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## National Bolshevism or National Communism: Features of Sovietization in Lithuania in the Summer of 1945 (The First Congress of the Intelligentsia)

In this article I discuss the problem of the sovietization of Lithuania in 1944–1945 from the perspective of the goals pursued by the Communist Lithuanian government in convening the First Congress of Lithuanian intelligentsia and the demands made by some of the congress delegates on the government. The research is based on the idea that the incorporation of elements of nationalism into the Soviet system was regarded as a means of making the regime more acceptable to the titular nationality and was also intended to facilitate the sovietization of societies. Some representatives of the leadership of the Lithuanian SSR thought that it would be possible to strike a deal with the Lithuanian cultural elite: the Soviet government would satisfy the most important (national) expectations of the intelligentsia, while the intelligentsia would support the government's policies. However, no such policy was ever adopted. Instead, Moscow simply began to force Lithuania's sovietization.

Keywords: National Communism, Intelligentsia, Lithuanian Communist Party, Sovietization

### *Introduction*

Historians who have analyzed the evolution and features of sovietization in Central Europe in 1944–1947 note that during this period Moscow maintained a fairly moderate political course. In some cases, the local Communists were warned to refrain from taking more radical political steps. Thus, the conclusion is reached that the leadership of the Soviet Union, at least temporarily, for tactical reasons did not undertake forced *revolutionary* sovietization of the countries in the region.<sup>1</sup> Such a cautious political course, which took into account the specific aspects of the local societies, was based on several assumptions. First,

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1 Silvio Pons, “Stalin and the European Communists after World War Two (1943–1948),” in *Post-war Reconstruction in Europe. International Perspectives, 1945–1949*, ed. M. Mazover et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 124–29; Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars. From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2008), 236–37; Eduard Mark, “Revolution by Degrees. Stalin's National Front Strategy for Europe 1941–1947,” in *Cold War International History Project. Working Paper no. 31*, (Washington: Wilson Center, 2001), 6–7, 17–20.

the purpose of this policy was to expand Moscow's influence in the region while also preserving the relationship of cooperation with the Western allies. Second, the main political ally of the USSR in the region, the Communist Parties, were few and unpopular. The greater part of society considered the Communists politically dependent and not representative of national interests. Therefore, the first task with which the leaders of the Communist party were confronted was how to increase their influence and build social support. This goal could be achieved in two ways: by implementing social and economic reforms, which the greater part of the public supported, and by positioning itself as the party that defended "national interests." Thus, the "national factor" became an important instrument in the practical policies of the Communist party, mobilizing society and legitimizing the new soviet social and political order. The question of how this policy was implemented in Central Europe, specifically in Poland and Hungary, was thoroughly studied by two historians, Marcin Zaremba and Martin Mevius.<sup>2</sup> According to them, nationalism became an important instrument of the legitimization of new communist governments and the sovietization of societies.

Historian David Brandenberger has observed that even in the 1930s the leadership of the Soviet Union, seeking to strengthen the legitimacy of the regime, more actively pursued cultural policies that "cloaked a Marxist–Leninism worldview within russocentric, etatist rhetoric."<sup>3</sup> According to him, in the Soviet Union this meant "a peculiar form of Marxist–Leninist etatism that fused the pursuit of communist ideals with more statist ambitions reminiscent of czarist 'Great Power' (*velikoderzhavnoe*) traditions."<sup>4</sup> Historians refer to this political course as national bolshevism (some call it national Stalinism).<sup>5</sup> With certain exceptions and specificities (depending on local conditions), this course was supported by Moscow in Central Europe as well. The incorporation of nationalism into the Soviet system was intended to make the regime more acceptable to the titular nationality and also to facilitate the sovietization of societies. Of course, historians have noted that in the policies of the Communist

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2 Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw: Trio, 2001), 135–73; Martin Mevius, *Agents of Moscow. The Hungarian Communist Party and the Origin of Socialist Patriotism 1941–1953* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 87–110.

3 David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism. Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge–London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 6.

4 *Ibid.*, 6.

5 For more about the National Bolshevik conception see: Erik van Ree, "The Concept of 'National Bolshevism': An Interpretative Essay," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 6 (2001): 289–307.

parties in Central Europe, one must distinguish between national bolshevism and national communism.<sup>6</sup> Without dwelling too much on this question, I argue that the major difference between these ideologies and political practices was that national communism meant a certain political and cultural autonomy and sovereignty with regard to Moscow. In his discussion of the Polish version of national communism, American historian Martin Malia identified home rule as one of its most important features.<sup>7</sup> It seems that the leadership of the Soviet Union tolerated certain manifestations of autonomy in Central Europe until at least 1947.

It is worth mentioning, as a side note, that according to some historians the process of the sovietization of the Baltic States in 1944–1947, while it had its own distinguishing features, nonetheless essentially was similar to the sovietization of the countries of Central Europe. According to the Russian historian Elena Zubkova, Moscow’s policy in regard to the Baltic republics in the initial period of sovietization (up to 1947) depended on the social and political situation of the republics, the situation in the Soviet Union, and the relations between the Western allies and Moscow.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the policies of sovietization were moderate: Moscow did not force Vilnius to implement collectivization, and Russia showed respect for national symbols, the Lithuanian language, and the national intelligentsia. Repressive measures were focused on members of the armed underground. Thus, in the process of sovietization attention was paid to the national specifics of Lithuania and the other Baltic societies.<sup>9</sup> Of course, for the most part, the assessments that were penned by Lithuanian historians differ

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6 However, even authors who emphasize the differences between the two “policies and ideologies” also note that the relationship between them was sufficiently “dialectic,” i.e. one could easily “switch” to the other. See, for example, Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism na každá okazje. Polityczna historia rumuńskiego komunizmu* (Cracow: Universitas, 2010), 37–40.

7 Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy. A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York–Oxford: The Free Press, 1994), 322.

8 Elena Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml 1940–1953* (Moscow: Rossijskaja političeskaja enciklopedija ROSSPEN, 2008), 128.

9 Recent Lithuanian historiography analyzes different manifestations of the autonomy, i.e. national communism, of the soviet Lithuanian nomenclature. However, this research covers the period from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, and it is focused on the “local,” “indigenous” aspects of policy (economic and cultural). See Saulius Grybkauskas, *Sovietinė nomenklatura ir pramonė Lietuvoje 1965–1985 metais* (Vilnius: LII, 2011), 111–38; Vilius Ivanauskas, *Lietuviškoji nomenklatura biurokratinėje sistemoje. Tarp stagnacijos ir dinamikos (1968–1988)* (Vilnius: LII, 2011), 497–570. About the concepts of national communism, see: Vladas Sirutavičius, “Tautinis komunizmas ir jo raiška. Istoriografiniai problemos aspektai,” *Istorija*, 3 (2013): 48–58. The research was funded by a grant (No. VAT – 02/2010) from the Research Council of Lithuania.

