures aimed at achieving the major strategic criminal goal of permanently destroying the statehood of Lithuania and extinguishing the national spirit dedicated to restoring the statehood lost in the course of history. The consistency of this objective with its implementing measures constituted the elements and essence of the CPSS-CPL's overarching crime against the Lithuanian nation.

Thus, what remains to be done is to classify and systematise all evidence attesting to the crime and to present it as the primary basis for the explanatory note of the proposed law. This would make it easier for the Members of the Seimas to review this summarised evidence, evaluate it from the standpoint of natural and international law, and pass an appropriate legal act.

Why do we need a law of this kind? It is needed for several reasons:

1. The law, once in force, would oblige each and everyone to officially recognise the CPSS-CPL as an organisation that committed crimes against the Lithuanian nation and continued to destroy Lithuania's independence until 1988–1990 by means of cruel and systematic terror.
2. The legal recognition of the CPSS-CPL activities as criminal is also significant for disclosing the authentic 20th-century history of Lithuania, teaching Lithuanian history in schools and universities, and generally assessing domestic and international historical events involving the CPSS-CPL.
3. The current day is burdened by pressures, because the criminal ideology of the CPSS-CPL and the policy aimed against the

statehood of Lithuania are not just history. Today, the modern Russia under Putin is reviving its aspirations and intends to put them into practice. It directs its aggressive ideology, first and foremost, against Lithuania's independence by calling it false and unlawful and threatening our state with a new invasion. The recognition of the CPSS-CPL as a criminal organisation would indirectly mean recognition of the current Russian doctrine of the 'Russian world' as imperial and therefore criminal in itself.

4. The recognition of the CPSS-CPL as a criminal organisation by law will bring up the question currently being debated: will all of its former members be considered complicit in the same crimes?

This is a question which requires clarification of the concept of collaboration with the occupying power. Collaboration, like membership of the CPSS-CPL, is sometimes unjustly equated to solely wrongdoing. However, collaboration can have two meanings: conscious and zealous aid to the enemy, on the one hand, and a special kind of resistance against the enemy, on the other. Under occupation, collaboration with the occupying power is inevitable if an occupied country wishes to soften the occupation and preserve the bulk of fundamental values of the nation. Open and universal resistance would be disastrous for the very existence of the nation as long as the occupying power is capable of armed suppression of the open struggle for liberation.

The nation normally opposes occupation by secret struggle that takes various forms. This may translate into outwardly placating the enemy: wearing the enemy's uniforms, arming oneself with the enemy's phraseology, publicly approving of the enemy's policy, and possibly obtaining the CPSS-CPL membership card … in order to win the enemy's trust and penetrate the inner architecture of the occupying power, harm it from within, and obstruct or at least weaken its wrongdoings.

The classical example of secret resistance through collaboration with the enemy under the conditions of German occupation is the behaviour of councillor general Pranas Meškauskas-Germantas. There are other examples as well. The case in point is also the arrest of the pro-Soviet activist and NKGB agent Levikovaitė during the Uprising of 23 June 1941. She was assigned to the category of communists condemned to death by shooting because her written request to join the communist party

was discovered. However, risking his life, a Lithuanian translator who collaborated with the occupying power translated the request of this girl for a German Gestapo officer not as an application for membership of the Communist Party but as an application for employment. This saved both her life and freedom. During the German occupation, many village elders managed to help a large part of rural population to evade forced labour in Germany and horse requisitioning only because they served the occupying power, had the information from the enemy at their disposal, and therefore could warn those targeted by repression.

Was this also the case with the CPL? Definitely. Statements like 'we worked for the cause of Lithuania as well' made by certain CPSS-CPL members during the *Sąjūdis* period are not entirely unfounded. Therefore, the adoption of the said law would stimulate specific historical research on a totally new topic with a view to revealing the number of cases of criminal collaboration with the Soviet occupying power and the number of cases of secret resistance. Notably, the disclosure of cases of such resistance would confirm that recognition of the CPSS-CPL as a criminal organisation does not imply that each member of the CPSS-CPL is complicit in the same offence.

However, even if individual cases of resistance of individual members of the CPL come to light, this will not and cannot change the overall assessment of the CPSS-CPL activities as criminal. The predominant, persistent and decisive tendency of collaboration by the CPL remains a key factor.

Having realised that the criminal power they served assiduously would inevitably collapse and wishing to remain at the top rank of society under new conditions as well, a part of the CPSS-CPL nomenclature and ordinary members of the CPL hurried to change sides and join the strengthening Lithuanian Independence Movement *Sąjūdis* initiated by freedom fighters (partisans) and continued by the Lithuanian Freedom League and the Catholic Church. The other part of the CPSS-CPL with Mykolas Burokevičius in the lead continued their criminal activities against the aspiration for freedom by the Lithuanian nation until the very bitter end.

Some of the CPL members who aligned themselves with the nation managed to remain in power. They dispersed over a spectrum of

newly formed parties, privatised state property that was managed by them at the time anyway, and started actively promoting the ideology of extreme liberalism (unlimited freedom). Extreme liberalism was conveniently diametrically opposed to communist ideology and thus helped them not only to avoid real de-Sovietisation and restriction of their political rights in Lithuania after restoring its independence, but also, as a top priority, to freely privatise state property, win seats in the Seimas, gain steady access to the media, and further exercise considerable social power. It is now primarily these individuals who form the force which, by using various arguments – both valid and misleading – seek to politically exonerate themselves and obstruct the efforts to recognise the CPSS-CPL activities in Lithuania as criminal, so that the crimes committed in the past remain unrecognised as criminal offences by law and a good name for a bad game is entrenched in history.

Following the collapse of the Communist Soviet Union, the same happened not only with the CPL, but also with the communist parties operating in all Western countries. This situation demonstrates that these communist parties were not supported by society. Instead, they acted only as agencies financially maintained by the CPSS to serve the CPSS imperial aspiration for the global proletarian revolution. Those foreign communist parties were merely ordinary communist businessmen who advocated communism because it brought them money, high posts and privileges... With the collapse of the provider of funding and privileges, the business of communism collapsed as well. Unfortunately, the communist crimes retained their pervasive impact everywhere where the CPSS held political power, using authority as a tool for committing crimes continuously.

13 March 2023
Moments from the conference *Communist ideology and practices yesterday and today: Historical, moral and legal evaluation of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania* held in the Seimas

Photos by Olga Posaškova,
Office of the Seimas.

# In Commemoration of Antanas Terleckas and the 45th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League

## Antanas Terleckas: Influence on Lithuania's Freedom

*Dr Algirdas Jakubčionis*

Two things that are inseparable from one another are Antanas Terleckas and the Lithuanian Freedom League. Consider this rhetorical question: what is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear about the Lithuanian Freedom League? The instant answer is Antanas Terleckas. The Lithuanian Freedom League and Antanas Terleckas are closely linked and virtually inseparable. A meeting or a rally with the prominent personality of Terleckas at the forefront immediately flashes across one's mind.

The course of life of each person is marked by exceptional years or significant dates. The number 8 is significant in Terleckas' life: his birth in 1928, his first conviction by the Soviet regime in 1958, the establishment of the Lithuanian Freedom League in 1978, and the meeting of Terleckas with US President Ronald Reagan in 1988. Moreover, in 1988, Terleckas initiated a number of meetings, rallies and protest marches. Surely, that single year was a too short a period to bring about real change and the work continued in subsequent years. This year, we commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League. Five years later, we will celebrate its 50th anniversary, and the number 8 will stand out again, because the year 2028 will mark both the 50th anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League and the 100th birth anniversary of its founder.

My cooperation with Terleckas began around the year 2000, when I wrote an introductory article for the publication Lithuanian Freedom

League: From the 'Herald of Freedom' to Independence. I keep the publication because it contains the author's handwritten dedication to me in thanks for my role in 'facilitating the publication of this book.' His gratitude was reaffirmed in his memoirs, At the Predawn of Freedom: Memoirs of Resistance Participant, where he described my introduction as 'very beautiful'. One of the reasons for our cooperation was Terleckas' personality that stood out among other resistance participants. He would tell the truth, believe in his righteousness, stay categorical, and do it despite any circumstances. He was confident about the future of Lithuania. Even asked by a KGB agent whether he believed in Lithuania's independence, Terleckas replied: 'I don't know when it will happen, but I truly believe that it will happen.' That was what he said as long ago as in 1975! His faith in the restoration of the Lithuanian state was both his primary driving force and main motivation for seeking ways to achieve this goal and to engage in practical activities, for example, to establish the Lithuanian Freedom League and to take further steps.

Terleckas' faith in the restoration of the state rested on the knowledge of the history of statehood of Lithuania. The idea was simple: Lithuanians had a state once and must have it again. This assurance about the prospects of Lithuania could have been determined by Terleckas' history studies that he was unfortunately prevented from completing. History was essential as an applied science for learning about ways of facilitating and achieving statehood. This is proved by the type of his reading: historian monographs and even Volume 15 of the Boston-published *Encyclopedia Lituanica* borrowed from the Special Stocks of Vilnius University Library.

Seeing history as a path of opportunity encouraged Terleckas to look for a like-minded professional historian to support his efforts. This is proved by several facts. Terleckas wrote to his son: 'I am sorry about your choice against studies in history (which I have recommended to you). You can become a good historian.' Vytautas Bogušis, Member of the Lithuanian Freedom League, had once read out to me the words by Terleckas: 'We'll turn you into a historian, Bogušis.' Terleckas' dream came true when his grandson became a historian. In summary, the study of history played a crucial role in finding the path to Lithuania's freedom. Historical knowledge was meant to help raise national

self-esteem; stories about freedom struggles and deportations were meant to help Lithuanians overcome apathy and encourage them to join the active anti-Soviet resistance and engage in mass movements.

