

VIRGINIJA JURĖNIENĖ

**LITHUANIAN FAMILY –  
A HEARTH OF THE UNARMED RESISTANCE  
AGAINST THE SOVIET OCCUPATION**

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**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, denacjonalizacja, odporność duchowa, ideologia sowiecka

The 20th century was called the age of nationalism. The titular state was considered as the ideal form of the modern nation. The Lithuanian nation achieved this concept very quickly and restored their state in 1918. The nation preserved such a concept of nationalism till the end of the century when they, following it, were among the first nations to restore their state.

The fights for the retention of the statehood took place in 1919–1920, during the rebellion in June, 1941, the fights for freedom in 1944–1953. People sacrificed their lives for freedom in exile, in concentration camps.

The nation never resigned itself to the loss of Independence in 1940, and proved it in the 1950s when it started a new era of resistance – unarmed anti-Soviet resistance. During that period, the most remarkable form of political protest was manifestations and demonstrations taking place on the All Saints' Day. Then not only the words "Freedom for Lithuania", but also "Freedom for Hungary" were uttered. The new generation joined the Resistance looking for other ways of opposition and fights for freedom. The youth of this generation started to form secret anti-Soviet organizations, the number of which during the whole Soviet period was about 480, and they united about 3.5 thousand young people. In essence, all of them had one goal: to restore Independent Lithuania.

Such an activity of these youth organizations (anti-Soviet proclamations or inscriptions) was not only a provocation of freedom to the regime, but also created preconditions for the wider resistance of people, prepared active fighters against the system in the 1970s.

The period of the 1970s was the time of the rise of the unarmed anti-Soviet resistance. About 30' underground publications evoked the spirit of freedom at that time. "Laisvės šauklis" and "Vytis", "Perspektyvos" and "Alma Mater" are only few among other publications that nurtured the idea of freedom, enhanced the national self-awareness. Since 1976, the movement of human rights was started by the Lithuanian group of Helsinki, the initiator of which was Viktoras Petkus. During several years, it prepared about 30 documents, informed about infringements of human rights, restrictions of the freedom of conscience, the ignorance of national rights.

The treatment of religious, national and political consciousness in Lithuania, raising of the question of freedom in the international arena, – these were the aims declared by the Lithuanian Freedom League that was formed in 1978. In the 1970s, the anti-Soviet movements, the fight for the freedom of conscience became the assumption to restore the statehood of Lithuania. These are the most remarkable events of the anti-Soviet resistance. But the source of all of them is the family, where active, patriotic citizens seeking for the freedom of the country and the nation, were born.

### **Topic: The Lithuanian family – the hearth of the unarmed resistance against the Soviet occupation**

The article presents the results of the research "Family and the Soviet Occupation". The family is the basis of the existence of the state and the society, as it is indicated in the Constitution of Lithuania. Article 38 of it states: "The right and duty of parents is to educate their children as decent people and faithful citizens..."<sup>1</sup>. Therefore it is important to constantly analyse the relation of the family and the state through the prism of the education of citizens of the state and the implementation of nationality.

**The object of the research** "Family and the Soviet Occupation" was the members of Lithuanian families (fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers) in Kelmė, Kaunas Tauragė, Šiauliai, Rusnė, Birštonas, Šilutė, Šakiai, Kaišiadorys, Alytus, Zarasai. The opinion of the responsible (arbitrarily) members of families about the Soviet occupation, education of children in the national traditions and the forms of the resistance of families against the Soviet ideology were analysed.

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<sup>1</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania). Vilnius, 2008, p. 23.

The research was carried out following the methodology of the interpretation of the qualitative social research. The data were collected in two ways – by the document analysis and by the semi-structured interview. Members of 24 families were interviewed: those who were born in the 1930s, and in the Soviet Lithuania. These people were interviewed in the places, understanding that their position did not influence their attitude, but maybe it was influenced by the wish to form their own positive image fighting against the Soviet system. But the latter did not serve the purpose.

The interviewed were warned about the specific aim of the research. Seeking to analyse the resistance of families against the Soviet regime, the ways of the resistance were discussed first of all, and the education of the national values was analysed at the end. Other questions related to such essential aspects as to which members of the family had a bigger influence in the educational process, or the punishment for the national education as well as the attitude towards the family education, were formulated in -directly.

The empiric base consisted of 24 interview transcriptions. The interview method was applied seeking to analyse the opinions of members of the families about the resistance of the family against the Soviet occupation. The interview was carried out and the report of the research was prepared in 2011 and 2013. The coverage of the research was formed applying the targeted selection method.

The application of the results of the research has restrictions. First of all, there was no criterion of representativity posed, but the aim was to find out the opinion of ordinary people of Lithuania about the Soviet family and its influence when resisting against the occupation as well as educating the children as patriots of their country. Most often the researches performed are limited to the period of the active resistance (1945–1953) and the unarmed resistance, when different anti-Soviet organizations are discussed.

Besides, the research is explanatory, in order to examine the steering of the instrument of the research (the questionnaire) and to see what forms of passive resistance prevailed in the Soviet family and to establish what determined the tendencies.

Despite of the aforementioned limitations, the sources of information and the methods of the research as chosen for this research allowed to analyse not only the role of the family in the Soviet occupation, but also the forms of resistance in Lithuania, especially in Kelmė, Kaunas, Tauragė, Šiauliai, Rusnė, Birštonas, Šilutė, the districts of Šakiai, Kaišiadorys, Alytus, Zarasai, and the gained results are valuable scientifically.

## The analysis of the problem

There is no literature on this topic, but authors analysing other themes, touched upon this one as well. The article was based on the social-political journal "Soviet Woman" that was launched in 1952. In the journal, seeking to form the Soviet woman, the political propaganda, atheistic material used to be published. Women of the Soviet Lithuania learnt about women that were famous in one or another field, the ones that were the examples to be followed. Women were also consulted in issues related to children's education. When determining the position of women in the society of the Soviet Lithuania, the legal acts of Lithuania become an important source. First of all, the constitutions of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania of 1940 and 1978 legalized the equality of the woman in all spheres of life<sup>2</sup>. The status of women in the society of the Soviet Lithuania was also reflected by the legal acts of labour, family and marriage<sup>3</sup>.

In 1973, the material<sup>4</sup> of the congress of the women of the LSSR (Lithuania Soviet Socialist Republic) of 1972 was published. There are several presentations published in it that can be distinguished. One of the aims of the Soviet government was the political education of the woman, the implementation of materialistic world outlook, as she is responsible for the education of children in the family. In 1973, the book by A. Šalna "Woman in the Modern World"<sup>5</sup> was published. The book ideologically evaluates the status of women all over the world in the public production, analyses the problems of their schooling and education, the co-ordination of functions of a mother and a worker, their position in the family, participation in the social-political life. The evaluations of the author were conditioned by the communist propaganda. The material of the practical-scientific conference "Women of Soviet

<sup>2</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos socialistinė Konstitucija (pagrindinis įstatymas) (Constitution of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania (the main law)) // Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucijos (Constitutions of the State of Lithuania). Vilnius 2001, p. 61–73; Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucijos (pagrindinis įstatymas) (Constitution of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania (the main law)) // Constitutions of the State of Lithuania. Vilnius, 2001, p. 74–100.