significantly. According to Lithuanian historians, as early as 1944 and 1945, the USSR leadership in Lithuania was already implementing a process of sovietization based on “general principles,” without taking into account the national specifics of the republic.<sup>10</sup> This was also due, at least according to this assessment, to the fact that among Lithuanian Communists a “nihilistic approach to their nation” and subservience to the Russians prevailed.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, with certain exceptions, the Soviet leadership’s political course of sovietization described by E. Zubkova could have been characteristic of the period until the fall of 1944 (or the beginning of 1945 at the latest). On the other hand, the Lithuanian historians who are critical of Zubkova overlooked certain nuances of the sovietization policies. Česlovas Laurinavičius noted that in the policies of the Soviet Union (from the middle of 1943 until the beginning of 1945) one can see clear efforts to “raise” the Soviet Republic of Lithuania in international politics, while at the same time efforts were made to “push the Republic of Lithuania out of the international arena.”<sup>12</sup> Also at roughly the same time, in the policies of the Lithuanian SSR leadership, “national aspects” began to be expressed more actively. In the Lithuanian programs on Moscow radio, the interwar anthem of Lithuania, which had been banned in 1940,<sup>13</sup> began to be broadcast. Measures were taken to release from imprisonment some of the politicians and public figures of the Republic of Lithuania and use them in a propaganda campaign against the Germans and to proclaim the establishment of the Lithuanian SSR among the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA.<sup>14</sup> Efforts were also made to assure the use of the Lithuanian language in the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus.<sup>15</sup>

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10 Arvydas Anušauskas et. al., *Lietuva 1940–1990 m. Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija* (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos centras, 2005), 270–82; Mindaugas Pocius, *Kita mėnulio pusė. Lietuvos partizanų kova su kolaboravimu 1944–1953 metais* (Vilnius: LII, 2009), 54.

11 Vytautas Tininis, *Sniečkus. 33 metai valdžioje. Antano Sniečkaus biografine apybraiža* (Vilnius: n.p., 2000), 66–68.

12 Česlovas Laurinavičius, “Vvodnaya statya,” in *SSSR i Litva v gody vtoroj mirovoj voiny*. Sbornik dokumentov, ed. A. Kasparavičius, Č. Laurinavičius, and N. Lebedeva, vol. 2 (Vilnius: LII, 2012), 42–43.

13 The hymn of the Republic of Lithuania – “The National Song” of Vincas Kudirka – was the hymn of the Lithuanian SSR from 1944 until 1950.

14 Lithuanian Communist Party daily *Tiesa (Truth)* in April 1944, no. 14 published a proclamation signed by the head of National Union of Lithuania Domas Cesevičius, which was named “A word to Lithuanians.” In the proclamation, the author called for the urgent “restoration of the free and soviet Lithuania” in which “all Lithuanians could live freely and beautifully.” Cesevičius was arrested in 1940 and released in 1944.

15 In April 1944, LSSR Council of People’s Commissars decided to “obligate the persons working in the Lithuanian SSR Soviet industrial and other offices to learn the Lithuanian language [...] To obligate the Education commissar to organize courses, provide them with programs and instructors. [...] To let

In general, Moscow at the beginning of 1944 began the course of “strengthening” the so-called Soviet statehood of Soviet republics. The reorganization of the people’s commissariats of defense and foreign affairs into a system of Union–republic subordination was begun<sup>16</sup> and suggestions were made regarding the restoration of the republics’ diplomatic services. In the fall of 1944, Soviet Lithuania, along with the Ukraine and Belarus, were proposed for acceptance into the UN.<sup>17</sup> Around that time, the leaders of Soviet Lithuania began to think about the possibility of expanding the republic’s “Soviet sovereignty.” Metaphorically speaking, in the activities of Lithuania’s Communists one can notice the tendency to move towards national communism.

I will present an example. In the spring of 1944, as the Red Army was approaching Lithuania, the leaders of the LSSR began to consider the possibility of returning to the country and restoring the Soviet social and political order, in all likelihood at the initiative of Moscow. In March 1944, Mečislovas Gedvilas, Chairman of the Council of the People’s Commissars (CPC) of the Lithuanian SSR, appealed for assistance to Lithuanian Communist Party (LCP) Secretary Antanas Sniečkus, suggesting that the Central Committee bureau discuss “the principles of the restoration of the Soviet system in Lithuania.”<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, we know little about how the debate actually occurred. However, we do have the decision of a joint project of the Lithuanian SSR CPC and the LCP Central Committee, by the same name, which was addressed to the USSR government and the Central Committee of Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU). In it, the leaders of the Lithuanian SSR “asked” the USSR leadership to determine the principles of the restoration of the Soviet system. According to the third point, the Lithuanian SSR would not adopt “automatically” the ordinances pertaining to the republics of the Union, but rather, having taken into account the general situation of the restoration of the Soviet system, it would accept the ordinances “by the resolutions and decrees of the organs of the republic.”<sup>19</sup> We know nothing about the Kremlin’s reaction to the initiatives of Lithuania’s

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employees attend the courses twice a week in the evening” “Resolution No.49,” Moscow, 28 04 1944, Lietuvos Ypatyngasis archyvas (LYA) [Lithuanian Special Archive], f.1771 [Central Committee of Lithuanian Communist Party], ap.7, b.28, 17.

16 “V. Molotovo pranešimas TSRS Aukščiausioje taryboje,” *Tarybų Lietuva*, February 6, 1944, no. 6.

17 Laurinavičius, “Vvodnaya statya,” 43.

18 “Gedvilas letter to Sniečkui,” March 1, 1944, LYA, f.1771, ap.7, b.82, 5.

19 The original version of this decision: “Общесоюзные указы, постановления, распоряжения, приказы в Литовской ССР не вводятся автоматически. Они вводятся в соответствии с общим ходом советского строительства указами, постановлениями, распоряжениями и приказами центральных

Communists, nor do we know in general whether *such a* project was sent to the USSR leaders. The point cited here remained only on paper, and there was no further mention of it anywhere, although, of course, it testified to certain “sovereignty” ambitions of the leadership of Soviet Lithuania.<sup>20</sup>

The leaders of the Lithuanian SSR returned to Lithuania in July 1944. In the fall of that year, Moscow sharply criticized the LCP leadership for a variety of “errors and failures” in their work that testify to their inability to control the public and the political situation in the republic. “Organizational conclusions” were drawn: in November, the CPSU established the Lithuanian bureau. Michail Suslov was appointed chairman of the bureau.<sup>21</sup> The bureau became the most important political institution of the Lithuanian SSR, almost all of the important decisions of the LCP, the Council of People’s Commissars and the Supreme Council presidium were adopted only with its consent.<sup>22</sup> The establishment of such an institution not only in each of the Baltic republics, but also in the Moldavian SSR clearly testified to the strengthening of the centralistic and unification trends in the western borderlands of Soviet Union. From Moscow’s point of view, the Communist parties in the region were weak and the Soviet government did not have significant support among the local populations. It was therefore necessary to consolidate Communist Parties. The situation in Lithuania was more complicated: the mobilization of Lithuanians into the Red Army (which began at the end of July and the beginning of August 1944) collapsed,<sup>23</sup> and armed resistance grew stronger. On the other hand, after the defeat of the

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государственных органов республики.” “СНК Литовской ССР и ЦК КП (б) Литвы. Постановление. Проект” [Lithuanian SSR Council of People’s Commissars and Central Committee of LCP. Resolution. Project], [1944] LYA, f.1771, ap.7, b.80, 80.