In their monograph *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940–1980* (1983, p. 221), historians Romualdas Jonas Misiūnas and Rein Taagepera state that, in the 1980s, consumerism was evolving and societies saw communist ideology 'so despicably emptied of any content that it was beneath one's dignity even to bother taking an open stand against it.' Their only weapon was 'a mix of ridicule and boredom'. In conversations with Estonians, Terleckas found out that as few as 1 % of Estonians believed in independence and, subsequently, wrote that many Lithuanians thought similarly. This likely explains why the 1978 Declaration of the Lithuanian Freedom League included the following goal: 'to assist the growth of religious, national and political consciousness among the people'.

This goal was to be promoted by the *Herald of Freedom,* a publication initiated by Terleckas. It's very first issue declared the objective of 'combating Bolshevik disinformation', revealed the essence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, disclosed the 1941 instructions on deportation, and contained an article about falsification of history. The second issue included an article on *The 1941 Uprising in Lithuania.* Therein, Terleckas, under the pseudonym Skirmantas, wrote that Lithuania 'was reborn on 16 February 1918 only because the Lithuanian nation showed its will and determination by rising against the Russian yoke in 1794, 1831 and 1863.' These uprisings shaped the historical perspective of the country's eventual path to independence.

By delving into history on his path to Lithuania's freedom, Terleckas was also maturing as a historian. He published an article 'Who killed the four communist fighters', where he demonstrated the talent of a researcher. The topics explored by the *Herald of Freedom* or Terleckas can be classified according to their purpose: to wake up the hope of the nation to restore statehood; to seek preservation of historical memory; to invoke and build national awareness, especially among young people; to combat russification; to reveal those evils which break and physically harm the spirit of the nation; and to raise awareness on the harm of the phrase 'don't blow against the wind'.

In the 1970s, the debate intensified on how to achieve the principal objective of freedom. Reflection was given to partisan fights that were heroic, but failed to win independence. Even the protest rallies in 1956 and 1972 failed to achieve more freedom. Vytautas Skuodis proposed a new path. In the underground publication *Perspektyvos*, he announced the programme of a sham organisation named the Lithuanian Communist Union (LCU). Incidentally, Terleckas reacted very negatively to this idea. Skuodis' theory rested on the assumption that the Communist Party would not be able to deny the LCU participation in the elections and, if the LCU won, it would announce the restoration of an independent Lithuania. This was an unrealistic plan, because the Soviet regime hated the different-minded members of even their own Communist Party and, in the early years, would execute dissenters by shooting them and, later, would imprison them. No alternative Communist Union could exist. At that time, several European countries started publicly promoting the idea that creating parliamentary democratic socialism was feasible, yet rejected the Soviet model. The Soviet Union condemned this initiative and used the term *Eurocommunism* as a pejorative word.

Terleckas disapproved of the path discussed by *Perspektyvos* as a distraction and diversion from the real purpose. He suggested another way of action laid down in the Declaration, namely, 'to raise the cause of Lithuania's freedom in international fora.' In his statement about the establishment of the Lithuanian Freedom League, Terleckas would say that 'the Lithuanian nation has not yet received even moral support from the states across the world.' When meeting with Western journalists in 1979, he would reiterate the same: 'There is a real threat to the existence of the Baltic republics... The West remains totally indifferent to the fate of these nations.' The meeting was attended by journalists from Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Western Germany, Scandinavian countries, even the USA and Japan. That particular meeting marked the beginning of the path towards independence through raising the cause on the international scene. Later, Terleckas would reflect on 'why the Organisation of the United Nations (now the United Nations) is not raising the issue of the annexation of the Baltic States.' Today, this idea expressed back at the time is relevant again: 'If we do not fight or

help others fight for freedom, this lack of action only strengthens and motivates the aggressor for new waves of aggression.' This already sounded like criticism to the West for failing to help Lithuania achieve freedom. In brief, the course of action was chosen and Lithuanian aspirations were made known to the West.

In 1979, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact already counted the 40th year from its conclusion. The decision was made on seizing the opportunity and signing the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals. In essence, the Memorandum was drafted by Terleckas and Julius Sasnauskas and handed over to Moscow's dissidents for passing it on abroad. The Memorandum was addressed to state parties to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the UN Secretary-General. Importantly, the Memorandum asserted the right of the Baltic States to statehood on the basis of their international recognition received in 1920; made reference to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that had caused the loss of independence; and asserted the right to the restoration of statehood on the grounds enshrined in the Atlantic Charter. On this basis, an appeal was made to declare the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact invalid from the date of its signing and to eliminate its consequences. The Memorandum was read out on the radio and brought to the attention of radio listeners. Terleckas would remember the following: 'I heard on the foreign radio that the contents of our Memorandum being aired by a number of foreign radio stations. That day was one of the happiest days in my life.' Russian dissident Tatyana Velikanova, who helped to ship the Memorandum abroad, served wine on the occasion and raised her glass 'to the success of our hopeless course.' Her prophetic words came true. The Memorandum reached the European Parliament, which passed a special resolution and sent it to the UN. This indicated that the approach chosen by Terleckas for raising the issue of freedom in international fora was effective.

In 1987, Terleckas embarked on a new stage of activities by restoring the Lithuanian Freedom League, organising a rally on 23 August, and demanding the elimination of the consequences of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. He raised the cause of Lithuania on the international scene again on 30 May 1988, when he was received by US President Reagan. In his later years, Terleckas focused on domestic politics by making radical demands from the point of view of the time and thus

testing the red lines of the Soviet regime. His moves showed to other political forces what was permissible, given that Terleckas' initiatives went unpunished.

In summary, Terleckas' contribution to the restoration of Lithuania's independence is evident. Therefore, I quote his words to the newspaper *Tiesa*: 'Someday Lithuania will erect monuments for the giants of our spirit: Petras Paulaitis, Balys Gajauskas, and others.' I do not believe that it is necessary to honour all of them this way, but at least one of them – the leader who guided us to independence – deserves such recognition.

# My Path to the Lithuanian Freedom League

*Jonas Volungevičius*

I will refrain from trying to analyse the activities of the Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL) and from drawing far-reaching conclusions as to the significance of its activities during the Soviet occupation. This is a job for historians. As briefly as possible, I will recount my life and tell you how I got into the group of honourable people, which, over time, received the name of the LFL. Rather, this group should be called a brotherhood, because in those days we all felt like a family of brothers and sisters who sacrificed their careers, their material well-being, the peace of their families and close ones, and, quite frequently, even their freedom out of their concern for the developments in and the fate of the occupied Lithuania.

My beloved native Dzūkija suffered all kinds of hardships, including the oppression by the Tsarist Russia, the Polish rule, and atrocities and injustices of the Soviet occupation. Up until 11 March 1990, our land had not had a breath of free air for centuries.

Let us start with the fact that my father was imprisoned during the Polish rule, which followed Poland's annexation of the Vilnius region. Following the Russian occupation of Lithuania in 1940, he was arrested and sentenced for anti-Soviet activities as his neighbours had reported on him. It is known for certain that, at the outbreak of the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1941, he was in confinement in Minsk. It is thought that he may have been executed in Chervyen along with other prisoners evacuated from Minsk at the time. I was born when my father was already under arrest.

Meanwhile, my mother narrowly escaped being shot down twice by mistake. The first time was when the war was coming to an end. A German military train was at a halt after spotting mines on the railway. My mother was returning from Marcinkonys after having delivered her milk due to the Germans. As my mother was crossing the rails at the intersection, the Germans mistook her for a Russian diversionist and

started shooting at her. Her falling figure was seen by a neighbour who was close to the place of the incident at the moment, and he hurried home with the news that the Germans had shot my mother Leonora down. Imagine the pain I felt as a four-year-old. After a while, however, I was overtaken by pure joy at my mother's return home, safe and healthy. It appeared that the Germans had apprehended my mother but let her go after finding out the truth. She told us about her near-death experience, with bullets slamming into the ground right next to her head as she lay on the ground.

For the second time, my mother's life was in real danger at the beginning of the partisan war. The neighbours who had reported on my father also told on my mother to the Lithuanian partisans. The allegation was that my mother used to go to Druskininkai supposedly to pass information about the partisan movement on to Russians. The partisans came in at night, threatening to shoot my mother down. They finally said that 'it is only for your small child that we leave you alive today.' When leaving, they promised to find out the truth. I remember this episode very well because I was sitting on my mother's lap when this conversation took place. Later on, having discovered the truth about the dirty doings of our neighbours, the partisans went to punish them, but found their house empty. Our neighbours had already fled to Druskininkai. It turned out that they were the Soviet informers. The same night the partisans burned down the house of those neighbours and came to apologise to my mother.

It may be said that my knowledge of the world began with the Soviet occupation. I was born during the occupation. Like the entire nation, I experienced the stark reality of Soviet deceit and injustice because this system represented all the world's evils, including lies, deception, hypocrisy and brutality. Every day now, we attest to the same malevolence in the form of Russia's banditry and terrorist war against Ukraine.