<sup>3</sup> Lietuvos socialistinės respublikos Šeimos ir santuokos teisės kodeksas (Code of Laws on Marriage and Family of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania). Vilnius, 1981, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Tarybų Lietuvos moterys – aktyvios komunizmo kūrėjos* (Soviet Woman – the Active Creator of Communism). Vilnius: Mintis, 1973, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> A. Šalna, *Moteris šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje*. (Mokymo priemonė). (Woman in the Modern World. (Educational material)). Kaunas, 1973, p. 131.

Lithuania – active creators of communism”<sup>6</sup>, that took place in 1975, was abundant and informative. The presentation of V. Klikūnienė under the title “Soviet Woman and Problems of Communist Education of the Young Generation”<sup>7</sup> reflects the requirements raised for the woman, as a mother and an educator, in the society of Soviet Lithuania. The presentation of A. Gulbinskienė “The Formation of the Personality of the Woman in Soviet Lithuania under the Conditions of Developed Socialism”<sup>8</sup> indicate the ways and forms of the implementation of the Soviet propaganda for women, and also highlight their requirements for women as posed by the Soviet ideology.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic of Lithuania, the status of women and families in Soviet Lithuania became the object of scientific analysis only recently, therefore there are no scientific papers in this theme. D. Marcinkevičienė and R. Praspaliauskienė analyse how the image of the woman and the portraying of her status in the society changed during the indicated period in the article “The Transformation of the Woman in the Press of 1975–1997”<sup>9</sup>. D. Marcinkevičienė in her article “Men, Women and the Soviet Ideology”<sup>10</sup> analyses how the real life was influenced by the requirements raised for the relations of a man and a woman, the family in the Soviet times. The book compiled by D. Marcinkevičienė under the title “Domesticated Commonness in 1945–1970”<sup>11</sup> included the biographical interviews of Lithuanian women. The author presents the biographies of women seeking to show what they experienced in 1945–1970. D. Marcinkevičienė revealed that the decisions

<sup>6</sup> *Tarybų Lietuvos moterys – aktyvios komunizmo kūrėjos* (Women of Soviet Lithuania – Active Creators of Communism). Vilnius: Mintis, 1976, p. 143.

<sup>7</sup> V. Klikūnienė, *Tarybinė moteris ir jaunosios kartos kumunistinio auklėjimo problemas* (Soviet Woman and the Problems of Communistic Education of the Young Generation) // *Women of Soviet Lithuania – Active Creators of Communism. Material of the scientific practical conference as of October 30, 1975*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1976, p. 28–35.

<sup>8</sup> A. Gulbinskienė, *Moters asmenybės formavimasis Tarybų Lietuvoje išsivysčiusio socializmo sąlygomis* (Formation of Woman’s Personality under the Conditions of Developed Socialism of the Soviet Lithuania) // *Tarybų Lietuvos moterys aktyvios komunizmo kūrėjos. Mokslinės praktinės konferencijos, įvykusios 1975 m. spalio 30 d. medžiaga*. (Women of Soviet Lithuania – Active Creators of Communism. Material of the scientific practical conference as of October 30, 1975). Vilnius: Mintis, 1976, p. 58–67.

<sup>9</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, Praspaliauskienė R. *Moters įvaizdžio transformacija moterų spaudoje 1975–1997 m.* (Transformation of the Image of Woman in the Women’s Press in 1975–1997 m.) // *Feminizmas. Visuomenė. Kultūra. Straipsnių rinktinė* (Feminism. Society. Culture. Collection of articles). Vilnius: Vilnius University Publishing House, 1999, p. 61–67.

<sup>10</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Vyrai, moterys ir sovietinė ideologija* (Men, women, and Soviet Ideology) // [http://www.moterys.lt/index.php?show\\_content\\_id=599](http://www.moterys.lt/index.php?show_content_id=599) [on: 2010 12 20].

<sup>11</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės 1945–1970 metais* (Tamed Everyday in 1945–1970). Vilnius: Petro ofsetas, 2007, p. 204.

and evaluations made by women were influenced by the Soviet ideology, but there were subjective evaluations, and therefore we can state that only those women who belonged to the Soviet avant-garde or were outcast by the regime might have remained unnoticed by the Soviet propaganda. The book "Lithuania 1945–1990"<sup>12</sup> described the religious resistance, the activity of youth as well as cultural activities. It does not speak about the role of the woman or the family in the fight of resistance. In 1998, the articles of the conference "Lithuanian Woman. Woman and Resistance in Lithuania"<sup>13</sup> about the active fight of resistance of Lithuanian women in 1945–1953, were published. O. Voverienė in her article "The famous Women of Lithuania in the 20th Century"<sup>14</sup> talks about women signalers, partisans, writers, mothers that actively fought against the occupation of Lithuania. The youth resistance was analysed by J. R. Bagušauskas. He shows in his work<sup>15</sup> that the resistance forms of the youth were various starting from the hippie movement and finishing with the establishment of the hiking club and its activity.

## The efforts of the Soviet Party System to implement the Soviet Ideology in Lithuanian Families

### Gender Equality in the Soviet Republic of Lithuania

The question of the gender equality in the Soviet Lithuania was solved following the indications of the Soviet Union. First of all, the rights of women were equaled to those of men. They were free to choose their profession, the living place, to acquire education. The principle of the equality of women and men was established in all the most important documents of the country, first of all, in 1940, and later in 1978, in the Soviet "Constitutions of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialistic Republic". In 1940, Article 94 of the chapter of the Soviet Constitution under the title "The Main Rights and Duties of

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<sup>12</sup> Lietuva 1945–1990 (Lithuania in 1945–1990). Vilnius: Spindulys, 2005, p. 710.

<sup>13</sup> Lietuvaitė. Moteris ir rezistencija Lietuvoje (Lithuanian Girl. Woman and Resistance in Lithuania). Mokslinė konferencija 1998 (Scientific conferences in 1998). Vilnius: Mokslo aidai, 1998, p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> O. Voverienė, *Žymiosios XX amžiaus Lietuvos moterys* (Famous Women of Lithuania in the 20th century). Kaunas: Mažoji poligrafija, 2005, p. 360.

<sup>15</sup> J. R. Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of the Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression). Vilnius: Spindulys, 1999, p. 446.

Citizens” stated: “The Women in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialistic Republic are granted equal rights with men in all economic, national, cultural and public political spheres of life”<sup>16</sup>. Although the Constitution declared the equality, but in the real life the stereotype “women – only for work”, and men – for the leadership”<sup>17</sup> prevailed. This stereotype as formed in the Soviet times is still strong in Lithuania.