20 The representative of the USSR NKVD-NKGB in Lithuania, Ivan Tkachenko, on the basis of intelligence reports, wrote to his boss Lavrentij Beria in Moscow in July 1945 about the views of Justas Paleckis, Chairman of the Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR Supreme Soviet. In a private conversation Paleckis explained: “our Lithuanian Communist roads are different. God only knows what ugly directives Moscow sends, and we are obliged to fulfill them. We know perfectly well what our country and nation want, but we are helpless. The dark forces of the Kremlin that can lead and bring the Lithuanian people to degeneration and extinction operate everywhere.” “Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR ‘Smersh.’ 1939–mart 1946,” in *Arhiv Stalina. Dokumenty vysslych organov partijnoj i gosudarstvennoj vlasti*, ed. V.N. Chaustov, V.P. Naumov, and N.S. Plotnikova (Moscow: Materik, 2006), 531.

21 Zubkovaam, *Pribaltika i Kreml*, 139–42.

22 Henrikas Šadžius, “VKP (b) CK Lietuvos biuro veikla organizuojant tautinio pasipriešinimo slopinimą,” *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1997* (Vilnius: Žara, 1998), 241–42.

23 LCP CC secretary Vldas Niunka in a letter to Georgy Malenkov on 4 August 1944 explained that the mobilization was not suitably prepared: the mobilization was carried out “without publicly proclaiming” it and summons were not distributed to the people. For this reason, and due to the “German propaganda,”

Warsaw Uprising, Moscow began increasingly to abandon the idea of “raising” the international “prestige” of the Baltic republics, first and foremost because the West perceived this policy as an attempt to obtain the recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup> Thus on the basis of various considerations, these kinds of proposals were usually rejected. (Finally, Moscow abandoned the idea of inviting the Lithuanian SSR to the UN at the Yalta conference.)

The fight with the increasingly stronger partisan movement and various manifestations of “bourgeois nationalism” became one of the most important tasks of the Lithuanian bureau. On May 24, 1945, at a meeting of Lithuania’s bureau, it was decided to extend the fight against the armed and unarmed underground. In the summer, a major military operation against the guerrilla movement was planned and carried out.<sup>25</sup> In the middle of July, the mass deportations of the families of partisans began.<sup>26</sup> The Russification campaign of Lithuania’s Communist Party gained ever more momentum.<sup>27</sup> Under these circumstances, the bureau of Lithuania and the Lithuanian government decided to organize the first congress of the intelligentsia of the Lithuanian SSR.<sup>28</sup> The congress began on July 10 and lasted for a total of five days.

In this article, I will discuss the goals that were pursued by the Lithuanian SSR government in convening the congress and the demands that were placed by some of the congress delegates on the Soviet Lithuanian government. During the congress, some of the demands raised by the delegates had a clear national orientation and testified to the importance in the minds of the delegates of

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rumors began to be spread that the mobilization was just an excuse to transport Lithuanians to Siberia. LYA, f.1771, ap.7, b.85, 40. Also see Vytautas Tininis, *Prievartinė mobilizacija į raudonąją armiją* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2014), 47.

24 Laurinavičius, “Vvodnaya statya,” 43.

25 Šadžius, “VKP (b) CK Lietuvos biuro veikla,” 247–49.

26 From July 17, 1945 until the beginning of September 1945 about 4,500 persons were deported. Arvydas Anušauskas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas 1940–1958 metais* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), 320–21, 328–29.

27 From the summer of 1944 until the spring of 1945 more than 6,000 officials, most of them Russians, were sent to Lithuania, by CPSU. Pocius, *Kita mėnulio pusė*, 54.

28 The course of the congress was well publicized at the time in the official central press in the newspaper *Tiesa* (*Truth*) of the LCP CC, and *Tarybų Lietuva* (*Soviet Lithuania*) of the Lithuanian SSR Supreme Council presidium. Most of the speeches of the delegates and translations of the speeches into Russian are stored in the Vilnius County Archive (VAA). The agency reports of security officials and the accounts of the congress proceedings are stored in Lithuania’s Special Archive (LYA). Some of the material of the congress is stored in the *Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj archiv socialno-politicheskoj istorii* (RGASPI) [Russian State Archive of Socio-political History].

the goal of autonomy, albeit within the framework of the Soviet system. On the other hand, the policies of the government and the Moscow emissaries were increasingly coercive and were increasingly focused on centralization and unification.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Organization of the Congress and the Government's Goals*

Judging from the letter of bureau head M. Suslov to CPSU CC Secretary G. Malenkov, the idea of convening the congress of the intelligentsia arose in the spring of 1945. According to Suslov, the purpose of the congress was to expand “our” influence on the intelligentsia and to acquaint the intelligentsia with the achievements of the Soviet government.<sup>30</sup> In general, formally, the congress of intellectuals was not a special event, and essentially it illustrated clearly the specifics of the Stalinist political system. The government would organize similar events, “congresses,” in the hopes of acquiring the support of various social groups and thus buttressing its legitimacy. In Lithuania in the first half of the same year, congresses of “labor peasants” and trade unions were held.

And yet, this congress was special for two important reasons: first, it was a congress of Lithuanian intelligentsia in Vilnius; second, for the Soviet Lithuanian government, the support of Lithuania’s intellectuals, especially the older generation of the intelligentsia, which had taken formed “in bourgeois Lithuania,” was particularly significant. Given the ever growing partisan movement and the complicated economic and social situation, nothing else could have done more to legitimize the government of Soviet Lithuania than the active “involvement in the construction of socialism” of the intellectuals, especially those who were members of the cultural elite.

The government therefore prepared seriously for the congress. The organization of the congress cost about 200,000 rubles. The participants were well fed. They were given cards with which they were able to purchase 500

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29 The congress of intelligentsia was not discussed in Lithuanian historiography. Only Vytautas Tininis mentioned the event. He also published a few archival documents related to the congress. See Vytautas Tininis, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944–1953/The Crimes of the Communist Regime in Lithuania in 1944–1953* (Vilnius: Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos karo akademija, 2003), 13–14, 135–45.

30 Suslov also asked that various cultural activists be sent to Lithuania with lectures. “Suslovo’s letter to Malenkov,” May 22, 1945, RGASPI, f.597 [Communist Party of Soviet Union Lithuanian Bureau], op.1, d.16, 50.

rubles-worth of goods.<sup>31</sup> (However, according to the Lithuanian SSR NKGB Commissar Aleksandras Gudaitis-Guzevičius, the goods were of poor quality and the logistics were poorly organized.)<sup>32</sup> After the meetings, a cultural program was organized: there were lectures and performances, including even a ballet from Moscow. A total of about 540 delegates and 250 guests came to the congress. (According to the initial plans, there would have been 600 delegates and 300 guests.) Some guests came from Moscow, including Mikhail Jovchuk, who served as deputy head of the CPSU CC propaganda and agitation department, several employees of the CPSU CC apparatus and several members of the Academy of Sciences.