Some episodes from my childhood are seared into my consciousness. The first is the war with its exchanges of fire between the partisans and the Soviet troops at night, making me and my mother fall on the floor to escape the bullets smashing the walls of our leaky house. The second is the collectivisation, when men driven forcibly to the district centre had their heads banged against the wall until they agreed

to join a kolkhoz. The third is the Soviet pay. At the end of the year, I would bring about 16 kilograms of grain home on my teenage shoulders in remuneration for my mother's yearly work on the kolkhoz fields. Finally, there is school where children often easily found themselves at a loss. On Christmas Eve, my mother used to take me to the Mass at Dawn, which was served earliest and was the most beautiful for any child. However, this meant we would be late for school the next morning, facing an angry teacher who would make all the latecomers stand in a line against the wall for questioning. She would call our parents know-nothings and threaten us with lower marks for our behaviour as well as other punishments. Interestingly, many of those teachers had spoken and acted differently merely two or three years ago. How could a child make sense of this chaos?

These few simple examples illustrate in a nutshell my first experiences of stepping into the reality that made me embark on the journey to the LFL. That was the type of schooling many Lithuanians went through, absorbing the same or similar lessons through their unique perspective.

After graduating from secondary school in Marcinkonys in 1961, I enrolled at the Tallat-Kelpšos Professional Music School (now the Conservatory). It was not long before like-minded fellow students came together to form a small group. At our gatherings, we would sing folk songs and discuss about the history of our nation and the present and future of our country. Over time, we realised that the situation was unacceptable and that the nation needed a wake-up call. Then, I and my closest friend Alvydas Šeduikis (an organist's son) from our group decided to write letters to the higher education institutions of Latvia and Estonia calling on students to fight against the Soviet authorities. In 1965, we typed the text on a typewriter belonging to the administration of our school and sent the letters out. In the same year, we asked our friends – Algimantas Kaliūnas, who was fresh from exile, and Airija Gudelytė – to draw anti-Soviet posters. They featured a map of Lithuania encircled by barbed wire, with a Soviet military boot looming over the country. On the eve of February 16, Alvydas, Algimantas and me put up these drawings all over Vilnius centre. By climbing on each other's shoulders to put up posters high enough to prevent being torn down

without a ladder. We glued them on the Vilnius University wall next to the monument to Kristijonas Donelaitis, on the Belfry of the Vilnius Cathedral, in Gediminas Avenue (called Lenin Avenue at the time) and in other locations. In 1966, we decided to disseminate anti-Soviet appeals. Šeduikis wrote the text. I typed it at my workplace as we were already employed after graduation. Alvydas photographed the text producing about 200 copies. On the eve of 16 February, my cousin Jonas Šestavickas, Alvydas' wife Aldona Steponavičiūtė-Šeduikienė and I disseminated the enveloped anti-Soviet appeals to the mailboxes of all Vilnius higher schools and Vilnius residents.

The grounds for opening a criminal case against us was provided by our fellow brother Latvian, a paragon of Komsomol virtue, who handed over the letter he had received to the Latvian KGB. Our arrest followed on 26 May 1966. Šeduikis was sentenced for five years of imprisonment and I was convicted for four years of jail. The friends who had helped us managed to get way with expulsion from higher education institutions. For me, this experience was a prelude to the choice of my further path of life.

The forced labour camp became not only yet another school of life for me, but also yet another battlefield. Although all the inmates at the camp were political prisoners, they held on to different beliefs and views, and one's own truth had to be defended in heated debates. In most cases, the sharpest conflicts, if I can call them this, would arise with Russians. Russian political prisoners were brought to the camp in dozens at a time. All of them had higher education, had worked as university teachers or engineers, and called themselves Christian Democrats. However, back then, just as now, they nurtured an imperial mindset: they envisaged all nations having freedom only within the empire of a Great Russia.

In 1970, I returned to Lithuania after having served my full sentence. From among those I met at Vilnius Railway Station, I got to know Viktoras Petkus, a former political prisoner and a would-be co-founder of the Helsinki Group dedicated to defending human rights. Thanks to him, I met Antanas Terleckas, Romualdas Ragaišis, Albertas Žilinskas and other former political prisoners.

Under the conditions of relative freedom, as a former political prisoner, I ran into everyday problems of nearly domestic nature. My long

and interesting tours in search of a job across various enterprises in Vilnius proved fruitless. The news I brought with me by arriving in person that I was a former political prisoner made everyone recoil in horror and run like the Devil from the Cross. Noncommittal answers would follow despite earlier talk of the need for employees. Because of the KGB's ban, the Personnel Division could not employ me at the Opera and Ballet Theatre where I had performed before the arrest. The Rector of the Conservatory (now the Music and Theatre Academy), where I studied before my imprisonment, was forthright with me: 'I will be happy to employ you if you bring me a permission from the KGB.' Finally, with the help of an acquaintance of my acquaintances, I got a job at Vilnius Art Facility on my second attempt because, during my first attempt, its director had instructed the Personnel Division not to hire me. On the third day of my employment at the Art Facility, I was summoned by the KGB and asked to cooperate: 'You serve us, we serve you.' As this supposedly generous proposal descended on me all of sudden, I retorted sharply and without much thinking: 'I am not going to build a better life for myself at the expense of other people's lives, and never dare give me similar offers again.' The only reply of the KGB agent was: 'Well, why are you being so harsh?!' Incidentally, I had received a similar suggestion earlier, back at the forced labour camp. Lieutenant Colonel Česnavičius had come to the camp to offer me collaboration, which had to start from my article on my repentance to the newspaper *Tiesa*. In reaction to my refusal, Česnavičius started dashing about the office issuing repeated threats: 'I'll make you rot here, you won't get out of here!' Later, any time I was summoned up or refused to appear, I would be delivered to the KGB office and given a stark reminder: 'You refused our offer, so all you can do now is work the clay.' That would come in reference to my work at the Ceramics Workshop.

Unfortunately, I have forgotten a great deal. I did not write a diary like Antanas Terleckas. Nevertheless, I keep vividly in my mind his straightforward question, so characteristic of him, from one of our first meetings: 'So what do you think, Jonas? Will you go underground and become a straw patriot, or will you continue fighting openly? Going for the first option would mean that the years spent in imprisonment were in vain and that you have needlessly ruined your life.' Since it was

impossible to rebuild my life in an honest way and I loathed acting dishonestly, all I could do was fight to the best of my ability.

Any time I would call on Terleckas, I would always find him deeply immersed in work: reading, writing, or engaged in a discussion with a guest. If not, he would walk around and mutter to himself lost in thought. Probably at those moments he was devising yet another dirty trick on Soviet cronies to aggravate their lives even more. The LFL's key documents were conceived by Terleckas and took shape at his initiative. His mind seemed to race day and night. Small wonder that he often complained about burnout and lack of concentration. For security reasons, we would usually consider serious topics or action plans on our walks in Antakalnis forests.

Here is a little and perhaps even funny episode of my cooperation with Terleckas. He was bitterly angry with the publishers of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania for refusing to publish his articles. In fact, I rewrote several twelve-page notebooks with his articles and, at the risk of being searched and detained, carried them to my native village of Kabeliai to pass them on the parish priest, late Father Jonas Lauriūnas who was to hand them over to the publishers of the Chronicle. Lauriūnas would often return the article back to me with apologies for not having published it in the Chronicle. Therefore, I understood Terleckas' anger very well because it angered me too.

I cannot help remembering the group of intelligent, active, creative and vigorous anti-Soviet-minded young people who joined in our fight. Their involvement gave us the hope that Lithuania was still alive without fully succumbing to conformism and collaboration. I am referring to Julius Sasnauskas, Vytautas Bogušis, Andrius Tučkus, Kęstutis Subačius and the late Algirdas Masiulionis. They had their beliefs shaped as early as during school years and dared to express them openly. Their dissident activities knocked one weapon out of the grasp of the KGB and promoters of Soviet ideas, that is, prevented them from creating a propagandist image of a society where merely bourgeois survivors and mavericks of various types were dissatisfied with the Soviet rule.

To conclude, I dare say that the establishment of the LFL had not brought us anything really new. The same people continued their activities, but the KGB was unaware about that and had problems with

detecting the LFL founders. The KGB knew about the most of active dissidents because the latter used to sign statements and appeals with their real names. However, the identities of signatories to the documents proclaimed on behalf of the LFL presented a great puzzle. The puzzle remained unsolved by the KGB until the LFL itself left the underground, just the same as it was with the publishers of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

Today's politicians have repeatedly asked me whether Terleckas and other members of the LFL reflected on the future of Lithuania after the restoration of independence or pondered on its future system of governance. I would answer that LFL members never considered such matters. The current politicians would be very surprised by my answer, thinking that we had the posts in offices shared among ourselves. Anyway, our efforts centred on the only goal of achieving Lithuania's independence. Perhaps that is why we were all united: Marxists and Christians alike.

My narrative is merely a presentation of fragmented memories and fleeting moments from my life. As emphasised at the outset, I did not have the purpose of presenting a detailed account on the number and content of more or less glorious deeds performed by me or my like-minded friends. Nor did I intend to boast of the number of statements and appeals against persecution we issued or signed during the Soviet era, or the work we did for our homeland. This would have made my story long and tedious.

After all, suffice it to say that I had the courage and, in the words of Terleckas, I did not become a straw patriot of the underground. I have humbly contributed to our shared and sacred goal.

Therefore, I am gratified to see that our struggle in the LFL ranks was meaningful! We have won and it is a sheer joy that the LFL, alongside its founder Terleckas, made an honourable contribution to that victory.