In 1978, the Constitution declared essentially the same provisions, but if the previous Constitution stated that the women were endowed with the same rights as the man, in other words, the rights of men were regarded as a certain standard, so in the new Constitution the idea was formulated differently – “the woman and the man have equal rights in the Lithuanian SSR”<sup>18</sup>.

In 1978, the Constitution of Soviet Lithuania also broadened the possibilities of the implementation of the equality – women and men were guaranteed equal possibilities to acquire education and professional training, to work, to get payment for work and be promoted in the work place, to participate in the social-political as well as cultural activities. The Constitution guaranteed for women special means for work and health care, the provision of equal rights to co-ordinate maternity with work, the protection of maternity and rights of children, the material and moral support, the paid holidays and other allowances for pregnant women and mothers with small children, the gradual reduction of work time for women with small children<sup>19</sup>.

It was stated that the aim of the Soviet Union as well as Soviet Lithuania was to form preconditions of the social and material equality of women and men. It is important to note that the Soviet legislature never regarded the equality of the rights of women and men *de jure* as the equalization of their legal status. The Soviet concept of the solution of the question was based on the fact the simple equalization of women and men could not assure the equal position of the woman in the society. It was explained that it was conditioned by the specific function of women – motherhood. It allowed to make the conclusion that the total equality of the woman and the man is possible only when women, having the same rights as men, will have certain additional rights and allowances. That is why the Soviet laws declared the equal rights

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<sup>16</sup> Lietuvos Tarybų Socialistinės Respublikos konstitucija (pagrindinis įstatymas (Constitution of the Soviet Socialistic Republic of Lithuania (the main law)), p. 71.

<sup>17</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> Lietuvos Tarybų Socialistinės Respublikos konstitucija (pagrindinis įstatymas (Constitution of the Soviet Socialistic Republic of Lithuania (the main law)), p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79–80.

of women and men to education, professional training, work, equal payment for the same work, participation in the public political and cultural activity, guaranteed certain labour and health care means for women, provided the conditions to co-ordinate maternity with the work activity, protected and morally supported maternity<sup>20</sup>. The co-ordination of work and family life in the Soviet times depended upon the position in the Party. The former influential Party activist of Soviet Lithuania L. Diržinskaitė told: "I met my husband in Šiauliai, when I have a job in the Party. (...) Husband was very jealous and did not allow me to work. He told me 'Look after the kid'. So my 'universities' were simply wasted"<sup>21</sup>. However, most of Lithuanian women had various jobs, from hard physical work to that of a secretary, the leader of the library, the principal of the house of culture. If they were not repressed and did not openly ignore the Soviet power, the system trusted them, though it could not assure the equality.

### Woman and Family

It was stated that in the socialistic society the new type of the social family must be formed, where the relation of a husband and a wife would be based on mutual love, respect and understanding, equality, common care for household issues and children. Partnership was to become the basis for the family. Such a family was regarded as the social value by the state<sup>22</sup>. Although generally the equality of spouses in the marriage was declared, in the Soviet times the family still remained as an unequal institution, the role of the woman was more remarkable in it than that of the man. In essence, she was responsible for the education of children, the household of the family, the every day works. Besides, she was required to actively take part in the public production and social-political life.

Soviet Lithuania acknowledged only the civil marriage. It was declared that people took the marriage vows in churches only when forced by the older generation. The national Lithuanian traditions that had nothing to do with religion and church, formed by the nation, were propagated. In Soviet Lithuania, the marriage was regarded as the contract of the national impor-

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<sup>20</sup> M. Kaunaitė, *Tarybų Lietuvos moterys – socializmo statybos aktyvios dalyvės* (Women of Soviet Lithuania – Active Participants of Construction of Socialism), p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 102.

<sup>22</sup> J. Markonis, *Be bažnyčios*. (Without Church) // *Tarybinė moteris* (Soviet Woman), 1962, No. 2, p. 7.



tance, and the marriage formed at church was held invalid. There were also attempts to deter women from marriage at church by such statements that only unserious men consciously wanted to have marriage at church, so that they were not restricted in the case of divorce<sup>23</sup>.

The Soviet propaganda commissioned school, press, literature and art to actively propagate the new type of family, to develop the feeling of responsibility of guys and girls regarding the family. The vision of the ideal family and marriage is provided in the article "Family and Marriage in Communism"<sup>24</sup> in the journal "Soviet Woman". It stated that with the development of the public production force, the legal relations in the family would be gradually replaced by the moral ones. Also, there shouldn't be a place for any economic dependence in the communist family, the relations of the family were supposed to be based on the standards of the communist morality. Divorce in communism was supposed to be a rare case, although the author did not provide for legal obstacles for the divorce. As the author states, divorce takes place due to frivolous nature, irresponsible attitude towards the formation of the family and its retention, and the man of high cultural and communistic morality could not make such an important step without thoroughly thinking about it. But it was propaganda. Reality was different. Leokadija Diržinskaitė, the former foreign affairs minister of Lithuania for 10 years, says that "...when my husband was sent to work in Laukuva, I tried to run away from him. In 1947 I left him..."<sup>25</sup>. She indicated the reason for the divorce: "...my husband loves other women..."<sup>26</sup>. The latter reason of divorce was often omitted in official documents and articles. There were even such reasons for divorce: "I lived with him one year and a half. He was a terrible liar"<sup>27</sup>. But often drunkenness was mentioned as the reason for divorce. In the documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was stated that in communism the sphere of beauty will prevail in the family life, members of the family will find joy and aesthetic satisfaction in taking care of each another. Women tell in their memories: "I have no regrets regarding my family status. He was better than other men, who used to beat their wives, and we led quite a normal life"<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> N. Solovjovas, *Šeima ir santuoka komunizme* (Family and Marriage in Communism) // Tarybinė moteris (Soviet Woman), 1962, No. 5, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 103.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

The requirements for women in the Soviet times to actively take part in the public production and the public political life collided with maternity and the traditional distribution of functions in the family. It was stated that the socialistic family, all members of which had to be active in the professional and social-political life, was largely supported by the society. The Soviet propaganda declared that it is not difficult to meet these requirements, as the state provided a complex help for the family, which consisted of the constant seek to improve the household of the family, the rational co-ordination of the education of children in the family and the society, the support for families with many children.

Maternity was considered as an important social function in Soviet Lithuania. During the Soviet times, the state declared that it supported motherhood materially and morally<sup>29</sup>. The expression of the material support was various payments mothers received from the state. Women received pregnancy and childbirth allowances during the whole period of pregnancy and the maternity leave. Women who had work experience of at least 3 years and the continuous work experience of at least 2 years received the allowance of 100 per cent of their work payment during the whole period of pregnancy and the maternity leave. In certain cases, there were single allowances after the birth of the child to acquire the things for the needs of the infant and food. Families with many children received a big material allowance. After the birth of each child they received single allowances that proportionally increased depending upon the number of children, and they got bigger allowances each month, respectively. For instance, if a mother having three children gave birth to the fourth child, she received the single allowance of 65 rubles and 4 rubles for every child each month, so mothers who had 10 children received the single allowance of 250 rubles for each successive child, and 15 rubles for each child every month. It was stated that the government provided support of monthly allowances for single women who had children out of marriage<sup>30</sup>.