The government took care of more than just the everyday lives of the delegates. Judging from the reports of Commissar A. Guzevičius, 64 agents “observed” the events of the congress and another 25 NKGB workers were sent as “service agents.”<sup>33</sup> Over the course of the whole congress, security officials “detected” 27 “anti-Soviet elements,” two of whom were arrested. According to Guzevičius, the majority of the delegates (teachers, principals, physicians, agronomists, surveyors, etc.) were from rural areas, and they were “chosen” by the local government and party committees.<sup>34</sup> However, the representatives of the cultural elite (writers, directors, actors) and the academic elite (high school principals, professors), who played the most important roles in the congress (they were the main speakers), were invited to the congress. Some of them, for instance Vilnius Academy of Arts professor Justinas Vienožinskis, declined to participate in it.<sup>35</sup> There were others who wanted to participate, but for one reason or another could not.<sup>36</sup>

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31 In the official party newspaper *Tiesa*, even a feuilleton was printed about the routine of the delegates. It was also argued that the statements of those arriving from the provinces were boring and that they repeated one another. Liūnė Janušytė, “Ką kalba delegatai,” *Tiesa*, July 12, 1945, no. 161.

32 “Aleksandras Guzevičius report to the USSR NKGB deputy commissar Amajak Kobulov,” July 13, 1945, LYA, f.K41 [State Security Committee of the Lithuanian SSR (NKGB-MGB-KGB), 2 directorate], ap.1, b.163, 197–98.

33 “Guzevičiaus report to Kobulov,” draft, 1945, LYA, f.K41, ap.1, b.163, 152.

34 “Guzevičiaus report to Kobulovui,” draft, 1945, 149.

35 Security officials recorded on such “anti-Soviet” statement by Vienožinskis: “I do not need a ticket to the congress, I’m not an ass, I cannot be bought.” “Report of the head of the second department LSSR NKGB Izotov,” July 10, 1945, LYA, f.K41, ap.1, b.163, 171.

36 Writer Sofija Kymantaitė – Čiurlionienė in a letter to Kostas Korsakas, on 22 July 1945, wrote: “I hear that the Congress was particularly interesting, for myself, as a writer it is especially important to observe such historical moments, but you can see what kind of a pilot I am now.” The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Manuscript Library (LLITI BR), f.1-4739 [Writers and linguists], no pages.

The question arises whether the government in any way attempted to influence the speakers or the statements they made, i.e. to censor them in advance. I would dare to say that it did not. The content of the speeches the texts of which have survived, the reactions of the participants, and the discussions that were held during the congress testify that the government avoided direct interference or pressure.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, it should also be noted that the information in the press about the congress was presented in “doses”: the full speeches of Lithuanian SSR Supreme Presidium Chairman J. Paleckis and the LCP CC Secretary A. Sniečkus were published. The speeches (there were about 40) of the delegates were summarized or paraphrased, but in general those that were particularly critical with regards to the government were not mentioned. Basing his conclusions on the reports of agents, Guzevičius informed USSR NKGB Deputy Commissar Amajak Kobulov that the participants had the impression that they enjoyed complete freedom of speech. Some of the participants were pleasantly surprised. According to the Lithuanian SSR Security Commissar, there were some participants who thought that they would not be allowed to speak freely. Indeed they feared that they would be arrested and deported to Siberia. Among the arrivals from the rural areas such rumors were especially prevalent.<sup>38</sup>

I mentioned that the congress can be called a *congress of Lithuanian intelligentsia* in Vilnius. I failed to find data on the national composition of the congress participants. Probably no such data were recorded. The press noted that the intellectuals arrived in Vilnius from “all corners” of Lithuania, however, I would guess that the overwhelming majority of them were Lithuanians, i.e. representatives of the titular nation. So my guess regarding the informal nature of the congress, as it was perceived by most members of the congress, was based on several assumptions: first, almost all the speakers were Lithuanians.<sup>39</sup> Prominent representatives of the interwar Lithuanian intelligentsia took part in the congress and delivered speeches.<sup>40</sup> Only a few of them were members of the Communist Party. The famous Lithuanian opera singer Kipras Petrauskas was “elected to the presidium” of the congress. Second, the report of Paleckis,

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37 Suslov, head of Lithuanian bureau, participated in the work of the congress, but he did not speak.

38 “Guzevičius report to Kobulov,” draft, 1945, 151.

39 Only a few non-Lithuanians spoke up at the congress: Jewish writer Jacob Josadė and a visitor from Moscow, the previously mentioned Jovchuk.

40 Theatre director Borisas Dauguvietis, physician and professor Jonas Kairiūkštis, physicist professor Juozas Matulis, Vilnius university rector professor Kazimieras Bieliukas, physician professor Pranas Mažylis, director Aleksandras Kupstas, biologist professor Jonas Dagys, actress M. Mironaitė, painter V. Jurkūnas, Kaunas university vice-rector professor J. Kupčinskas, former diplomat and writer Karolis Vairas-

although formally entitled “The Current Moment and the Challenges for the Intelligentsia of Soviet Lithuania,” also contained a subsection with the revealing title “The Road of the Lithuanian Intelligentsia” (in other words the title emphasized the national belonging of the intelligentsia, an assertion which was at odds with the Marxist principle of internationalism); third, several of the delegates in their statements at the congress compared the gathering with the Great Seimas of Vilnius in 1905, at which “autonomy for ethnographic Lithuania with Vilnius was demanded from the czarist Russian government.”<sup>41</sup> Of course, such associations were not reflected in the official press. Indeed, in his introductory speech Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars Mečislovas Gedvilas even declared that the congress was the first such event in the history of Lithuania.

The objectives of the government were formulated in several editorial articles of *Tiesa* (*Truth*) and *Tarybų Lietuva* (*Soviet Lithuania*) and the statements made by Lithuanian SSR Supreme Council Presidium Chairman Paleckis at the congress. The articles published in the newspapers stressed the progressive role of the intelligentsia in history and also noted that the “most prominent part of the [Lithuanian] intelligentsia remained loyal to the people.” There was also talk about the “mission” of the intelligentsia, which was to educate in the “spirit of Soviet patriotism,” to fight against “bourgeois nationalist ideology,” to promote the achievements of other Soviet republics, and to develop national culture (“national in form, socialist in content”). In order to carry out such a mission, the authors of the editorial articles asserted, it was necessary for the Lithuanian intelligentsia to “arm themselves with the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism,” to engage actively in the fight against bourgeois nationalism and generally to follow the principles of socialism.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the principles of the cooperation of Soviet Lithuania and the intelligentsia were formulated: the intelligentsia acknowledges and accepts the “principles of socialism” and relies on the Marxist-Leninist worldview, while the Soviet Lithuanian government takes care of national culture, the content of which, of course, had to be socialist.

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Račkauskas, rector of the Academy of Agriculture Matas Mickis, writers Julius Būtėnas, Balys Sruoga, Ieva Simonaitytė, Aantanas Vienuolis (Žukauskas), professor Viktoras Ruokis, astronomer professor P. Slavėnas, composer B. Dvarionas, professor J. Vabalas-Gudaitis, professor J. Laužikas.

41 For more see Egidijus Motieka, “Didysis Vilniaus seimas,” in *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, vol. 11 (Vilnius: Saulabrolis, 1996.)

42 “Garbingi mūsų inteligentų uždaviniai,” *Tiesa*, July 10, 1945, no. 159; “Žengti išvien su visa darbo liaudimi,” *Tarybų Lietuva*, July 12, 1945, 153.