# The Lithuanian Freedom League As a Troublemaker in Society

*Dr Kęstutis Kazimieras Girnius*

Western media showed little interest in the activities of Antanas Terleckas and the Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL). In 1987–1989, Mikhail Gorbachev and his reforms were centre stage. The Lithuanian Independence Movement *Sąjūdis* became the organisation best expressing the will of the nation after holding rallies and meetings in the summer and autumn of 1988. For many reporters, the LFL and Terleckas were merely an epiphenomenon. In contrast, the LFL had greater admiration among the Lithuanian diaspora embracing the LFL's demands to restore the statehood of Lithuania. The Lithuanians living abroad were concerned that *Sąjūdis* positioned itself as a champion of Gorbachev's reforms aimed at strengthening rather than weakening the Soviet Union and that a number of *Sąjūdis* leaders – as many as 17 out of 35 members of the Initiative Group – belonged to the Communist Party.

The article briefly explores the following three topics:

I. The key aspiration of the LFL and Terleckas for the restoration of the national independence and the re-establishment of the relevant Lithuanian national calendar.
II. The activities of Terleckas as of probably unconscious Socrates-type troublemaker who reminded the Communists about their past faults and later exposed their inconsistent standpoints and conveniently overlooked issues by *Sąjūdis* and the public at large.
III. General insights into the initially negative attitude of *Sąjūdis* and society towards the LFL and resistance participants, that is, into the manifestation of the national awareness shaped by the realities of the time. The question here is whether the reality matched the popular rhetoric that most Lithuanians were patriots waiting for a proper hour or day to challenge the Soviet rule and whether such alleged realists understood the true meaning of the idea expressed by Antanas Terleckas and Julius Sasnauskas as far back

as in 1976. The latter argued that 'staying in the spiritual underground and just waiting for Day X will make backbones degenerate and hearts turn into moss and mould. No stamina will be left for mounting a war horse at the trumpet sound of alarm, and children will grow up fully deaf to the aspirations of the nation.'

I

The LFL was a unique organisation and the only dissident association proclaiming openly and unequivocal that its purpose was the restoration of Lithuania's independence. The name of the organisation itself – Lithuanian Freedom League – implied that freedom was non-existent and had to be regained. The Soviet authorities were directly challenged not only by the demand to respect human rights, as required by the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, but also to end religious persecution, as sought by the Catholic Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Believers. Terleckas and his like-minded friends rejected the urges for moderation from those fearing that more courageous demands could lead to repression.

Probably the most significant, or most talked-about, document initiated by the LFL was the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals published in 1979 to condemn the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and to call for elimination of its consequences in the Baltic States. Instead of announcing the Memorandum only on behalf of the LFL, the decision was taken on signing it individually and including several Estonians and Latvian dissident signatories, thus underlining the common destiny of the Baltic States and the united desire to throw off the Soviet yoke. The Memorandum was published in Moscow on 23 August 1979, that is, 40 years after the signing of the Pact in the same city. Terleckas was arrested on 30 October 1979, only a few months after the publication of the Memorandum, and sentenced to three years of imprisonment in a forced labour camp and five years in exile. Sasnauskas received a less severe sentence. The Soviets usually would cautiously and carefully collect evidence in order to crack down on dissidents. The extraordinarily ferocious response of the authorities showed that, unlike the usual complaints against certain action by authorities in violation of Soviet laws or international obligations and the accompanying typical

appeals for rectification, the Memorandum denied the legitimacy of the Soviet rule and stated that the Soviet government came to power in the Baltic States as a result of a conspiracy between Stalin's Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany, rather than being installed as a consequence of peaceful domestic revolutions.

After his return from the forced labour camp and deportation in January 1987, Terleckas re-engaged in the struggle for freedom and underlined the necessity to reassess the history of Lithuania and publicly discuss on the fundamental issues pertaining to Lithuania's incorporation into the USSR and restoration of Lithuania's independence. On 23 August 1987, at the Monument to Adomas Mickevičius in Vilnius, the LFL held a rally to mark the 48th year from signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Communist Party launched a long-term press campaign against the rally organisers, but conversely this allowed for a significant number of people to receive at least minimum information about the circumstances of the loss of independence.

*Sąjūdis* decided to ban the LFL members from attending its rally held in Vingis Park on 23 August 1988 to commemorate the signing of the Secret Protocols to the Pact. Therefore, the LFL decided to organise its own rally on 28 September 1988 in condemnation of the signing of the Second Secret Protocol to the said Pact. The LFL also demanded 'to set an approximate date for the withdrawal of Stalin's army from Lithuania.' On the eve of the rally, the LFL was warned that the harshest measures could be used against demonstrators. Next day, the Soviet police and the USSR armed forces mounted a brutal three-hour crackdown. The demonstrators and random passers-by were kicked, punched and hit by batons, otherwise called bananas, therefore, the crackdown became to be known as a 'banana party'. This led to public outrage and calls for resignation of Ringaudas Bronislovas Songaila, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party. He was forced to step down on 19 October. The overthrow of the official of the stagnant regime was a considerable achievement.

## II

Terleckas and other LFL members, as troublemakers for both the Communist Party and *Sąjūdis*, shunned the idea of waiting for changes

in Vilnius to catch up with changes in Moscow. They were determined to test the red lines of the regime by defying it many times and in many ways in order to find out when it might unleash wrath and repression. Rallies, protest marches, brochures and speeches were the main tools. All action was peaceful without even a hint of violence. The LFL members had the experience of the Soviet repression, their friends and acquaintances had suffered from imprisonment at certain periods, and some of them still stayed in confinement in forced labour camps. This made the FLF members different from the *Sąjūdis* leaders who did not communicate with dissidents and had no deeper understanding of their problems. Tellingly and naturally, it was after the 'banana party' that Vytautas Landsbergis and Antanas Terleckas met for the first time.

One of the main aims of the LFL was to restore the Lithuanian national calendar, that is, to eliminate a white-washed version of history and highlight important historical dates that a mature nation should mark and properly celebrate. During the Soviet time, attempts were made for various reasons to erase the significant historical events, such as the Day of Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania on 16 February, from the public memory. The celebration of 16 February could have brought back the memories about the former state whose independence was crushed by Moscow. The Soviets would also refrain from highlighting the dates that would make them feel awkward because of associations with the suffering inflicted upon the Lithuanian nation and the disgraceful unjustified steps such as mass deportation in post-war years. The LFL sought to build the background allowing for disclosing the falsehood of the official narrative created by the Communist Party and for replacing its distorted version of history. The more often the LFL talked about these events, the more frequently the Communist Party had to engage in public discussions on the issues that had previously been ignored. Thus, the Communist Party was forced to change its canonical tale that had been unchallenged before. Such education of the nation was given particular attention in 1987–1988, all the more so as *Sąjūdis* was not yet ready to contribute to it.

After the commemoration at the Monument to Adomas Mickevičius in Vilnius, the LFL intended to publicly celebrate 16 February, which had

never been done before. In response to these plans, the government mobilised the Soviet police and other repressive forces. The Lithuanian Communist Party established special headquarters headed by the Second Secretary of the Central Committee to conduct counter-propaganda. This resulted in the publication of hundreds of articles and organisation of rallies in a range of towns to condemn US President Ronald Reagan for interference in Lithuania's affairs. Some dissidents, like Vytautas Bogušis and Nijolė Sadūnaitė, were put under house arrest and Arvydas Terleckas was kept in the KGB building all day.

In mid-April, the LFL urged the churchgoers in Vilnius and Kaunas to commemorate the deportation of forty thousand Lithuanian residents on 22 May 1948. Many people knew about mass deportations, but were unaware about their number, scope and victims. On 21 May, in response to the LFL plans, the Communist Party organised an official rally to highlight how Stalin's terror had affected communists like Zigmas Aleksa-Angarietis. The authorities would not have held any rally and would not have allowed any articles on deportation to be published, if it was not for the need to resist the LFL narrative. As on 16 February, dissidents were watched and arrested, and the Soviet police quickly dispersed those gathered in Gediminas Square.

The signing of the Peace Treaty between Lithuania and the Soviet Russia on 12 July 1920, whereby the Kremlin recognised Lithuania *de jure*, was another important event in the calendar of dates to be remembered by the LFL. The communists ignored this inconvenient occasion reminding that the Soviet Russia had once statutorily recognised Lithuania's sovereignty and independence only to take away it later. Approved by the never erring Lenin, the Treaty was beyond public criticism. The authorities tried in vain to prohibit the LFL and other organisations to hold any commemorative events on the occasion. Closely watched by the Soviet police, the demonstrators waved the copies of the Treaty and marked the date in other ways. *Sąjūdis* did not take part in these commemorations. As mentioned above, on 28 September 1988, the LFL held a rally to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Second Secret Protocol; and, on 10 January 1989, the LFL organised a rally to remember the last document to the Secret Protocols, whereby the USSR committed itself to paying Germany 7.5 million gold dollars

in compensation for the occupation of the territorial strip previously assigned to Germany in southwest Lithuania.

The LFL was the pivot of resistance. It was not that each participant formally belonged to the LFL. The unanimous opinion was also absent because many, like Terleckas, were persistent, stubborn, and reluctant to give in. Overall, the relationship between intellectuals and resistance members was weak. Intellectuals tended to regard the LFL as extremists, while resistance activists believed that intellectuals were cowards and conformists. In 1974, as regards conformism becoming the norm, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote that 'a hundred years ago, the Russian intelligentsia considered a death sentence to be a sacrifice. Today, even an administrative reprimand is considered as such.' During the first months of the *Sąjūdis* activities, its members in Vilnius shaped its agenda, and many of them, as plainly put by Algirdas Patackas, belonged to the nobility of the communist top management and avoided any kind of contact with 'extremists' and 'nationalists'. The *Sąjūdis* members in Kaunas had closer ties with the dissidents but had limited influence at the time. Therefore, the LFL took on the task of informing the public about the fate of Lithuanian political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

Political prisoners were few and not well known, but it was simply the right thing to do to try freeing them. On 17 August, former political prisoners went on a hunger strike in Gediminas Square demanding the release of Lithuanian political prisoners and the revocation of Article 68 of the Criminal Code, which applied to those thinking differently. *Sąjūdis* refrained from the campaign at first, but, with the rising popular interest and support, mediated between the authorities and the supporters of the strike. The authorities undertook to review the cases and transfer prisoners to Lithuania. Some of hunger strikers, but not all, ended their protest.