The expression of the moral support for maternity was the granting of the title of honour of "Mother Heroine" for women who gave birth and raised at least 10 children. Mothers who were granted the honourable title

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<sup>29</sup> B. Boreišienė, *Auklėjimas ir saviaukla moterų tarybose. Tarybų Lietuvos – moterų aktyvios komunistinio kūrėjos. Mokslinės praktinės konferencijos, įvykusios 1975 m. spalio 30 d. medžiaga.* (Production and Social Activity of Women of the Republic carrying out the Decisions of the 24th Convention of the LSSR), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> A. Žilienė, *Moterų ir vaikų sveikatos apsauga Tarybų Lietuvoje* (Health Protection of Women and Children in the Soviet Lithuania). Lecture 1. Vilnius, Mintis, 1966, p. 19.

“Mother Heroine”, also received the medal of “Mother Heroine” and the letter of the Supreme Council Presidium of the USSR. Mothers who gave birth and raised 9, 8 or 7 children, were granted the medal of “Mother’s Fame” of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, respectively. Mothers who gave birth to 5 or 6 children were honoured by “Maternity Medal” of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, respectively<sup>31</sup>. Although the Soviet laws on family and marriage declared the equality of women in the family, at the same time there was a provision saying that the role of the woman in the family was more important than that of the man. It was related to the specific function of the woman as the mother. Therefore, in certain cases it is not possible to regard the status of the woman in the Soviet family as equal. A perfect example of it is that the honourable title and medal of the mother heroine could be granted only to women. There was no award for “Fathers Heroes”.

Despite of the fact that the Soviet laws declared that the spouses must educate children together, the biggest part of this job was done by women. It is proved by the fact that there was the prevailing provision that the maternity leave, the sick-leave as well as the child’s care in the case of divorce were provided to women. It was stated that in the Soviet Lithuanian society, the main role of the educator of children was rendered to the woman – the mother, teacher and the educator in the kindergarten, the woman activist in the society.

The Soviet society commissioned the education of children to the family only partially. They were educated in the pre-school institutions, later at schools. The pre-school education institutions – kindergartens for infants and children, the after-school groups, summer camps had to provide conditions for women to work, learn, take part in the cultural as well as social-political life. It was declared that these institutions helped women to raise physically strong and spiritually rich people, patriots of their motherland, active developers of communism.

It was also said that there were many pre-school institutions for children in the Soviet Lithuania – kindergartens for infants and children. At these institutions, children were taken care of from 1,5 to 7 years old. The pre-school education institutions first of all accepted children of working women, mothers with many children and single mothers, the children of the handicapped since the war. In order to adjust the work time of these institutions to the work time of women, these institutions were of different types: for day-time,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

for prolonged day-time, and some of them worked 24 hours. In the latter ones, the children staid for a week and mothers took them back home only on holidays and days-off<sup>32</sup>. Women living in the collective farms used to raise their children up to 6 years of age. Women, housewives who had more than three small children, did not work at the collective farm<sup>33</sup>.

The Soviet propaganda declared that seeking to achieve the best results, the education in the family and the public institutions had to be coordinated. It stated that all people who carried out the function of an educator, had to know their tasks, keep mutual relations, raised the same requirements of education<sup>34</sup>.

The Soviet propaganda maintained that the grounds of the development of the personality and its formation were laid in the family. The family was regarded as the first team, where the children met the standards of the communist morality and understood them. The ideals of life of small citizens were to be born in this team, the child acquired the first skills of communication, the family formed his/her character. It was asserted that noble qualities of the character did not appear out of nothing, therefore, according to the authorities of the Soviet education, the team of the family had to be duly organized, the mother had to perform the proper role of an educator.

Women were encouraged to implement and create new traditions, and to refuse the old ones. We can mention the operation "Žibutė" as one of newly proposed traditions, when on the birthday of Lenin, children brought flowers on his monument, the celebration of the International Children's Protection Day. Mothers were also encouraged to cultivate the traditions of pioneers and communist-youth.

It was declared that, although the pre-conditions of the material and social-moral formation of the personality in the socialistic society were created, the spiritual development of a human being was still a very important problem. Women were given a task to nurture the personality's feeling of responsibility with regards to the collective, the society, to understand the importance of the words "it is necessary", to implant diligence, the sense of duty. They declared the seek to include the parents into the active education activity, unite them when solving the education problems, and it was not an easy task for schools, which is most successfully solved when the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 15–17.

<sup>33</sup> D. Marcinkevičienė, *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 148.

<sup>34</sup> V. Klikūnienė, *Tarybinė moteris ir jaunosios kartos kumunistinio auklėjimo problemas* (Soviet Woman and the Problems of Communistic Education of the Young Generation), p. 29.

administrations of the workplaces of parents as well as public organizations joined the educators<sup>35</sup>.

Women had to educate their children in the right way. Therefore, almost in every issue of the journal “Soviet Woman”, there was material on the questions of education of children and the youth published.

Of course, the woman, whose duty was to educate her children in the communist spirit, in line with the Soviet propaganda, herself had to follow the materialistic and atheistic world view, to be a mature personality. Much attention in the Soviet times was paid to the formation of the world outlook of the woman. At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, there was an increase in the political agitation material in the journal “Soviet Woman”, with the help of which the world outlook of the woman was formed.

### **The participation of women in the social-political activity**

The participation of the woman in the social-political activity was regarded as an important factor of the development of her personality, bringing a new moral element into the family life. The communist ideology, seeking to include women into the social-political activity, stated that a woman activist becomes a moral value and an example for her husband and children. The husband takes her as a friend, and not as a thing of pleasure or his slave, and it will bring mutual respect and understanding into their relationship. Such a woman becomes not only mother for her children, but also the member of an organization<sup>36</sup>.

The Soviet propaganda, with the aim to bring women into the active social-political activity, stated that such an activity positively influenced not only the relationship of the members of the family, but also the mode of life of the family. They had more time and power for the creative work of education. At the same time, their children became stronger, richer, and her authority increased. The woman as a personality (not as a housewife) actively participated in the formation of the provisions of values of the family, making important decisions<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 31–33.

<sup>36</sup> A. Gulbinskienė, *Formation of the Personality of Woman under the Conditions of Development Socialism of the Soviet Lithuania*, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

The participation of women in the social political activity was regarded as one of the most important indices of the progress of the society. It was declared that socialism had to form conditions for each working woman to take part in the politics, and for those who are the most active and talented, having the organizational skills, the politics should become their profession. As it was stated by the former minister of foreign affairs of Soviet Lithuania Leokadija Diržinskaitė: "In 1951, I finished the Party school (...) I was invited by Sniečkus (the first Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party – note by V.J.) and asked where I wanted to work. Together with my husband we were appointed to the Division of the Organizational Work of the Šiauliai region committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party"<sup>38</sup>. The big attention for the women's participation in the social political life was paid because it had to assure their total equality in the society<sup>39</sup>.