A similar ideas was proclaimed by Justas Paleckis on the first day of the congress. Lithuanian historians have noted that among other leaders of the Lithuanian Communist Party Paleckis was distinguished not only for his “liberalism,” but also as someone who “quite often voiced his dissatisfaction with the policy of Russification,” and in general was “a Communist of national consciousness.”<sup>43</sup> Paleckis’ turn towards “national communism” is confirmed by “Lietuvos laisvos darbo respublikos kūrimo programa” (A Program for the Creation of Lithuania as a Republic of Free Labor), which he wrote as early as the autumn of 1939. The program encourages the fairly radical transformation of the authoritarian political system, but it does not call for sovietization; on the other hand, it speaks not so much on the behalf of the Lithuanian nation, but rather on behalf of the Lithuanian people. In other words, it is about a community that is defined more by class considerations than national sentiments; from the geopolitical point of view, the future Lithuania as a republic of labor was projected by Paleckis as a protectorate of the USSR.<sup>44</sup> In fact, this political program matched the attitudes of the People’s Front that were promoted and actively supported by Moscow and the Comintern.

In the first half of 1940s, Paleckis was balancing between attitudes characteristic of Central European national communism and national bolshevism. He tried to emphasize the specifics of the historical development of Lithuania and its differences from other Soviet republics, in which the formation of the Soviet regime had begun earlier. According to him, the tradition of statehood made Lithuania a unique republic, and this circumstance should be taken into account in the transformation of Lithuania into a soviet. Paleckis was convinced that in order to make soviet authority more attractive to the Lithuanians, it would be necessary to cooperate with the nation’s cultural elite, in other words

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43 Vytautas Tininis, *Sovietinė Lietuva ir jos veikėjai* (Vilnius: Enciklopedija, 1994), 214–15; Liudas Truska, *Lietuva 1938–1953 metais* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1995), 134–35; Vanda Kašauskienė, *Istorijos spąstuose. Justo Paleckio gyvenimo ir veiklos bruožai 1899–1980* (Vilnius: Gairės, 2014), 497–504. In 1950, leaders of the LCP discussed the question of how to organize education in Polish-populated districts of east Lithuania. In the opinion of Paleckis and Gedvilas, after the repatriation of the Poles, the Poles who remained in the Vilnius region were just Polonized Lithuanians and their further Polonization through the development of education in Polish would not have been purposeful. The party discussions were won by Sniečkus and his supporters, and practical politics was based on the principle of “proletarian internationalism.” See Vitalija Stravinskienė, “Lietuvių ir lenkų santykiai Rytų ir Pietryčių Lietuvoje: 1944 m. antra pusė–1953 m.,” *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis, 2007 metai*, 2 (2008): 95–96; Arūnas Streikus, “Sovietinio režimo pastangos pakeisti Lietuvos gyventojų tautinį identitetą,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 1 (2007): 22–23; Jonas Rudokas, “Tarybinė Vilnius polonizacija 1950–1956 metais,” *Gairės*, 7 (2011): 17–18;

44 Justas Paleckis, *Ieškojome tikerų kelių* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1987), 134–36.

the interwar Lithuanian intelligentsia, and to promote the use of Lithuanian in public life. Also, Paleckis stressed the importance of “national revival,” and the most famous representatives of this revival, Jonas Basanavičius and Vincas Kudirka, for Soviet Lithuanian culture. Of course according to him, the “real liberation” of the Lithuanian nation from national oppression was crowned with the establishment of the Soviet government in Lithuania. Finally, Paleckis tried to incorporate national elements into the system of symbols of Soviet Lithuania. He actively supported the idea of making the hymn of the Lithuanian Republic, Kudirkas’ “National song,” the hymn of Soviet Lithuania. The Lithuanization of the symbols of Soviet power, must have hoped, would strengthen the legitimacy of the Communist government.<sup>45</sup>

So in his speech, Paleckis discussed the challenges that faced the Soviet Lithuanian intelligentsia. Essentially, he repeated what had already been written in the press, though he discussed the challenges that faced each group of intellectuals in greater detail. He mentioned the necessity, for the intelligentsia, of studying Marxism (he contended that the Lithuanian intellectual would find all the answers to his doubts in “the writings of the great sages of socialism from Marx to Stalin”). He drew particular emphasis to the importance of the historical relationship with Russia, stressing the positive impact of Russia’s civilization on Lithuania (communist Russia had liberated Lithuania from the yoke of czarism, returned Vilnius, and so on). He also explained the necessity of fighting against “bourgeois nationalists,” “Hitler’s laborers,” He ended the speech with the cry “Long live the great leader and teacher, comrade Stalin!” According to what was written in the press, the hall was filled with “thunderous applause.” So for the time, it was a fairly ordinary, orthodox speech.

However, in the report there was a part entitled “The Road of the Lithuanian Intelligentsia,” and this section could hardly be called orthodox.<sup>46</sup> It was an obvious reference to the national aspirations of Lithuanian intellectuals. In a speech by a spokesman for Marxism–Leninism, this, of course, was peculiar. In this part of the speech, Paleckis tried to combine two traditions that were, in his view, characteristic of the Lithuanian national movement: the struggle for social

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45 Idem, *Pergalės salūntas* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1985), 105. In summer 1944, the CC of LCP decided “to turn the national song [the hymn of Lithuanian Republic] into an instrument which could strengthen the soviet government.” Проект постановления к вопросу о гимне. Постановление ЦК КП (б) Литвы [Central Committee of LCP: the question of anthem, project and resolution], 1944 06 21, LYA, f.1771, ap.7, b.267, 41. The National song was formally the hymn of Soviet Lithuania till 1950.

46 *Tiesa*, July 18, 1945, no. 166.

liberation and the struggle for national liberation. He asserted that the struggle for Lithuanian “national liberation” “coincided” with the solution to the social question, i.e. the struggle of the peasant against the landlord. In that struggle “from the depths of the common people” there arose the “new Lithuanian intelligentsia,” who carried out “the work of awakening Lithuanian nation.” According to Paleckis two most prominent activists represented the “new Lithuanian intelligentsia”: Vincas Kudirka (the founder of illegal Lithuanian paper *Aušra* (*The Dawn*) and composer of anthem of Lithuanian Republic) and Vincas Mickevičius-Kapsukas (the founder of Lithuanian Communist Party.) So they both began the fight “for real Lithuanian folk matters, liberation from the yoke of czarism, as well as rights and land,” Paleckis explained.

In the end, according to Paleckis, the Soviet government completed the “liberation of the Lithuanian nation.” The interwar “bourgeois Lithuania” did not meet the “progressive ideals of the national movement,” and in an attempt to emphasize the idea to the people assembled, he cited a stanza by famous Lithuanian poet and priest Maironis: “Lithuania land of heroes / We have sung from long ago; But from that greatness only / the devils reap their benefits.” This organic interpretation of the nation’s history, according to which national liberation was naturally combined with the “people’s” struggle for social rights, is characteristic, according to some researchers, of national communism.<sup>47</sup> This was an effort to demonstrate that the Soviet system was “compatible” with national ideals.