Following the 'banana party', Petras Cidzikas resumed the hunger strike and put up a hut in Cathedral Square, which attracted increasing attention and enabled the LFL to present its programme to passers-by. A month later, Cidzikas stopped his hunger strike after receiving, from the authorities, assurances of the release of political prisoners. The release of political prisoners was a significant victory not only for the

LFL, but also for Lithuania as a whole, because the sacrifice made by victims received recognition, and political and religious opinions were made immune from punishment.

It was the LFL that was the first to put the withdrawal of the Soviet troops on the political agenda. The LFL regarded them as an occupying force that had to be taken out of Lithuania as soon as possible and that should not have Lithuanian youth in service, all the more so since Lithuanians had such a right under international law prohibiting the occupying power from conscripting local population. Plainly, the country was not independent as long as the occupying armed forces were deployed in its territory with no plans of withdrawal. This was a particularly sensitive issue, because the Red Army, the alleged liberator, was one of the most sacred cows in Soviet hagiography. Its withdrawal was unthinkable even to the most consistent champions of perestroika in Moscow, with many unable to as much as envision such a possibility. It is worth recalling Algirdas Brazauskas sincerely saying on 24 January 1990 (a month after the CPL separated from the CPSS and a month and a half before the declaration of independence was declared) the following: 'We see everything only from one perspective: Lithuanians should serve only in Lithuania and we should get rid of the occupying army. Please answer me a simple question: who will defend Lithuania?' Brazauskas' *cri de coeur* exposed the CPL's worldview, still clouded by a mindset shaped under Soviet subjugation.

The LFL, in turn, was rather cautious about raising this issue. As mentioned above, on 28 September, the LFL demanded 'to set an approximate date for withdrawal of the Stalin army from Lithuania.' Further on, at the rally on 10 January, several speakers stressed that the Red Army had to withdraw from Lithuania. They just urged mothers to stop sending their sons to the occupying army and recalled Article 51 of the UN Geneva Convention prohibiting the occupying power from compelling local people to serve in its armed or auxiliary forces. Together with the party Young Lithuania, the LFL called on the young people to launch a campaign for the refusal and return of their Soviet military identity cards in Cathedral Square on 3 August 1989. Similar campaigns took place in other cities. In the newspaper *Komjaunimo tiesa* (*Comsomol Truth*), Romualdas Ozolas encouraged young people to

abstain from participation. Though *Sąjūdis* was initially sceptical about the calls for return of military IDs, it began collecting, in July, signatures under the petition for the withdrawal of the occupying army. A month later, the petition already had about a million and a half signatures. On 8 September, Brazauskas stated on the radio that we could achieve a great deal by abandoning two slogans: 'Let's leave the Soviet Union!' and 'Away with the invaders!'

III

The LFL and *Sąjūdis* had tense relations that could hardly be described as friendly. The activities and attitudes of *Sąjūdis* depended on various circumstances. From the very outset, *Sąjūdis* sought to play the leading role in the Lithuanian political and social life and, therefore, tried to distance itself from the CPL, the LFL, and other dissident organisations and to present itself as a third moderate force representing the largest part of the population. By shunning the LFL and preventing its representatives from speaking at its events, *Sąjūdis* not only sought to prove its moderation and responsibility and appease the Communist Party, but also to attract ordinary and more fearful citizens with no appetite for falling into disfavour with the authorities for participating in an unauthorised event. Unlike the LFL, *Sąjūdis* held authorised rallies, thus gaining a great advantage.

Some of these tactical calculations were justified, especially in the first days, when *Sąjūdis* was under close watch and still lacked greater and broader support. The invitation of Terleckas to any of the first events by *Sąjūdis* would have promoted conspiracy theories, namely, that though *Sąjūdis* was not a creation of the KGB, as some LFL members thought, it was actually a Trojan horse of the enemies of the Soviet regime for leaking separatist ideas into public space. *Sąjūdis* occasionally acted overcautiously, for example, by refraining from inviting Terleckas to deliver a speech at the rally in Vingis Park, despite the fact that both Terleckas and Sasnauskas had served in prison for condemning the Stalin–Hitler conspiracy and risked to hold an unauthorised rally just a year ago without knowing how harshly the authorities would respond.

The reluctance to cooperate was strengthened by ordinary snobbism, which was widespread in the state celebrating workers and

peasants. To the cream of *Sąjūdis*, especially its Vilnius group, the LFL members were poorly educated commoners who did not deserve attention. On the other hand, the discord was also fuelled by Terleckas and his comrades who used to make unsubtle statements overloaded with bitter rhetoric and with a clear liking for ridiculing caution and who regarded the appeals for moderation as an indication of cowardice or pandering to the CPL. The communist hardliners refused to communicate with the LFL at all. At the rally in Vingis Park, Vytautas Petkevičius said the following: 'We are distancing ourselves from various extremist, chauvinist, or nationalist hotheads and have nothing to do with them.' Petkevičius was far from being *Sąjūdis'* only member who equally treasured both the CPL and *Sąjūdis*.

One of the main reasons that urged *Sąjūdis* members to distance themselves from the LFL was a fairly widespread belief among *Sąjūdis* and the public that the LFL was a gathering of the so-called extremists. Notably, what branded them as extremists was the demand to restore the statehood of Lithuania. Over the fifty years of occupation, Moscow partly succeeded in turning the clock back and weakening Lithuania's longing for sovereignty. The ethno-federal structure of the USSR made it possible to maintain ethno-cultural ethnicity, which satisfied a large number of Lithuanians and was devoid of any risk to the Soviet system. The Kremlin sought to turn Lithuania into a land of the Nemunas River and a depoliticised ethnographic museum covering the whole country, as represented by the museum in Rumšiškės. And with quite a success. Ethno-cultural approach sterile from political aspirations replaced the full-fledged nationalism or patriotism, a constituent part of the desire to decide on the future of one's own country. In 1986, most Lithuanians thought little about such a seemingly unrealistic aspiration as national independence and widely accepted the idea that Lithuania would probably remain part of the Soviet Union forever. As Lithuania's aspiration for statehood failed to fit in a rational plan of life, the Lithuanian patriotism associated with statehood was inevitably fading away.

The LFL was a beacon of light in the darkness. The indifference of the nation was quickly overcome, and a sweeping change came along very swiftly. By the summer of 1989, the majority of the nation supported the restoration of an independent state and the withdrawal of the

Soviet army, which were the LFL's aspirations regarded as extremist merely a year ago.

Historically, this was not the first sudden and radical change in public attitudes. Back in early 1919, many Lithuanians had doubts about the possibility to attain independence. Young people were divided about joining the Lithuanian armed forces. For example, there was no shortage of volunteers in Lithuanian territories to the west of the Nemunas River and around Alytus town. By contrast, in Panevėžys and Kėdainiai regions, as few as only two hundred volunteers joined homeland guard platoons in the summer of 1919. Colonel Petras Gudelis wrote in his memoirs that as few as 1.5 % of men took part in partisan action in Joniškėlis, where they constituted the largest unit combating Bolsheviks in northern Lithuania in the first half of 1919. Gudelis stated that 'I can assure you that no father sent his son away from home to become a partisan,' though there were some fathers who would not allow their children to take a horse along. However, when the soldiers led by Polish General Lucjan Żeligowski took over Vilnius merely a year and a half later, a wave of patriotism swept the entire country. In mass rallies, people became very vocal about their determination to sacrifice not only their property but also their lives. Remarkably, back then there was no radio, no television, no newspapers, no *Sąjūdis* news, and no rock march across Lithuania.

The inescapable conclusion is that the contribution of the LFL to the restoration of independence still remains underestimated.

# The Lithuanian Freedom League and the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals

*Dr Arūnas Bubnys*

In the occupied Lithuania of the 1970s, smouldering civil resistance became more visible and public, self-publishing emerged, and the anti-Soviet movement began developing along religious, national and national-liberal lines.

With the political aim of gaining independence for Lithuania, supporters of the national line sought to foster and preserve the Lithuanian identity. One of the most prominent organisations was the Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL) founded on 15 June 1978. It was a non-partisan, democratic organisation with no strict membership and no formal leadership. Its ideological leader was Antanas Terleckas. A lot of LFL members, including Kęstutis Jokubynas, Leonas Laurinskas, Romualdas Ragaišis, Vladas Šakalys, Jonas Volungevičius and others, had been previously imprisoned for anti-Soviet activities and participation in armed resistance fights. As stated in the LFL Declaration published in the underground magazine *Aušra* (*Dawn*), the LFL's main goal was to restore the independent state of Lithuania. The LFL set the tasks of developing national awareness among young people, preparing for the restoration of national independence, and raising the issue of illegal annexation of the Baltic States in international forums.

The LFL made use of the underground press. The nationalist newspaper *Laisvės* šauklys (*Herald of Freedom*), with five issues appearing from 1976 to 1977, was its most important publication associated with the LFL origins. Another one was *Vytis* (*Coat of Arms*), a radical nationalist paper published in 1979–1981, with six issues coming into circulation and the seventh issue falling into the hands of the KGB.