The social political activity of women was regarded as a complicated, non-professional work, for which no payment was paid<sup>40</sup>. The minister of foreign affairs of the Soviet Lithuania Leokadija Diržinskaitė says: "In the position of the Deputy Chairperson of the Ministers' Council, for ten years (1966–1977 – V.J.) I worked as the minister of foreign affairs of the LSSR. It was the work without payment. The amount of work was abundant"<sup>41</sup>.

Earlier one of the forms of the participation of the Soviet woman in the social political life was her membership and activity in the Soviet party"<sup>117</sup>. It was stated that constantly the most active women, politically conscious women join the communist party. But the witnesses of that time say: "They started to force me to join the Party (...) I tried to avoid the Party (...) but late, in 1957, I wrote an application to join the Party as a candidate. I was so poor that I had only one dress and a pair of clogs, and the house was practically falling down. After I wrote the application to join the Party, the collective farm repaired the house and I got a job as a secretary of the region. I felt evaluated, as the supreme head..."<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Marcinkevičienė D. *Prijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> Šalna A. *Woman in the Modern Society*, p. 119–120.

<sup>40</sup> Gulbinskienė A. *Moters asmenybės formavimasis Tarybų Lietuvoje išsivysčiusio socializmo sąlygomis* (Formation of the Personality of Woman under the Conditions of Developed Socialism of the Soviet Lithuania), p. 63.

<sup>41</sup> Marcinkevičienė D. *Prisijaukintos kasdienybės* (Tamed Everyday), p. 109.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Following the Soviet statistics, the number of members of the Communist Party increased from 23,2 per cent in 1959 to 30,5 per cent in 1975. Women-members of the Communist Party had to carry out the avant-garde role directing other women towards the development of communist<sup>43</sup>.

The Soviet propaganda always underlined that women took an active part in the social-political work. Such statements had to be proved by the performed social questionnaires. The results of one of them showed that 98,4 per cent of female respondents answered positively to the question “are you at present active in the social life?”. 61,92 per cent of the female respondents were elected to social work positions, 25,88 per cent had constant social commitments, 10,7 per cent – temporary ones. Answering the question, why they like social work, 31,01 per cent of women answered that they wanted to be useful for the society, 10,24 per cent said that this job developed the collective activity, 13,33% of respondents told that the social work helped to develop organizational skills, 10,29% of them had moral satisfaction. But 12 per cent of women answered that they carried out the social work out of duty, without willing. Such responses by the Soviet propaganda were explained by an uninteresting nature of the work performed<sup>44</sup>.

The social political activity of women in the socialistic society was also expressed by the participation in the massive political events: demonstrations, solidarity meetings, communist Saturdays, etc. It was said that women actively took part in discussions of the projects of the document of the Party, the decisions of the Party conventions regarding the five-year plans. There were more women who directly organized the aforementioned events, carried out specific tasks of the Party, state and social organizations. The social political activity of women was regarded as an important part of the conscious, creative omni-national communism development process, that should always be paid attention to. It was stated that Party organizations always took cared of this passive political work<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> L. Jenina, Lietuvos komunistų partijos veikla ugdant gamybinį ir visuomeninį politinį moterų aktyvumą (Activity of the Lithuanian Communist Party, educating the Productive and Social-Political Activity of Women in the Eighth Quinquennium), p. 52.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

## The Passive National Resistance against the Soviet Occupation

### Soviet Lithuanian family, its concept, functions. Values implanted by the family

The resistance against the Soviet occupation first of all appeared in families. Although from the aforementioned material it is evident that the Soviet system put all efforts to make the Lithuanian family an integral part of the society of the Soviet Union following the proletarian internationalization spirit, however, the efforts did not bring the expected results. The woman, responsible for the education of the young generation, received special attention by the Soviets. The family institution in Lithuania was very strong and it followed the provisions of the traditional patriarchal family. "At that time a big family was very important. It consisted of father, mother and children" (respondent 4). "The Soviet government supported families. If a woman had a job and she was not married, she had to pay a tax because she did not have children. If you got married, you had to have children, otherwise you had to pay taxes" (respondent 1). Family as an institution could be a form of resistance, as it is marked by a respondent: "Family was appreciated. It was created for the continuation of the nation (respondent 3). Often the Christian model of the family was stressed: "Our family was Christian and it was strong and firm" (respondent 5). It is interesting to note that the family was discussed as a small part of the total system, "but the positive values were maintained in the family up to this day: faithfulness, stability, respect, love" (respondent 2). "Love, children and family were the main values at that time: we know that once you get married, you have to live with that person, and we have lived now for 48 years" (respondent 1). Only one respondent indicated that "family experienced difficult times, the children were small. A mother having 4 children was considered as a mother with many children. You had to work, or else you had to pay taxes. You could do everything even having children: both to work at home, and to help the government at the same time. There was much intimidation: if you do not achieve the norm, you will not get a meadow for the cow or the parcel of land will be reduced" (respondent 6). The main task of the family was to educate children as decent people (respondent 7). So we can make a conclusion that the family was the most important part of the Soviet system and society, dominated by respect, children, stability and marriage. A rare respondent stressed the Christian family as a value, but more often they indicated the family as the guarantee of nationality retention and continuation. It is true that the influence by



the state (most often, positive) upon the family was discussed by most of the respondents. None of the interviews reflected the ideological leverage of the state upon the family, but namely these were the stereotypes of the mind of people brought up by the Soviet system about the family and its values. It was not distinguished even in the answers of those respondents who were born in the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic of Lithuania, i.e. till 1940. I dare state that it mixed traditional Christian, national and Soviet system values. Families kept to them and passed them to their children.

### **Role of father and mother educating the patriotism and nationality in children**

Soviet propaganda paid more attention to mother in the family, as she not only gave birth to children, but she also formed their personalities. Therefore, both the Soviet body of authorities, and the education system stressed it unanimously. The great role of mother in the family was underlined also by Antanas Smetona, President of the first Republic of Lithuania (1926–1940). In 1937, giving a speech at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Lithuanian women, he stressed the new tasks posed for women: “politics and public life are not the vocation of women. The lucid and varied power of women reveals itself nurturing the hearth of family”<sup>46</sup>. The leader of the Lithuanian Women’s Movement, the Union of the Lithuanian Catholic Women Organizations, and the Lithuanian Women’s Council, uniting all women’s organizations in Lithuania, were of the same opinion”<sup>47</sup>.