Of course, in Paleckis’ speech there were still a few important aspects. One of the parts of the speech was entitled “Bourgeois nationalists—Hitler’s laborers.” In this section, Paleckis argued that the armed underground had been engendered by the Nazi occupation and ultimately had the same goals, namely to destroy the Lithuanian nation. In his assessment, it was therefore, necessary to fight against it, and it was important for the intelligentsia to enter into this fight. And there was another important idea in the speech that is very often found in the official discourse, namely the necessity of strengthening ties and friendship with the Russian people. According to Paleckis, the Russian people and their Red Army had rescued the Lithuanian nation from Nazi extermination. Furthermore, the Lithuanian and Russian nations were bound by old “historical ties.” Both nations had long fought against the Germans invaders. According to Paleckis,

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47 Yannis Sygkelos, “The National Discourse of the Bulgarian Communist Party on National Anniversaries and Commemorations (1944–1948),” *Nationalities Papers* 37, no. 4 (2009): 426.

“Mindaugas signed a treaty with Aleksandr Nevsky against the Teutonic knights, and together they crushed them.” The same event occurred “at Žalgiris,” where the Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic knights with the help of the Russians. The fight of the Russian populists against czarism had a significant impact on the Lithuanian national movement. Their influence had also been important in the “progressive *Varpas* movement” begun by V. Kudirka. Finally, the struggle of the Russian proletariat had “awoken” Lithuania’s workers and peasants. So, Paleckis tried in every way to emphasize the progressive civilizing influence of the Russian nation: it was thanks to the Russian people that the Lithuanians freed themselves from the clutches of czarism and Vilnius was returned to the Lithuanians, etc. Russian culture was characterized as “humane,” a refreshing source that “also refreshes the culture of our nation,” as the presidium chairman explained to those assembled.

Moscow began to promote very actively the idea of the common battle of the Slavic nations against German expansion to the east during the war. This pan-Slavic doctrine and pan-Slavic policies had some foundation. The victims of German aggression were largely Slavic states and nations. On the other hand, the idea of Slavic unity did not rule out the special role of the Russian nation (the Soviet Union) in the Slavic world.<sup>48</sup> Of course, it should be noted that in the 1930s some political groups in Lithuania, such as the Young Peasant Populists, whose leader at that time was Paleckis, regarded the Soviet Union and the Russian people as the main ally of the Lithuanian nation in the fight against the “aggressiveness of the Germans.”<sup>49</sup>

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48 Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, 210; Geoffrey Hosking, *Rulers and Victims. The Russians in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge–London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 207–09.

49 The Young Peasant Populists maintained close ties with the LCP, and some were members of the Communist party. Some of the Young Peasant Populists, such as Paleckis, Gedvilas, Vaišnoras, Gregorauskas, Kežinaitis, Drobnys and others, pursued careers in Soviet Lithuania. Of course, most of them were gradually pushed out from active political life and a few faced measures of active repression. Juozas Vaišnoras, “Memories about People’s Front” (manuscript), 1966, LYA, f. 3377 [CC LCP Institute of Marxism–Leninism] ap.46, b.964, 1320. Mindaugas Tamošaitis, “Justas Paleckis ir jaunieji valstiečiai liaudininkai,” *Vilniaus istorijos metraštis* (Vilnius: VPI, 2007), 137–60.

### *Standpoints of the Congress Delegates*

Paleckis' programmatic speech became a subject of debate among the delegates. Virtually all of the speakers responded to it directly or indirectly.<sup>50</sup> How did members of the congress, the delegates (the Lithuanian intelligentsia), respond to the speech, and, more generally, to what extent did they fulfill the government's wishes? Judging from the available archival data, one can assert, of course, somewhat schematically, that among the intellectuals two main provisions dominated. Some of the delegates, characterizing socialism as a "global development trend" that guaranteed social progress and enabled the development of the national aspirations of the Lithuanians, endorsed and supported the "path of the development" of socialist Lithuania. Of course, they also saw the system's imperfections and threats to national sovereignty, and they spoke about this publicly. After World War II, there were likeminded intellectuals in other countries, apart from Lithuania. Second, some of the intellectuals present at the congress were skeptical with regards to Soviet Lithuania or even rejected Soviet Lithuania in principle. They identified the Soviet government with Russification, and thought that Russification was inevitable and the sovereignty of the Lithuanian SSR was an illusion. Of course, they could not express themselves publicly, but security officials made notes regarding such non-public comments in the corridors of the congress.

What were these comments? Some members of the congress were concerned less with Paleckis's speech and more with the question of whether an independent Lithuania would be "restored." For some, it seemed that the "question of Lithuania" should finally be resolved at the "conference of the heads of three countries." The director of the Raseiniai high school Karumas, who was already being observed by security forces "as a nationalist," thought this way. In the opinion of agronomist Baltušnikas, "the word (of Paleckis) will not help anything, the English and American tanks will decide."<sup>51</sup> Another participant doubted whether Paleckis would be able "to resist Moscow's will." Someone called the speech by Paleckis a sermon that had little to do with reality.<sup>52</sup> During the congress, professor and composer Balys Dvarionas, who

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50 The security officials in their reports very carefully recorded the non-public negative and positive comments about the Paleckis' speech and came to the conclusion that the majority of the delegates reacted to the speech positively. Some even praised it. "Guzevičius report to Kobulov," a draft, 1945, 157.

51 "Guzevičius report to Kobulov," a draft, 1945, 152–53.

52 "Guzevičius report to Justui Paleckiuui," July 12, 1945 LYA, f.K41, ap.1, b.163, 176–77.

in 1949 was awarded the Stalin Prize of the first degree and in 1950 wrote music for the Lithuanian SSR anthem, tried to comfort himself: “I want to flee from Lithuania, now it is not Lithuania here, but Russia,” and the University of Vilnius professor Gudaitis resented that those who had fought against the Fascists were being taken to Siberia.<sup>53</sup> Writer A. Žukauskas mentioned the difficult plight of the peasants, who were oppressed both by the “bandits and the NKVD punishments.”<sup>54</sup> Delegates from Telšiai and Kaunas recounted the rumors according to which at the end of the congress the government would force the participants to sign an appeal and then would deport them to Siberia. Overall, the delegates from the provinces feared what would happen to them when they returned home. Apparently, they feared reprisals from the partisans.

And how were the sentiments of support for the Lithuanian nation Lithuanian national autonomy expressed at the congress? One of the first speakers, professor Jonas Kairiūkštis (a physician, then non-party), approved of Paleckis’ views and invited the congress participants to “adopt and understand” the socialist system: “one can move forward only when you are convinced that the government will be on duty guarding national interests, only then are you calm for the happy future of the nation.” He continued: “We intellectuals ... patriots of our country, we love the antiquity of our land, the language, we love our nation’s traditions and culture.” (Incidentally, in the LCP official newspaper *Tiesa*, where the speech of Kairiūkštis was published, the passages cited here were omitted.) The professor concluded his speech by saying that “in socialism the loss of national identity does not threaten the Lithuanians.”<sup>55</sup> I think that the principle of mutual cooperation between the intelligentsia and the Soviet government was formed as early as the very beginning of the congress: a government that would take care of the development of national Lithuanian culture was considered worthy of support. Similar thoughts and ideas were expressed by other delegates. Some drew more emphasis to the advantages of socialism and the prospects it would create (such as deputy rector of Vilnius University, professor of physics and chemistry Juozas Matulis, who became an LCP member in 1950). This motif was repeated in the reports of many speakers. Others stressed concern about the necessity of the culture of the Lithuanian nation, such as Borisas Dauguvietis (LSSR senior director of the theater, non-

53 “Guzevičius report to Kobulov,” a draft, 1945, 152–53. “Guzevičius report to Kobulov,” July 14 193–94.