Like other unarmed underground organisations, the LFL focused on writing statement and appeal letters to international organisations and the Soviet Union's government. While fighting for the restoration of Lithuania's independence, the LFL emphasised the illegitimacy of the

Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, consistently underscored the fact of the 1940 occupation, and was among the first to speak out about the secret German-Soviet agreements of 1939. Initiated by the LFL for the date of 23 August 1979, the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals sent repercussions around the world, even reaching Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, and foreign governments, including the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, and signatories to the Atlantic Charter. The Memorandum was signed not only by 38 Lithuanian dissidents, 15 LFL members included, 7 Latvian and 4 Estonian dissidents, but also by some of the most prominent Russian human rights champions, with academician Andrey Sakharov among them. The Memorandum revealed the truth about the occupation of the three Baltic States and demanded the elimination of the consequences of the Second World War and the withdrawal of the occupying army. The Memorandum made its way to the West to be read out by the Voice of America radio station on 23 August 1979 — the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact — and received wide acclaim both abroad and in the Lithuanian underground press.

The very idea of the Memorandum was born in the summer of 1979 at a meeting of the LFL Council with attendance of Antanas Terleckas, Valdas Šakalys, Julius Sasnauskas and others. Sasnauskas' sister Leonora Sasnauskaitė printed the text in Russian. With this text, Terleckas and Sasnauskas travelled to Tartu on either 10 or 12 August to meet Mart-Olav Niklus, an observer of Lithuanian dissident trials from Estonia. They amended the text together revising arguments and legal aspects. Next day, Niklus collected Estonian signatures. Then, the text was handed over to the spouses Jadvyga and Jonas Petkevičius in Šiauliai. Jadvyga Petkevičienė soon travelled to Jelgava to meet Ivars Žukovskis who helped her to collect Latvian signatures. On August 20, Terleckas took the Memorandum signed by Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians to Moscow. Once there, he firstly met with Malva Landa, who suggested adding a few sentences expressing the support of the Russian dissidents to the statements in the Memorandum. She herself reprinted the text with the annex and promptly delivered it to Andrey Sakharov and Yelena Bonner for signing because she knew they were about to leave. Sakharov read and signed the text after stating that an

illegal act had been committed against the Baltic nations and that they should be free to choose their own path of further development. His wife, Yelena Bonner, did the same. Landa then signed the document herself and visited other Moscow dissidents to collect their signatures. Once the signatures were collected, Tatyana Velikanova handed a copy of the Memorandum with the signatures to a familiar Western journalist, who was instrumental in disseminating other dissident documents abroad. As a result, one copy with the original signatures went abroad, while various copies with differently listed signatures remained in the USSR.[1]

In connection with the 40th anniversary of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, a number of events took place in Western Europe to highlight the consequences of the secret agreements. On 21 August 1979, Bonn hosted a joint press conference of the Baltic Society and the Polish National Council. At the conference, Dr Albertas Gerutis from the Lithuanian Diplomatic Service reflected on the secret agreements whereby totalitarian regimes conspired to divide Eastern Europe. Noting that the Baltic States were the only ones to lose their independence during the Second World War, Dr Gerutis demanded that the governments of Germany and the Soviet Union rescind the agreements once concluded between them. On August 24–26, Switzerland hosted the European Conference on Human Rights, where Dr Otto von Habsburg made the report *The Hitler-Stalin Pact and Trampling on European Freedom*.[2]

In the context of commemorating the Hitler-Stalin secret agreements, the protest document signed by the citizens of the occupied Baltic States acquired greater relevance than ever. The Baltic Appeal, called the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals, quickly made its way to the West. With the help of Russian dissidents, the Memorandum was read out on foreign radio broadcasts as early as on October 1979. The news about the signatories to, and the circumstances of the signing of, the Memorandum was very contradictory. Surprisingly, the Memorandum also received approval in one of the few editorial comments

1 Anušauskas A., Burauskaitė B., *Baltijos laisvė - Europos atsakomybė* (*Freedom of the Baltics is the Responsibility of Europe*), Vilnius, 2002, p. 41, 42.

2 The Treaty of Stalin-Hitler, *Europos Lietuvis (publication Europe's Lithuanian)*, 1979, No. 35.

of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. These comments, made in a regular issue of the Chronicle, soon reached the Lithuanian diaspora in the West. Although the Chronicle usually shunned making direct political comments, its issue No 40 of 19 October 1979 expressed support for the signing of the Memorandum by denouncing Lithuania's status as an occupation and endorsing the demands of the Memorandum to eliminate the consequences of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact. The standpoint taken by the Chronicle was particularly important because it clearly showed the link between the Catholic movement and the national political liberation efforts.

One thing is certain: this was the first protest that attracted such a wide international interest. The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (SCLL) appealed to the national governments, signatories to the Helsinki Final Act, to ensure that this protest was heard. 'This Baltic protest needs strong support in each country,' the SCLL said in the appeal. The SCLL called for 'doing your best in your situation in order to draw, in the press and on other occasions, your governments' attention to the illegal occupation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia so that your governments keep pressing the Soviet Union in line with the demands laid down in the protest document; so that the people who went on protest rallies and dared to sign the protest demands were recognised globally as human and national rights defenders and that their security was protected by public opinion; so that this courageous deed of the Baltic people and its coordinators was not forgotten, but promoted and reminded of by all Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and other people in the free world until the Baltic States were free again.'

What was published was the first version of the Memorandum, translated from Russian. The text neither precisely corresponded to the original, nor included the names of all the signatories, but it was for this reason that the Memorandum, which began to circulate in the Western countries, took the name of the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals.

In November 1979, the Board of the German-Lithuanian Community sent the Memorandum to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, political parties and prominent public figures with the request to support the demand of forty-five Baltic nationals by

invalidating the Nazi-Soviet secret agreements[3]. On 8–9 December 1979, before the upcoming Madrid Conference, the SCLL assembly decided to seize every opportunity for bringing human and peoples' rights centre-stage and spreading the Memorandum around the world.[4] In December 1979, Stasys Bačkis, the Lithuanian diplomatic representative in Washington, and the diplomatic representatives of Estonia and Latvia in the United States presented the Memorandum to the United Nations in New York and called on them to support the demand to restore the independence of the Baltic States.

The Memorandum had wide-reaching repercussions around the world. Once again, it was underscored that failing to condemn annexation or showing indifference to the plight of oppressed nations was, in itself, a serious crime.

The US House of Representatives passed a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the Baltic States on 13 November 1979. The resolution was passed by 390 votes with none against. '[...] The peoples of the Baltic States are entitled to equal rights and self-determination as set forth in Principle VIII of the Helsinki Final Act and should be allowed to hold free elections conducted under the auspices of the United Nations after the withdrawal of all Soviet military forces and political, administrative, and police personnel from the Baltic States [...].' The House of Representatives (the Senate concurring) resolved 'that (a) it is the sense of the Congress that the President, in order to assure true and genuine peace in the Baltic region and in Europe in general, should instruct the United States delegation to the 1980 Madrid meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to seek full implementation of Principle VIII of the Helsinki Final Act concerning equal rights and self-determination of peoples; (b) it is further the sense of the Congress that the President should, through such channels as the International Communication Agency and other information agencies of the United States Government, do his utmost

[3] Transcript from the Vatican Radio by K. Puzonas, Head of Unit of the State Television and Radio Committee of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR, 25 November 1979, Lithuanian Special Archives, Stock K-1, Series 58, File 47753/3, Volume 6, p. 145.

[4] *Europos Lietuvis*, 28/01/1980, No 4.

to bring the matter of the Baltic States to the attention of all nations by means of special radio programs and publications; (c) it is further the sense of the Congress that the President should use his good offices to make every effort to gain the support and cooperation of other nations for the realization of the independence of the Baltic States. [...].[5] Congressman Edward J. Derwinski was the initiator of the resolution.

The escape of Šakalys, one of the forty-five signatories to the Memorandum, from the Soviet Union to the United States in the summer of 1980 enabled him to provide new, authentic information about the signatories to the Memorandum and persecution in Lithuania. Šakalys drafted a letter on the Stalin-Hitler secret agreements, supplemented the biographical lists of political prisoners known to the Lithuanian-American Council, the Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, the Lithuanian Information Centre, and ELTA, and prepared testimonies on the case of Vladas Česiūnas, an athlete kidnapped from West Germany. The SCLL handed the testimonies over to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Moreover, the SCLL presented some of the material to the US President and the US Congressional Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, thus seeking admission to the White House and an invitation to testify at the Madrid Conference on the situation of the state of Lithuania and the Lithuanian nation.[6] In Washington, Šakalys, with the help of Liūtas Grinius, Vice-Chairman of the SCLL Board, made a report to the Lithuanian community and the Voice of America and paid visits to the officials of the US State Department and Lithuania's representative Dr Bačkis. During his visit in Canada on 7–10 October 1980, Šakalys was received and his testimonies were heard by several members of parliament, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, representatives of an Amnesty International branch, and the Prime Minister of the Province of Ontario.

Šakalys' escape and meetings with Western politicians did not go unnoticed in the Soviet Lithuania. In response, it launched a propaganda campaign against the Memorandum.

[5] Resolution on the Baltic Affairs, *Europos Lietuvis (publication Europe's Lithuanian)*, 11/12/1979, No 48; cf. Congressional Record-House, 13/11/1979, p. H10583-86.

[6] *Vlado Šakalio kelionės* (Vladas Šakalys' Travels), *Europos Lietuvis*, 03/11/1980, No 4(42).