It was acknowledged by family analysers of the whole world that after World War II the roles of genders in families were stereotypical, and father had to support the family, create the welfare, and women had to take care of the family. Although in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were two theories of family models (the traditional and modern ones) prevailing in the world, and only since the 1960s the postmodern theory appeared, however, in Lithuania, since the 1940s, the model of the modern family was only developing, and the prevailing position was taken by the traditional family, where the man had the public space, and the woman had the private space of the family. The most important role in it was that of the father, as he, in line with the tradition,

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<sup>46</sup> Respublikos Prezidento žodis. (Word of H. E. President of Republic) // *Moteris ir pasaulis* (Woman and World), 1938, No. 1–2, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> V. Jurėnienė, *Lietuvos moterų judėjimas XIX amžiaus pabaigoje – XX amžiaus pirmoje pusėje*. (Lithuanian Women Movement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>–the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Vilnius, p. 181.

provided for the family. In Soviet Lithuania this model was deteriorating, and the modern one was under development where the woman-mother was the performer of all social roles.

During the research it became clear that the role of the mother as the most important in the family for the national education of children was indicated by all respondents. "I myself raised children and educated them" was said by respondent 3. "In our family, the biggest activist was the mother. She knew a lot of the national festivals and traditions of her parents and grandparents" (respondent 4). It is interesting to note that the respondents fell into two age groups: four of them were born in the 1920s and 1930s, and four of them were born in the 1950s and 1960s. But the role of mother as a more important one was revealed, as she was the guardian of traditions: "Mother, as she kept the traditions both in education and festivals" (respondent 6). We cannot make a conclusion that the role of the woman in the education of children was more stressed in one or another period. It is weird to note that father was the guardian of national values in the family: "It was father because he enjoyed it. Maybe because he was from Upper Lithuania (Aukštaitija<sup>48</sup>) (respondent 7). "Grandfather. He used to sing folk songs, told stories about grand dukes of Lithuania and strong Lithuanians who carried out deeds to Moscow, Kiev and won the battle of Grunewald" (respondent 1). The education of children was closely related not only to the social roles ascribed to genders, but also to the acquired experience: "Children were educated by father as he had suffered from the Soviet regime. He had been exiled to Siberia and he knew what it was to live far from Motherland, without the family, what it meant to come back to Motherland" (respondent 2). Other respondents participating in the research indicated the role of both parents in the education of children. These are features of a modern family, where there is no clear distribution of stereotypical social roles of men and women. It is possible that such a change was largely influenced by the process of the urbanization in Lithuania as well as development of industry after the World War II. In the Soviet Lithuania, industry, service sector, where both genders had jobs, were rapidly created and developed: "We are both the same. One of us carried out certain tasks, the other one – other tasks, and so we contribute to each other. We educated children in this way as well" (respondent 12). "Grandmother and grandfather were the

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<sup>48</sup> Aukštaitija is an ethno-linguistic region in Lithuania. In the history of Lithuania, it is underlined that the territories in Aukštaitija are motherlands of the first grand dukes of Lithuanian state and the core of the united Lithuanian state.

ones who educated mostly in the national spirit. It was difficult for them to look at our school books with portraits of Lenin, as they had suffered from the regime of Stalin. The parents also educated in the national spirit, but with fear, as they had also been exiled to Siberia as small children” (respondent 18). “Both parents equally educated us and cherished the national values. They both used to say that February 16<sup>th</sup> was the Independence Day of Lithuania. The first Republic of Lithuania was a strong state with a firm currency and solid presidents leading the country” (respondent 13).

Only in two interviews the role of school was underlined in the education of children: “The children went to school. And we had no time, we worked. We had so much work, the children got their education at school” (respondents 3, 21). Respondent 6 said that “Nationality determined the national education and nurturing of national values in the family. Mother was active in educating us, children, as she was a Lithuanian”.

Summarizing we can state that more than half of the questioned indicated that in the family both parents were important in educating their children. It shows that both parents had their jobs and devoted time and attention to their children according to possibilities, sharing all the household works with each other. In such a way, neither the Soviet regime, nor the former tradition from the interwar society had the determinant influence upon the maintenance of the stereotypical roles of genders in families. The tendency, although still not very distinct, was revealed – fathers and grandfathers were responsible for the education of children. It shows that the children education process is complicated, not succumbing to the tradition, nor the politics of the state.

## **Resistance of the family against the Soviet occupation**

In Lithuania, in 1955, the period of unarmed resistance started that lasted till 1990 and ended up with the restoration of Independent Lithuania. There were many illegal organizations that in various ways opposed the annexation of the country. In 1972, in Kaunas the Union of Young Lithuania distributed the proclamation “Lithuanian” where they underlined the role of the family in the national education of the youth. “What is the family worth where the children are raised without roots, without the national education (...) What is a citizen worth if he is not a citizen of his country...”<sup>49</sup>. Such an idea as ex-

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<sup>49</sup> J. R. Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression), p. 95.

pressed by one of the respondents: "Active people joined various movements. The movement was a passive resistance of the family against the regime. It was done via belief and the retention of nationality" (respondent 24).

During the research it became clear that the resistance against the Soviet regime was understood as the partisan fight (**active** resistance): "They fought for freedom and they went to the forests and struggled there, fought for independence. But they could not do anything, they were shot. Some surrendered themselves" (respondents 1, 11). "The biggest resistance was the partisan fights, as they did not succumb to the Soviet power" (respondent 20).

But **passive** resistance was also important: "The restoration of Independence was achieved not by fighting, not by open resistance, but silently, quietly, in secret. It was the belief and patriotism we had inside". "Fight for freedom, for independence" (respondent 12). It was said by 2 middle-aged respondents. Most of the researchers of the Soviet times say: "At that time most of people of Lithuania successfully adapted to the conditions of the Soviet regime and resigned themselves to the idea that it is hopeless to think of the restoration of the statehood of Lithuania..."<sup>50</sup>. Their statements were complemented by ideas of some of the respondents: "Why should we resist against it? It was good for me..." (respondent 3). "When I started to go to school, I had no other alternative and there was no need for me to fight against my own life" (respondent 4). "There was no resistance, as parents worked, and children had to work too. (...) Nobody struggled against the government, because the government punished those who were against it" (respondent 21). "There was no resistance in my generation" (respondent 22). But during the research it became clear that they could understand the resistance being the spectators: "I remember when father used to sing Lithuanian patriotic songs, and he used to say that he was not supposed to do it, as others might hear him. Only when I was a teenager I understood his fear" (respondent 5). Often respondents described the resistance as a positive action not going into details (respondents 6, 9). The respondents indicated that they resisted against the regime by not taking part in the social life of the country: "We did not celebrate Soviet festivals (May 1<sup>st</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, February 21<sup>st</sup>, March 8<sup>th</sup>), we did not join the Communist Party, we did not allow our children to join the organizations of 'spaliukai' and pioneers, we did not sing the anthem of the USSR" (respondents 10, 19).