54 “Report of the head of second department LSSR NKGB Izotov,” 170.

55 “Kairiūkštis speech,” VAA, f.761 [The Executive Committee of Vilnius city], ap.9, b.35, 15.

party). Recently returned from a Nazi concentration camp, writer Balys Sruoga addressed those assembled: “with the deepest respect and love I welcome every creative effort, every labor, great or small, that refreshes our land.”<sup>56</sup> The writer thanked the party and the government for having rescued him, which is entirely understandable.<sup>57</sup>

However, the speeches of several people at the congress stood out specifically because of their national overtones and their critical attitudes towards the authorities. The speech of botanist and Vilnius University professor Jonas Dagys was remarkable in this regard (in *Tiesa* and *Tarybų Lietuva* there was only brief mention of his speech.) First, Dagys talked about the need to bring members of the Lithuanian intelligentsia who “had been shipped from Lithuania to various corners of the USSR, Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1941” back to Lithuania.<sup>58</sup> Although according to the professor, that had been merely a precautionary measure, “it was carried out in haste and therefore many mistakes were made.” It was necessary to rectify these errors, he declared. Therefore, the speaker appealed to the leaders of the Lithuanian SSR to “undertake measures and create conditions for the Lithuanian intellectuals to return to their homeland.” (In the archival transcript of the speech, after this passage one finds the words “fierce applause.”<sup>59</sup>) He also criticized NKVD Commissar Juozas Bartašiūnas for his article in *Tiesa*.<sup>60</sup> According to Dagys, in the article commissar used “many kinds of threats and harsh words.” Such words only dissuaded those who wanted to get out of the forest, and after all, one found not only criminals in the woods, but also people who wanted to avoid mobilization. In conclusion, Dagys noted that one should go to socialism not only armored

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56 “Sruoga speech,” typewriting, LLTI BR, f.1-5741 [Writers and linguists], 1–2.

57 However, in 1946 the writers congress Sruoga was harshly criticized by the LCP bureau member Kazys Preikšas. Preikšas accused the writer of continuing to be under the influence of “bourgeois culture” and representing a mentality that was “alien to the Soviet way of life.” The novel *Forest of Gods*, in which Sruoga portrayed the lives of inmates in the Nazi concentration camps, was banned from publication. *Už tarybinę lietuvių literatūrą. Lietuvos TSR tarybinių rašytojų susirinkimo, įvykusio 1946 m., medžiaga* (Vilnius: Grožinės literatūros leidykla, 1947), 22–23.

58 “Dagys speech,” VAA, f.761, ap.9, b.35, 61.

59 Ibid., 62.

60 The article by Bartašiūnas entitled “We will pull out at the roots the most wicked enemies of the Lithuanian nation—the Lithuanian German nationalists.” In the article, the commissar reminded his readers that the government amnesty for “members of gangs” was still valid: those who surrendered “will be allowed to atone for their serious crimes.” Those who did not surrender, according to the commissar, could expect “fierce punishment.” Also, anyone who helped the “bandits” would be punished “with all the severity of Soviet laws.” *Tiesa*, May 25, 1945, no. 120.

in the science of Marxism, but also “with love and nurture.” It is clear the speech raised uncomfortable questions for the government. According to the accounts of the security officials, the speech was actively discussed behind the scenes of the congress. There were some who thought that the author would be punished one way or another. At the same time, the security officials noted that the professor’s ideas had far more supporters, and “only a very small percentage disagreed.”<sup>61</sup> At the convention, only People’s Commissar of Education Juozas Žiugžda responded publicly to Dagys’ speech. (Understandably, in the pages of the newspapers, this criticism of the speech also was not published, although the greater part of the Commissar’s speech was printed.) Žiugžda attacked Dagys, accusing him of not knowing the theory and practice of Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism and contending that it was inappropriate for the professor to talk from “the venerable rostrum about what he himself does not understand.”<sup>62</sup>

The national aspirations were highlighted even more strongly in the speech by Agriculture Academy Rector Matas Mickis (in 1940–1941, he served as minister of agriculture in the so-called People’s government, and he joined the party in 1949). I will offer more extensive citations from his speech because it was not published in the press. According to the rector, Lithuanians were a small nation. “Various invaders lay claim to its sovereignty”: Polish landlords, Germans, czarist Russia, which not only sought to enslave, but also took away the press.<sup>63</sup> However, the “small nation” also wanted to be free. It wanted to preserve its culture and language. On the other hand, Mickis pointed out, Lithuanians had a “great history.” And this showed that Lithuanians were a “mature nation,” with their own national character and customs, which they valued, and they were no less proud of these customs than large nations were of theirs.<sup>64</sup>

Like the Russians, Mickis continued, the Lithuanian nation had many heroes, who nurtured its statehood. They know what Vytautas the Great, a hero of our nation, had given them. No one can deny the significance of his feats. He had been victorious at Žalgiris, and he had stopped the German onslaught from the West. He made a contribution to the history of mankind. V. Kudirka also gave a lot to the nation. (According to Mickis, Stalin was enthralled by the national anthem of Kudirka, by its dignity and beauty.)

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61 “Guzevičiaus report to Kobulov,” July 14, 1945, 80.

62 Guzevičius called the statement of Žiugžda memorable.

63 “Mickis speech,” VAA, f.761, ap.9, b.35, 72.

64 *Ibid.*, 73.

He also emphasized in his speech that for a small nation the “true road” is the socialist path: “we Lithuanians do not want anything more than to be equal, not to be thrown in the shade, and only the socialist system provides such conditions.” The Soviet system, the professor said, also can solve the national question: “The essence of socialism is that it allows all nations to live their cultural lives freely.”<sup>65</sup>

However, according to Mickis the practices of socialism do not always conform to the ideas proclaimed. In rural areas, “there was a lot of tactlessness and arbitrariness” from the Soviet administration. Arrivals from other republics, not knowing the Lithuanian language, insulted it. There were numerous institutions in which representatives and functionaries could not understand Lithuanian. All this was vexing to Lithuanians, Mickis explained. As a result, in his opinion, the fear of Russification arose. As an example, Mickis pointed out the Utena district policeman, who mocked the Lithuanian language. Below I will quote an extract from the archival copy of the speech: “He [the policeman] is the same kind of *black hundred* of whom there were many in the times of the czar. (*applause*) The government will throw such refuse out of our republic. (*applause*) They are not only enemies of our nation, but also enemies of socialism. (*applause*) The militiaman visits a peasant and tells him to open his suitcases... [he is robbing – *author’s comment*] (*applause*)”<sup>66</sup> If you want socialism, Mickis ended his speech, you yourself must set an example.<sup>67</sup>

The national sentiments of the intelligentsia found expression in other forms in the congress. Even though at the very beginning of the congress Gedvilas had stated that it was the first congress of its kind, in their speeches several delegates publicly recalled the Vilnius Seimas, in which Lithuanians raised the political demand for the first time: “autonomy for ethnographic Lithuania, with the capital Vilnius.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, the speakers emphasized the historic link between the Lithuanian SSR congress of the intelligentsia and the Great Seimas of Vilnius.

