

various anti-Soviet texts and of sending them to the USSR and international organisations and their leaders. The Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR sentenced him to three years in the labour camp in Perm and to five years' exile in Magadansk Region.

Antanas Terleckas returned to Lithuania in January 1987 and soon after that actively engaged into anti-Soviet and political activities, revitalised the *Lithuanian Freedom League* and drafted documents to that end. The most significant achievement of his political activities was a public rally organised by the *Lithuanian Freedom League* on 23 August 1987 at the monument to poet Adomas Mickevičius (Adam Mickiewicz) in Vilnius to mark the Molotov-Ribbentrop plot. In 1989, the League initiated the collection of signatures for the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Lithuania. With the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis* being involved in the action, more than 1.5 million signatures were collected. With the rise of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*, Antanas Terleckas and the *Lithuanian Freedom League* under his leadership were always decisive and consistent in pursuing the objective of Lithuania's independence which was later enshrined in the 11 March Act of Independence. Fighting for the right of Lithuanians to live in freedom, Antanas Terleckas also sought the same for all nations in Lithuania: he is the holder of the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland and his articles about relations between Lithuanians and the Jews have been translated into more than ten languages.

When Lithuania regained its independence, Antanas Terleckas was actively involved in the political life of the country and expressed his views on the most relevant political and public matters, though he did not hold any official office nor was he elected to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (he ran for parliament in 1998 and 2007).

For his courage, dedication and perseverance in the fight for national freedom and protection of human rights in the occupied Lithuania, Antanas Terleckas was awarded the Third Class Order of the Cross of Vytis (currently the Cross of Commander of the Order of the Cross of Vytis) by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 August 1998. On 1 July 2000, he received the Medal of Independence of Lithuania for his merits in restoring and strengthening Lithuania as an independent state. On 6 February 2004, he was awarded the Cross of Officer of the Order of Vytautas the Great for his merits to the Republic of Lithuania as a participant in the resistance movement, leader of the *Lithuanian Freedom League* and initiator and organiser of public campaigns for the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from the territory of Lithuania.

FREEDOM PRIZE

The Freedom Prize honours individual people and organisations for their achievements in and contribution to the defence of human rights, development of democracy and fostering of international cooperation for the cause of self-determination and sovereignty of nations in Eastern and Central Europe. The Law on the Freedom Prize was adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 15 September 2011.

The first Freedom Prize – that of 2011 – was awarded to Sergei Adamovich Kovalev, an active fighter for freedom and democracy, defender of human rights and Russian dissident. Presenting the nomination to Sergei Kovalev for the Freedom Prize, Petras Auštrevičius, MP, Chairman of the Freedom Prize Commission said: "I am convinced that the Russian dissident and human rights activist Sergei Kovalev fully deserves the first Freedom Award, established in Lithuania, and I think Lithuania is greatly privileged to award the Prize to such a prominent person. The Commission's nomination is well thought out. This is a Russian citizen, dissident and fighter for human rights who founded the first human rights organisation in Russia in 1969 and consistently followed his route despite continued repression. The Prize is awarded for long and tireless activity extending beyond a single country. It would have hardly been possible for Lithuania to win back its freedom without the support of the Russian democratic forces and the backing of Russian dissidents and democrats."

Pursuant to Resolution No XI-2392 of 8 November 2012 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Freedom Prize 2012 will be awarded to Antanas Terleckas, a political prisoner, one of the most active participants in resistance to the Soviet occupation, a human rights activist and founder of the political organisation the *Lithuanian Freedom League*.

The winner of the Freedom Prize will be awarded the Statuette of Liberty designed after the Freedom Monument by sculptor Juozas Zikaras. The Freedom Monument, a symbol of Lithuania's statehood, was erected in the War Museum Garden in Kaunas in 1928, demolished during the Soviet occupation and yet restored in 1989. The Statuette was designed by sculptor Joana Noreikaitė.

The Seimas set up the Freedom Prize Commission by its Resolution of 10 November 2011. The Commission consists of one member from each Seimas political group and two members from each of the following bodies: the Commission of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian World Community, the Club of Signatories to the Act of Independence of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Youth Council. Each year the Commission selects a candidate for the Freedom Prize and submits its conclusions on the nomination to the Seimas before 23 November.

WINNERS OF THE FREEDOM PRIZE



Sergei Kovalev.
Photo from the archive
of the European Parliament



Antanas Terleckas.
(Andrius Petrulevičiaus'
personal archive)

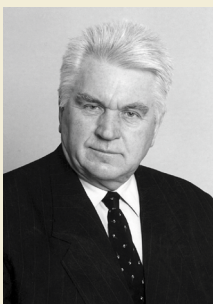
FREEDOM prize



FREEDOM PRIZE

ANTANAS TERLECKAS

WINNER OF THE FREEDOM PRIZE 2012,
A POLITICAL PRISONER, ONE OF THE MOST ARDENT
PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESISTANCE TO THE SOVIET
OCCUPATION, A HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND
FOUNDER OF THE UNDERGROUND ORGANISATION
THE LITHUANIAN FREEDOM LEAGUE



Antanas Terleckas.
(Antanas Terleckas'
personal archive)

My fate is closely intertwined with the destiny of our whole nation. The one who fails to obey, conform and renounce his political views and moral principles is doomed to be a prisoner or a deportee.