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

Most of the respondents noted that resistance was not only the behaviour, but also the mind of people: "There was resistance. There was a variety of opinions. Some people were of a certain attitude at that time, others expressed their thoughts in another way" (respondent 23). The youth was especially active in the period of passive resistance. "I understand that the most remarkable act of resistance against the Soviet regime was the self-burning of Romas Kalanta. It was the rejection of the Soviet ideas" (respondent 18). The researcher of the resistance of the Lithuanian youth against the Soviet occupation J. Bagušauskas states: "It is typical for the youth to sacrifice. One of the most distinctive acts of sacrifice for the freedom of Lithuania was the action of R. Kalanta that had a huge affect upon the youth. On May 14, 1972, in the garden of the Music Theatre, R. Kalanta set himself on fire in the protest against the occupation of Lithuania. He was born in 1953"<sup>51</sup>. Summarizing, we can say that the respondents understood the resistance against the Soviet occupation in two ways: the active one (partisan fights) and the passive one (singing of the Lithuanian patriotic songs, belief in the future Lithuania, the determination not to participate in the political and social activities). It depended upon the age of the respondents. Older respondents stressed the active fight of resistance, as they or their families had suffered from the occupation directly. The respondents of middle age, who were born in Soviet Lithuania, underlined the form of the passive resistance. However, one third of the respondents stated that there was no resistance, as there was no aim for fighting. Most often they indicated that they had to work or were too young to understand the necessity of resistance. So the research reveals that the Soviet system, although it paid huge attention to the Soviet families, the education of the youth in the Soviet ideological spirit, it did not have a determinant affect upon the awareness of the people of Lithuania, as the idea of freedom was alive and they opposed the annexation of the country in many ways.

### **What were the ways learnt in the family that were used to resist the Soviet occupation?**

**The first invisible**, but fruitful result of the education in the family was the attempt to avoid the military service at Soviet Union Army. During the Soviet period, the primary military preparation for schoolchildren and stu-

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<sup>51</sup> J. R. Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression), p. 191.

dents was organized. In this way the youth was prepared for the military service. But each year the military commissioners faced the negative attitude of the youth towards the primary military preparation as well as the military service in the Soviet army in general<sup>52</sup>. Each year the plans of the enrollment of the youth into the military schools were not fulfilled. In 1984–1987, 777 Lithuanian was enrolled into the military schools without competition instead of 1048, but almost one third of them dropped out. Most of them refused to continue education themselves. In total, in the USSR Army, 1233 officers had their service<sup>53</sup>. These facts state that there was the general negative attitude towards to military service in the Soviet Army. In this case, the bigger influence upon the youth was made by their families, and not the Soviet ideology.

**The second factor of resistance – *spiritual resistance*.**

It was expressed by:

- going to the theatre,
- going to church,
- marriage at church,
- celebration of national festivals,
- teaching of the Lithuanian history.

**The theatre** is distinguished as the separate **form of spiritual resistance**, as Lithuanians here found what they believed in, the national patriotism, the striving for freedom.

After the events of 1972 – the self-burning of R. Kalanta, not only physical occupation, but also the spiritual occupation grew stronger. First of all, intelligent people were persecuted who did not obey the government. The Party started paying attention to the theatre. Every play was reviewed by the Ministry of Culture where the decisive word was that of the representative of the Centre Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party.

In 1975, in Kaunas Drama Theatre, during the premier of the play “Barbora Radvilaitė” by the director Jonas Jurašas, the picture of St. Mary was raised. After this event, the play was banned. The reason for banning it was too immense spirituality and patriotism of the play<sup>54</sup>. J. Jurašas was criticized for the aforementioned play and “The House of Grasa”. He was dismissed after the ban of the play “Barbora Radvilaitė” and emigrated to the West as a protest against the intrusion of the Soviet authorities into the

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<sup>52</sup> Lietuva 1940–1990 (Lithuania in 1940–1990), p. 494.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 569.

cultural affairs, the censure and prohibition. He continued his creative activity in emigration<sup>55</sup>. The Party accused the director of distorting the idea and the artistic thought of these pieces, subjectively evaluated the past<sup>56</sup>. Other directors were also criticized for biased works. But no open repressions were applied, as the theatre for Lithuanians was a sacred place. Although the theatre was constrained in many ways, but these restrictions were bypassed in one way or another. Works of very popular Lithuanian authors were staged in theatres, for example, the plays “Mindaugas”, “Katedra”, “Mažvydas” by Justinas Marcinkevičius, and others.

After the research, it became clear that most of the respondents went to the theatre if they had money. They preferred the theatre to the cinema. The respondent says: “I used to go to the theatre. It was my favourite form of art” (respondent 18). Also it was indicated that the theatre developed the human and national values in the spectators: “Plays were interesting, you could see and learn something new” (respondent 21). The theatre thrived in Soviet Lithuania, in the 1970s and 1980s. The respondents noted: “The theatre in Vilnius was not a thing of luxury, but it was difficult to get tickets, as the tickets were quite cheap and there were many those who wished to go to see the plays. It was very difficult to buy a ticket. In order to get a ticket to the premiers of plays, we used to stand in the queues during the night, shifting with one another” (respondents 13, 3). And only one respondent said that he never went to the theatre, as he had to work all the time and was quite poor (respondent 20). In this way, the Lithuanian theatre was the most visited cultural institution that nurtured the feelings of patriotism, the national awareness as well as formed the humane values. Visiting theatres was the most active form of passive resistance of the nation. During the Soviet times, the historic, national plays were the ones that made people stand in the queues during nights.

## Going to church

Going to church was regarded as the form of unarmed resistance by all Soviet Lithuanian researchers. People went there because of their belief, because of the influence of their parents and the resistance against the occupation.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> J. R. Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression), p. 198.

As it is witnessed by the archive documents, since the beginning of occupation women actively strove for the retention of the Catholic faith. Despite of the risk to be exiled to Siberia, they used to protest during lectures on the reactivity of Church<sup>57</sup>.

In January, 1946, the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress of the Lithuanian Women Workers was convoked in Vilnius. In the opening speech of the congress, the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR M. Gedvilas named the tasks of the Lithuanian Communist Party: "Women are no longer decorations of houses or church goers. It used to be their activity. Now women and men are in the politics (...) As they form the majority of the society, they must be emancipated. We hope they will take positions in the government, as well"<sup>58</sup>. Also he had to comfort women and guarantee that the government would not change relations in the family and will ensure the freedom of faith.

What women required from the occupants' government after World War II was important during the whole period of resistance. Constraints of religious life were enforced by certain norms of the Soviet law. The decision of the Presidium of the Lithuanian Supreme Council "Regarding the application of Article 143 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR" was passed on May 12, 1966, where the infringements of the order of religious cults, for which the criminal and administrative responsibility was applied, were listed in detail. A one-year imprisonment was intended for the organization of religious teaching of the youth, the performance of religious meetings and other rituals that "violate the public order". In the same year, commissions for keeping the laws on the religious cults were formed at executive committees of all districts and cities. They were supposed to strengthen the control of religious life. After ten years, 648 people were employed in this commission<sup>59</sup>.

The Soviet regime in the 7<sup>th</sup> decade carried out the tactics of limited allowances and strove to intensify the direct co-operation with the clergy and the believers.