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65 Ibid., 73.

66 Ibid., 76–77.

67 Neither Dagys nor Mickis was persecuted because of the speeches they held at the congress. (At the time, Dagys was under observation as “a nationalist” by the intelligence forces. See Tininis, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944–1953/The Crimes of the Communist Regime in Lithuania*, 14.) However, later both of them experienced some pressure. In 1948, Dagys was severely criticized as the author of the handbook and was removed from his position as head of the Department of Plant Anatomy and Physiology at Vilnius University. In 1953, he was again appointed to this position, which he held until 1977. A. Merkys, “On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Professor Jonas Dagys.” *Biologija*, 53, no. 2 (2007): 3.

68 Motieka, “Didysis Vilniaus seimas,” 297.

(It is understandable that neither in *Tiesa* nor in *Tarybų Lietuva* were there any references to the Great Seimas of Vilnius.) Professor Pranas Mažylis (a member of the interwar Social Democratic Party and member of the Academy as of 1946) recalled that in the same hall in 1905 there had been “a large meeting of Lithuania’s peasants, workers and intellectuals, usually called the Great Seimas of Vilnius.”<sup>69</sup> He himself had participated in it, and the Seimas had had a “significant impact on the revolution.” Writer Karolis Račkauskas-Vairas also remembered the Seimas. According to him, it had been a congress of “Lithuanian peasants,” which had “pushed our people,” shaken the nation out of apathy, and shown it a new path.<sup>70</sup>

A few more meaningful facts merit mention that testify to the national ambitions of a sufficiently large number of the participants in the congress. These facts again exemplify how on some issues the approaches of the LSSR government and the intelligentsia, which promoted the “socialist road” but also emphasized the importance of the national factor, were different. Overall, it could be argued that part of the Lithuanian intelligentsia certainly supported the model of national communism. On the last day of the convention, after a sufficiently orthodox speech by A. Sniečkus, the text of an appeal to Lithuania’s intelligentsia was discussed.<sup>71</sup> The literary critic Kostas Korsakas presented it to the congress. In the hall discussions arose on the text of the appeal and various additions were suggested.<sup>72</sup> Academician Matulis, discussing the tasks of the intelligentsia, suggested adding “the Lithuanianization of Vilnius” to the appeal. According to him, the citizens of Poland were departing and Vilnius remained “half-empty.”<sup>73</sup> He stressed the important of pursuing the Lithuanianization of Vilnius. This was met with “long applause.” (According to Matulis, “Lithuanianization” was equally important in the case of Klaipėda, the major port city of Lithuania.) There were other proposals, including one regarding the return from the USSR to Lithuania of all Lithuanian intellectuals so that they could carry out restoration work in the homeland (this was also followed by thunderous applause). It is likely that the government did not

69 “Mažylis speech,” VAA, f.761, ap.9, b.35, 54.

70 “Račkauskas speech,” VAA, f.761, ap.9, b.35, 124.

71 “Pirmojo tarybų Lietuvos inteligentijos suvažiavimo Kreipimasis į visus tarybų Lietuvos inteligentus,” *Tiesa*, July 26, 1945, no. 172.

72 “The discussion of the appeal,” VAA, f.761, ap.9, b.35, 176–77.

73 On 22 September 1944, the LSSR government and representatives of Poland’s national liberation committee signed an agreement on the repatriation of people. For more information, see Vitalija Stravinskienė, *Tarų gimtinės ir tėvynės. Lietuvos SSR gyventojų repatriacija į Lenkiją* (Vilnius: LII, 2011), 95–100.

expect such a proposal to be made. Council of People's Commissars Chairman M. Gedvilas, who was chairing the meeting, agreed to include the provision concerning the Lithuanianization of Vilnius in the appeal. Regarding the second proposal, he contended that it would be meaningless, since the government was already "making every effort to return them [the intellectuals]." In the end, the delegates scrapped this point.

The printed message in the official press on the work of the last day and the text of the appeal<sup>74</sup> differed from the text agreed on by the Congress delegates and approved by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. In the official accounts in the press, there was no mention of making Vilnius more "Lithuanian," a goal that was dear to the Lithuanian intellectuals who were willing to cooperate with the Soviet government. Rather, there were only references to the importance of the "reconstruction and accommodation" of Vilnius.

### *Conclusions*

First, the government of Soviet Lithuania, by organizing the congress, sought to draw the intellectuals into the "construction" of the socialist system and the "fight against bourgeois nationalists." The express approval of the intelligentsia for Soviet policies would have served the legitimization of the government. This was especially important, as the partisan movement was growing stronger. One should note that there were signs of such approval: the appeal to the intelligentsia of Soviet Lithuania was adopted, with greetings sent to Stalin. Second, the participants in the congress, the Lithuanian intelligentsia, the creative elite, in general agreed to support the "construction" of socialism under the condition that Lithuanian culture would be nurtured and favored. Not coincidentally, the congress proclaimed the necessity of making Vilnius, the old, traditional capital of Lithuania, "Lithuanian." This goal was shared by various groups of intellectuals. Third, one can assume that some of the members of the leadership of the Lithuanian SSR thought that it would be possible to strike a deal with the "old" Lithuanian intelligentsia, which had taken form "in bourgeois Lithuania." The government would satisfy the most important (national) expectations of the intelligentsia, while the intelligentsia would offer support for the government's policies. Unfortunately, while Lithuania's Communists may have entertained such visions, they were never realized in practice. Moscow began to force Lithuania's

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74 *Tiesa*, July 15, 1945, no. 164.

Sovietization. Not coincidentally, visitors from Moscow who observed the congress offered critical assessments of its results.<sup>75</sup> Finally, if during the summer of 1945 the policies of the Soviet Lithuanian government were dominated by the spirit of national bolshevism, for some of Lithuania's intellectuals, this was understood as national communism. This vision of a form of communism that would be at least in part a realization of national autonomy was to prove fleeting.

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75 In the report that was submitted to G. Malenkov, the controllers from the CPSU apparatus noted that the Congress of the intelligentsia was held late, that the LCP leaders could not get a handle on the moods of the intellectuals, and finally that during the Congress hostile statements were made. *SSSR i Litva v gody vtoroj mirovoj voiny, Sbornik dokumentov*, ed. A. Kasparavičius, Č. Laurinavičius, and N. Lebedeva, vol. 2 (Vilnius: LII, 2012), 891. In August, just after the Congress, Gudaitis-Guzevičius was removed from his office. According to the confidential report, he was dismissed because of his “incompetence” and “ineffectiveness” in the fight against the “Lithuanian national underground.” (See Vytautas Tininis, *Sovietinė Lietuva ir jos veikėjai* (Vilnius: Enciklopedija, 1994), 183–84.) He was appointed the head of the Committee of Culture and Education in 1945. He later served as the head of the State Publishing House, and from 1953 until 1957 he was the Minister of Culture.

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