On 27 September 1980, the newspaper *Tiesa* (*Truth*) published an article on the alleged confessions of Terleckas and Sasnauskas. The article was aimed at discrediting the Memorandum and the authenticity of its signatures by naming seven individuals who withdrew their support. The situation in the occupied Lithuania, the persecution of the signatories to the Memorandum, the continuous political repression, and the active position of the patriotic organisations of the Lithuanian diaspora placed the Soviet Union under increasing international pressure. During the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Madrid in the autumn of 1980, Lithuanian political organisations of all types became more active in adopting statements and memorandums addressed to international organisations and advocating for the restoration of Lithuania's independence.

For a decade after signing of the Memorandum, the Soviet Union tried to cover up its secret agreements with Nazi Germany while also harassing and terrorising the signatories. However, the voice of protest expressed in the Memorandum leaked through the Iron Curtain to become heard by the European Parliament. After several years of preparatory work in the European institutions, on 13 January 1983, the European Parliament adopted, based on the Memorandum, a resolution to draw attention to the situation of the occupied Baltic States. When presenting the draft resolution, its initiator Otto von Habsburg from Germany recalled that the Soviet Union had broken all the treaties signed with the Baltic States, whereby it had committed itself to respecting their freedom and independence. The Baltic nations suffered under Soviet oppression. The resolution was adopted and the Baltic nations were not forgotten. Back then, Otto von Habsburg and another European parliamentarian, Alan R. Tyrrell from the UK, had forecast that this resolution would point the way of the Baltic States to Greater Europe and that the day would come when the representatives of the free Baltic States would sit in the European Parliament.[7]

The European Parliament recommended that the Conference of Foreign Ministers raise the issue of the Baltic States at the United Nations and refer it to the Decolonisation Commission. Additionally, the

[7] Anušauskas A., Burauskaitė B., *Baltijos laisvė – Europos atsakomybė*, p. 7, 8.

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was urged to address the matter. The hope was that the Conference of Foreign Ministers would use its clout to make the aspirations of the Baltic nations for their form of government come true. The President of the European Parliament was instructed to forward the said resolution of the European Parliament to the Conference of European Foreign Ministers and the governments of the Member States of the European Union.

The European Parliament's debate on the issue of the occupation of the Baltic States and the restoration of their independence aroused great interest across Europe. In constant contact with Dr Kazys Bobelis, the ELTA information service immediately passed the received information about the consideration and adoption of the resolution on to Lithuanian newspapers and radio services and forwarded the text of the adopted resolution to Ambassador Max Kampelman, Chairman of the US Delegation of the Madrid Conference, and Congressman Dante B. Fascell, Chairman of the US Congressional CSCE-Helsinki Commission.[8]

The resolution of the European Parliament was a great political and moral achievement for those European political forces who treasured the idea of restoring the freedom of nations and felt responsible for their fate. After the adoption of the resolution of the European Parliament on 13 January 1983, there were more steps in support of the liberation of the Baltic States. On 23 February 1983, the US Congress adopted a resolution authorising the US President to declare 14 June 1983 the Baltic Freedom Day.[9] Senator Robert Dole included the European Parliament resolution on the Baltic States in the US Congressional Record of 1 March 1983. He supported the resolution of the European Parliament and stated that the adoption of the resolution by such a large majority demonstrated firm commitment of the representatives of European countries to the restoration of the independence of the Baltic nations. Senator Charles H. Percy thanked the SCLL in writing for sending him the resolutions of the European Parliament and the Australian Senate.

[8] *VLIK'o* žygiai *Europos Parlamente* (*The SCLL Efforts in the European Parliament*), newspaper *Darbininkas* (*Worker*), 18/02/1983.

[9] Joint resolution to declare Baltic Freedom Day, Dr. Kazys Bobelis' personal archive; article *Baltijos laisvės diena*, *Europos Lietuvis*, 24/06/1983.

He expressed his great satisfaction that 'such institutions have voted in favour of these resolutions'.

The Memorandum continued to circulate widely. Dr Bobelis, SCLL President, sent it out to the participants of the session of the European Foreign Ministers of 12 April 1983 along with a letter on the situation in the Baltic States. This letter reached the Ministers of Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, who were asked to support the restoration of independence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

In the early 1980s, the European Parliament raised not only the issue of the occupation of the three Baltic States. This issue was inextricably linked to the problem of human rights in the Soviet-occupied countries. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of conscience, religion and belief, were recognised and established as norms of international law well before the 1980s. The signatories to the Helsinki Final Act undertook to respect these rights. In the early 1980s, the European Parliament also raised the issue of religious persecution in Lithuania.[10]

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution on 28 January 1987 (Doc. 5667), recalling that 'the incorporation of the three Baltic states into the Soviet Union was and still is a flagrant violation of the right to self-determination of peoples' and 'recalling the Resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 13 January 1983, concerning the situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania', drew attention to 'serious violations of human rights and the right to self-determination in the three Baltic states'.[11] The protection of universal human rights became an effective tool in international forums for raising the issues of the annexation of the Baltic States and the self-determination of peoples over and over again.

The national revival, also known as the Singing Revolution, which originated in the Baltic countries, finally and inevitably brought the restoration of independence closer. On 7 July 1988, after the first mass

[10] Adolfas Venskus' letter to Dr Domas Krivickas, 31/01/1984, Adolfas Venskus' personal archive.

[11] Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, publication *Laisvoji Lietuva* (*Free Lithuania*), 19/03/1987.

demonstrations of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, the European Parliament adopted, by a majority of 98 %, a new and one of the last resolutions on the annexed Lithuania, which reiterated the provisions of the resolution of 13 January 1983. The new resolution reaffirmed that the states represented in the European Parliament continued to reject the annexation of the Baltic States under the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939. The resolution recalled paragraph 8 of the Helsinki Final Act, which guarantees the right to free self-determination of all peoples.[12]

The search for ways to liberate the Baltic States, including the proposals from decolonisation accompanied by granting the right of self-determination to provision of absolute national sovereignty and the restoration of independent states, took place both in the annexed Lithuania (through initiatives of civil resistance and dissident groups) and across the democratic Europe. The freedom of the Baltic States became a critical test for Europe in the field of human and peoples' rights, a domain where the future of the European continent depended on the outcome. Through peaceful civil protest and parliamentary democracy, the Baltic States were breaking free from the Soviet empire despite its obstruction.

Another equally important LFL document with wide repercussions was the Moral Ultimatum to the Government of the USSR prepared by Algirdas Statkevičius. In the Ultimatum, the Government of the USSR was presented with the demand to consider the issue of the restoration of an independent Lithuania and to publish the documents of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in the USSR periodicals. This step soon led to KGB repression. Less than a few months after the publication of the aforementioned documents, the LFL heads Terleckas and Sasnauskas were arrested. The arrest of Statkevičius followed in August 1980. The repression against the most active LFL members brought the activities of the organisation to a halt for some time.

As the processes of democratisation of the state and political system began in the Soviet Union and the heads of unarmed resistance organisations started returning from prisons and exile in 1987, the resistance

[12] Article *Pabaltijo reikalai Europos Parlamente* (*Baltic Matters at the European Parliament*), daily *Draugas* (*Friend*), 14/07/1988.

effort intensified, and the LFL resumed its activities. As early as 23 August 1987, at the Adam Mickiewicz monument in Vilnius, the LFL held the first public protest rally dedicated to the 48th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Protocols fatal to Lithuania. For the first time, the public demanded to withdraw the Soviet army from Lithuania and restore the country's independence. Although some of the rally participants were subjected to preventive coercion and publicly condemned after the rally, it was no longer possible to keep society politically passive. A breakthrough in national consciousness occurred; the general revival of the nation began; and the LFL continued to actively participate in it. In 1988–1990, the LFL initiated a range of campaigns, including the collection of signatures. A large part of these efforts, including the boycott of military conscription, the return of Soviet military IDs, and the collection of signatures for a petition demanding the withdrawal of the occupying forces, were aimed directly at challenging the presence of the Soviet army. The LFL, unlike the Sąjūdis, took a radical position and demanded the immediate granting of Lithuanian citizenship, the declaration of the Lithuanian language as the state language, and the restoration of sovereignty and independence. Finally, after the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990, the LFL was officially registered as a political party. In 2001, it joined the Lithuanian Right-Wing Union. In 2003, the LFL ceased its activities as an independent organisation.

# Once Again about Conscience and Collaboration

*Kęstutis Subačius*
*Member of the Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL)*
*Signatory to the Memorandum of Forty-Five Baltic Nationals*

'Why does every man have a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience.'

– Henry David Thoreau *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*

I think that conscience is a forgotten term in the structure of the state and society, let alone the judiciary and justice. However, if we were to reinstate conscience as a criterion virtue and ethics, we would be able to build a more or less decent life in the state. Conscience would be the moral basis for our decisions.

I would identify stirrings of conscience with a sense of empathy. Empathy is known to be a crucial, if not the most important, component of intelligence. It is a pity that the word 'empathy' now often becomes trite by being trivialised in different seminars and manipulated in lectures of questionable quality. Unfortunately, empathy is gone from our government decisions and activities and, I dare say, has vanished from the concept of our state. However, without empathy, I believe, Lithuania's successful existence and survival as a state will become impossible. It is quite unnecessary to go through ten different lives to understand what an outcast, a loser, a criminal and a poor or good-for-nothing person feels. Let us simply try to understand them and to feel for them.