(Terleckas' letter to his wife, 31 March 1982, Antanas Terleckas, *Laisvės priešaušryje: Rezistentų prisiminimai 1970–1986 m.*, Vilnius, 2011, p. 220)

Antanas Terleckas was born in Krivasalis Village, Švenčionys County (currently Ignalina District) on 9 February 1928 to the

family of a small-farm peasant. In summer 1945, a student of a lower secondary school in Linkmenys, Terleckas was arrested by the Soviet authorities. He was charged with engagement in the underground organisation *Geležinis Vilkas*, interrogated for two months and finally released due to the lack of evidence.

Antanas Terleckas moved to Vilnius in 1946. He studied at Vilnius College of Commerce. Subsequently, Terleckas entered the Faculty of Economics, Vilnius University. After the graduation in 1954, Terleckas was employed in the Lithuanian Branch of the USSR State Bank. At that point, he continued his studies as a post-graduate student at the Institute of Economics, Lithuanian SSR Academy of Sciences, but was arrested and expelled from the Institute in 1957.

At that time, all the documents in the State Bank were drafted in the Russian language and the majority of employees had a poor knowledge of the Lithuanian language and Lithuania in general. Terleckas tried to present the Lithuanian history and language to his colleagues; however, he was accused of being nationalistic and downgraded to a lower position. Antanas Terleckas together with

a group of students of philology travelled in Southeast Lithuania and the areas populated by Lithuanians in Belarus and brought Lithuanian language textbooks, fiction books and the press there. On 24 December 1957, on Christmas Eve, the Soviet repressive authorities searched Terleckas' apartment and, even though no evidence of crime had been found, he was arrested.

Antanas Terleckas' court case and the cases of several other people charged with the establishment of and engagement in the underground organisation *Tautos Frontas* were merged. The Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR convicted Terleckas to four years in a labour camp. Terleckas served the sentence in Taishet Labour Camp, Irkutsk Region, Siberia, leaving behind his pregnant wife and a four-year-old daughter in a student dormitory.

Having returned from the camp three years later, Terleckas was not allowed to work as an economist and worked as an engineer for the design office *Punktukas* and the Canteen and Restaurant Trust. He entered the Extra-mural Department of Vilnius University to study history (1964-1969). Terleckas worked on his thesis *Lithuania under the Russian Rule in the Period Between 1795 and 1915* which was seized by the security officers during a routine search and Terleckas was prevented from taking his final exams.

In May 1973, Antanas Terleckas was arrested again for abuse of office and sentenced to one year of prison. The arrest and the sentence resulted from the media report on Simas Kudirka's court hearing. Simas Kudirka, born in 1930, was a sailor who attempted to flee to the USA and was sentenced to ten years of prison in 1971.

In 1975, Terleckas wrote an open letter to Yuri Andropov, who headed the Soviet KGB then, where he presented his political views and criticised the russification policy, forging of history and human rights violations. The letter was secretly transferred to the West. It was read on Vatican Radio and broadcast to Lithuania for several months. The letter was translated into the English language and published in the United States of America.

Antanas Terleckas participated in the court hearing of the famous Soviet dissident Sergei Kovalev held in Vilnius on 9 December 1975 and took good care of the Russian dissidents Andrei Sakharov, Alexander Lavut and Lyudmila Boytsova, Kovalev's wife, while they stayed in Vilnius in order to follow the proceedings.

In 1976–1977, Antanas Terleckas, Kęstutis Jokubynas, Julius Sasnauskas et al. edited and published the underground publication

Laisvės šaukllys, which was later replaced by the other publication *Vytis*. They published articles that dealt with national and historic topics, russification policy and forging of history, as well as facts relating to human rights violations. The review of the articles was published in the underground publication *Einamųjų įvykių kronika* in Moscow, in the newspaper *Europos Lietuvis* published in the West, etc. In 1977, Antanas Terleckas' home was searched again. During the search, underground publications, anonymous and signed texts were found. Terleckas was arrested, interrogated by the KGB and released after three days.

The efforts of individual fighters, former prisoners and the underground press made the world mention the name of Lithuania more frequently. However, this was only an outside view, while the "mentioning" itself was not as principled and assertive as we would have wanted or as it should have been made by the West in performing its moral duty....

(Introductory article from the first edition of the underground publication *Vytis* (1979), A. Terleckas, *Laisvės priešaušryje: Rezistentų prisiminimai 1970–1986*, Vilnius, 2011, p. 148)

In June 1978, Antanas Terleckas and his comrades founded the underground organisation called the *Lithuanian Freedom League*, which primarily aimed at restoring the independence of Lithuania. Its main objectives were: support for national and religious values, ensuring political and civic education of the nation, and bringing forward the question of Lithuania's freedom in international forums.

The concept of human rights should include not only the right to live outside the bars, but also the right to build a national state.

(Declaration of 15 June 1978 of the Lithuanian Freedom League, A. Terleckas, *Laisvės priešaušryje: Rezistentų prisiminimai 1970–1986*, Vilnius, 2011, p. 145)

On 23 August 1979, Antanas Terleckas and his comrades drafted an appeal to the signatory governments of the Atlantic Charter and to the Secretary General of the United Nations. The document condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its implications and called for recognition of the right to liberty and independence of the occupied Baltic States. The document was signed by 38 Lithuanian dissidents, 7 Latvians, 4 Estonians and a few renowned dissidents in Moscow. Later, this document became known as the Memorandum of 45 Baltic Nationals. The Memorandum was widely commented upon in the foreign and Lithuanian underground press.

On 30 October 1979, Antanas Terleckas was arrested for the third time on the grounds of drafting, printing and distribution of