Sometimes I ask myself whether there is a significant difference between the Soviet and Nazi occupations. After all, does the essence of collaboration fundamentally change depending on whether an occupation lasts for fifty years or for only six years, as seen in Western Europe? Barring the post-war lynching in France, we all somehow agree and

accept that justice was served when Knut Hamsun, a Nobel Prize Winner aged over 90 at the time, stood trial for his pre-war meetings and other dealings with the Führer; when philosopher Martin Heidegger ran into decade-long difficulties impeding his work as a university lecturer and finally forcing him into retirement; when world-renowned conductor Herbert von Karajan had similar troubles; and when Carl Orff, composer and author of the famous *Carmina Burana*, also failed to slip through the cracks. Poet Ezra Pound, writer Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and many other prominent figures went on trial as well. Thus, in reference to the West, we unanimously agree that collaboration must be disclosed and punished.

Have you heard the story of Marshal Philippe P**é**tain of France? He was the First World War hero granted every possible award, the French Minister of War and Ambassador to Spain, and, in general, a highly respectable figure throughout the country. When Germany attacked France, he signed a peace treaty with the Nazis, thus most probably saving numerous innocent lives. After the Second World War, however, he was sentenced to death for having collaborated with the Nazis as a member of the Vichy government. His death sentence was later commuted to imprisonment because of his advanced age. One conscious mistake was enough to brush off a lifetime of merit and achievement.

In the contemporary Lithuania, Marshal P**é**tain's decision would be justified on account of the lives saved. We indeed try to justify our fellow compatriots in every viable way by overlooking their transgressions or the side taken by them.

I really shun the idea that now, after all these years, we should restart looking for the guilty. We all agree that at all times there are bridges to be built, people to be cured, and children to be educated, even though there are times when the muses are silent. Maybe the late professor Česlovas Kudaba was right by saying: 'After all, people, even if they are beautiful, worthy of respect and even [...] love, should not only be appreciated for what they do, but also for what they... can do.' While reflecting on the past, Kudaba empathetically regretted: 'We need to understand that tragedy. [...] It is a tragedy. Let's burry it, roll a rock on top, and silently walk in a new direction. Believe me, I am not speaking only for myself alone, but also for all of us.'

I think we should only talk about the kind of collaboration that ideologically consolidated the Soviet system over fifty years. The Stalin era eventually came to an end. This opened a window of opportunity for discontinuing much of the wrongdoing and partaking in evil. After all, the people I mentioned above came to trial not for their active participation in Nazi crimes, but because their standing and prominence in society made their sympathy for the Nazis more impactful than the toil of any given Nazi hardliner. They enjoyed public trust. That is why, the aforementioned Louis-Ferdinand Céline, a novelist with exceptional style and a physician with work experience in slums, tried to justify his behaviour. Sued by Jean-Paul Satre, Céline wrote letters in self-defence from abroad stating that Jews supposedly should be thankful to him for all he could have done to them, but abstained from doing. As a member of the most humane profession, Céline should have really had empathy.

In one of his most prominent books about Soviet mindset titled *The Captive Mind*, Czesław Miłosz used the term *ketman*. According to Miłosz, this is a concept or a phenomenon with its origins in the Muslim world of the East. Miłosz first discovered the concept in the writings of Arthur de Gobineau, whom Miłosz described as a rather dangerous pioneer of racism. According to Gobineau and the Muslim East philosophy, 'He who is in possession of truth must not expose his person, his relatives, or his reputation to the blindness, folly, and perversity of those whom it has pleased God to place and maintain in error.' This description is appropriate for *ketmans* of the Soviet era. Moreover, Miłosz himself acknowledges this by stating that '*Ketman* in its narrowest and severest forms is widely practiced in the people's democracies.'

I will refrain from diving deeper into the phenomenon of *ketman*, that is, conscious compliance and even a habit of paying, again conscious, lip service for the sake of one's own good and comfortable life, despite privately knowing and feeling a kind of different truth within oneself. I will only mention that Miłosz describes in detail the subspecies of the *ketman*, namely the National Ketman, the Ketman of Revolutionary Purity, and even the Aesthetic Ketman, the latter being most typical of the reality invented by our Soviet intelligentsia.

Actually, the subject of collaboration, compliance, and, of course, conscience is a tired one. Perhaps suffice it to mention a few must-read

books that dispel any doubts about the destruction inflicted on our minds by the burden of the Soviet era. A case in point here is *Nenutrūkusi styga: prisitaikymas ir pasipriešinimas sovietų Lietuvoje* (*Unbroken String: Adaptation and Resistance in Soviet Lithuania*) by Nerija Putinaitė, who is well aware of the misfortunes conditioned by the Soviet legacy, or *Nepykantos Formos* (*Forms of Hatred*) by Leonidas Donskis. The latter book may be easier understood after other works referred to therein, namely, *Essays on Individualism* by Louis Dumont and several Lithuanian-published books by Ernest Gellner.

Why do we come back to these painful questions time and again? It seems the t's should be crossed, and the i's should be dotted the way it was done in Europe by *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt, *The Captive Mind* by Czesław Miłosz, or *1984* by George Orwell. Why are we afraid of ourselves? Why the monographs *Didysis apakimas* (*The Great Blindness*) and *Vinco Krėvės-Mickevičiaus politinė biografija* (*The Political Biography of Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius*) by historian Mindaugas Tamošaitis were met with hostility or silence? The Roman saying goes *de mortuis nil nisi verum*: of the dead nothing but truth. Arguments may arise about the grounds for the interpretation of some facts and, perhaps, about some inaccuracies in the monographs. The moral insights and evaluation, however, are most certainly beyond doubt if we empathetically try to understand, feel, and ask how we would have acted ourselves. Empathy is like a weapon against self-belittling, self-degrading and even self-loathing. Dignity could be won back even in the face of past mistakes by arming oneself with empathy provided that it exists in the conscience of those who influence today's thinking by their words and deeds.

A sad conclusion, however, is that, according to José Ortega y Gasset, the opinion of the masses still prevails, and, I would say, an even more terrible mediocrity sets in to dictate the terms in some instances. Gasset states that 'a mediocre person of present times, this new Adam, never doubts his perfection; his self-confidence is truly similar to that of the Biblical Adam.' Plainly, mediocracy still triumphs in politics and apparently tries to place itself, with some success, in academia. Meanwhile, empathy and conscience are truly foreign to the mediocre. Nevertheless, I cherish a dream that, instead of Plato's philosophers,

the state should be governed and increasingly influenced by able and willing people who adhere to Thoreau's principle, which says: 'the best thing a person can do for his culture when he is rich is to attempt to live his life as he did while he was poor.'

Thus, paraphrases and corrections adapted to our situation can help us send an instruction to ourselves: let us try to achieve the goals that we cherished when we were unfree. Then there will be no need to remember Confucius who said: 'When the state follows the Way, being poor and lowly is a cause for shame. When the state is without the Way, being rich and eminent is a cause for shame.' Alas.

With that in mind, I want to draw your attention to one LFL document that is particularly relevant in the context of the Ukrainian war today. Now it is often discussed as to why Putin's Russia has only a handful of people who condemn the war and refuse to participate in the aggression. Signed by a handful of resistance members and titled *Condemnation of the Invasion of Afghanistan*, the LFL's public letter illustrates what life was like during the Soviet era.

### Condemnation of the Invasion of Afghanistan

To: Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet
Secretary-General of the UNO
People of Afghanistan

OPEN LETTER

On December 27, 1979, the world was shaken by the news of the Soviet army's incursion into Afghanistan. Explanations that this was done at the request of the government of Afghanistan, in accordance with the so-called treaty of friendship and cooperation against foreign aggression, are unfounded. Amin's government could not have requested that the Soviet army overthrow it, and the government of Karmal did not yet exist at that time. No other country tried to bring its army into Afghanistan. Even Brezhnev did not say such a thing in his answers to questions put by *Pravda's correspondent* on November 12. The incursion of the Soviet army contradicts the USSR-Afghanistan treaty 'On the Definition of Aggression,' signed in 1933. Articles two and three of this treaty state that any intervention by military forces constitutes an aggression, and no economic or political arguments can justify it.

The Baltic States, too, had similar treaties of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union. In 1940, the Soviet troops also entered these countries on the basis of such treaties. Therefore, the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nations are well acquainted with the purposes and the results of such actions.

The world community has most clearly condemned the incursion of a foreign army into Afghanistan. In the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on January 15, 1980, 104 states voted in favor of the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan immediately, with only eighteen votes against.

We support the resolution of the UN General Assembly and demand that all the Soviet troops be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn from Afghanistan.

17 January 1980

Mart Niklus, Jonas Volungevičius,
Algirdas Statkevičius, Vytautas Bogušis,
Enn Tarto, Ivars Žukovskis,
Juri Kukk, Liutauras Kazakevičius,
Zigmas Širvinskas, Vladas Šakalys,
Leonora Sasnauskaitė, Leonas Laurinskas,
Mečislovas Jurevičius, Jonas Šerkšnas,
Jonas Petkevičius, Jonas Pratusevičius,
Algirdas Masiulionis, Kęstutis Subačius.'

Moments from the event hosted by the Seimas on 9 June 2023 to commemorate Antanas Terleckas and the 45th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League

Photos by Džoja Gunda Barysaitė, Office of the Seimas.


1990.03.11

LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS
SEIMAS

# Hostile Ideology: Challenges and Repercussions

*Speeches delivered at the Seimas in 2023 during the conferences titled 'Communist Ideology and its Practice: Past and Present. Historical, Moral, and Legal Assessment of the Soviet Occupation of Lithuania' and 'Celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Freedom League'*

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