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<sup>57</sup> O. Urnienė's (pranešimas, Šiaulių rajonas 1948, LYA) Report, Šiauliai District in 1948, CAL. F. 1771, AP. 11, B. 497, l. 31.

<sup>58</sup> Mečislavo Gedvilo kalba pirmajame Moterų darbininkių kongrese Lietuvos Socialistinėje Respublikoje, Lietuvos Ypatingasis Archyvas (Speech of Mečislovas Gedvilas in the first Congress of Women Workers in the Socialistic Republic of Lithuania, the Chief Archivist of Lithuania (CAL)), f. 1771, AP. 9., b. 456, l. 72.

<sup>59</sup> Lietuva 1940–1990 (Lithuania in 1940–1990), p. 575.



After Karol Wojtyła was elected as new Pope, the Soviet powers, afraid of enthusiastic activity of Church in Lithuania, strengthened repression against it<sup>60</sup>.

The research revealed that parents made their children go to church: “Parents used to say: “We will leave everything as we found it. You have to go to church once in a while” (respondent 13). “Our family was religious, so we went to church quite often” (respondent 20). “Church was the main thing (...) Our parent accustomed us to go to church. And it was nice to meet the youth” (respondent 17). In such a way it became clear that going to church was one of the methods of the education of the young generation. It was a massive phenomenon, as the youth also went to it. “I go to church only on festivals and funerals, as I am not very religious” (respondent 23). “We went to church, as really it was one of national attributes, as we understood it” (respondent 24). Respondents 14 and 11 indicated that they did not go and do not go to church, but it is not due to the influence of the atheistic propaganda, but because of priests. One interviewee noted: “We went. Children at schools were taught not to go to church. But we did it ourselves” (respondent 15). So the latter statements show that the state carried out the anti-religious propaganda, but some Lithuanians evaluated it negatively and regarded it as the seek of the occupants’ power to de-nationalize them.

## **Marriage at church**

In 1940, after the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, only civil marriage was acknowledged. Church marriage was illegal, and therefore Lithuanians married both at Church, and the civil registry offices. “Russians did not acknowledge church marriage... Those who married at church, did not get the family name, an apartment, nothing, and marriage of those who married at the civil registry office was regarded legal. You could even lose your job after marrying at church” (respondent 11).

Church marriage was regarded as traditional and therefore it was thought that “religious people acknowledge only marriage in front of God, in the name of God. Only at church” (respondent 24). “We married at church. We, our parents and grandmother wanted it. It was because of them, not because of marriage itself, in order to make it stronger and firmer” (respon-

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 579.

dent 22). The respondent told they married at church secretly: “..secretly we went to Klaipėda and we got married in front of God” (respondent 1). In the Soviet times, some people did not get married at church due to the following reasons:

1. They worked in official positions. “We did not get married at church, as the husband worked in the militia, and it was forbidden to marry at church. Civil marriage was enough for us” (respondent 10).
2. Due to different nationalities of spouses: “we were of different religions, so we could not get married at church” (respondent 6). There were few marriages of this kind in Lithuania. Lithuanians supported national (Lithuanian) marriages, and it was a conscious resistance against the occupation. When Independence was restored in 1990, 80 per cent of citizens of the country were Lithuanians.
3. Due to convictions: “we married at the civil registry office, though we did not belong to the party” (respondent 14).
4. Due to the second and later marriages: “No, I was the second wife for my husband” (respondent 23).

In this way, church marriage may be regarded as the Lithuanian resistance to the Soviet regime. Only 6 respondents (which constituted 25 per cent) did not get married in Church. The rest understood such a marriage as a duty of Catholics, as a traditions and even respect for their parents and grandparents.

But the official statistics of the Soviet Lithuania showed that the number of marriages at church was decreasing<sup>61</sup>.

Year/Marriages (per cent)						
1957	1961	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985
60,7	50,0	35,6	29,9	26,9	23,7	20,0

Although the official statistics of religious rituals indicated that the religiousness of the society was decreasing, still these data are unreliable, as the Soviet authorities used to falsify the data and wanted to show that the policy that was being carried out met the requirements, and, as it is evident from the research, many couples got married secretly at church and were not included into the official documents. In order to have the reliable statistics, it is necessary to collect the data from the church books of the whole

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 580.

Lithuanian of that time and compare them to the statistics as declared by the Soviet power.

## Celebration of national festivals and punishments

In the history of the state of Lithuania, February 16<sup>th</sup> – the Independence Day – was very important. In the political consciousness of most of the society, the idea of February 16<sup>th</sup> was the symbol of freedom and independence of Lithuania during the 50 years of occupation. Most of the underground youth organizations regarded the freedom and independence of Lithuania was the most important aim of fighting.

Most of the respondents mentioned that they did not celebrate festivals: “I only knew such a festival as February 16<sup>th</sup>, but we actively commemorated the Day of All Saints. It was banned by the Soviet regime. In Šiauliai, they used to arrest the young people going to the graveyard... If an old woman without candles came to the graveyard, they did not say anything” (Respondent 11). “February 16<sup>th</sup> was a very dangerous day... As my parents and grandparents had suffered from the Soviet regime, so our parents, protecting us from repressions, did not allow us to celebrate these festivals. We knew that February 16<sup>th</sup> was the Day of Independence of Lithuania” (respondent 24).

The respondents indicate that “there was no celebration of the Independence Day, you could not go to the streets, if someone had learn about the fact that you were celebrating, you could have been put to jail or madhouse... Security officers used to stroll the streets and listened to people’s talks..” (respondent 4). The attitude of the KGB (the USSR Security) towards February 16<sup>th</sup> and fights against it did not change throughout the Soviet period. In the places where people used to gather, the KGB organized the inconspicuous patrolling, they used to observe people distributing the proclamations. With the purpose to examine passports, they visited houses of people they suspected, etc.<sup>62</sup>

Taking part in the commemoration of February 16<sup>th</sup> was regarded as a very difficult political crime. The Soviet regime relentlessly persecuted schoolchildren and students, intellectual people and workers who used to commemorate February 16<sup>th</sup> in one way or another.

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<sup>62</sup> J. R., Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression), p. 174.

If they celebrated February 16<sup>th</sup> so they did it secretly, did not tell anyone: “we celebrated, as we did not want to be accustomed to Russian traditions” (respondent 10). Other stated that “we did not celebrate February 16<sup>th</sup>, but we tried to protect those who celebrated. It was severely forbidden to celebrate February 16<sup>th</sup> during the Soviet times” (respondent 13).

The respondents, who were youngsters in the 1980s and 1990s, say: “We celebrated national festivals, put up the flag of Lithuania. The punishments were very severe, and the militia used to arrest those you put up the flags, as they suspected. (respondent 22). “Everything associated with the festivals of independent Lithuania was forbidden, and the Soviets especially were concerned with February 16<sup>th</sup>. We did not celebrate it in families” (respondent 22). “But students used to put up the flag of Lithuania, it was a brave act” (respondent 1). It is evident from the interviews that the youth was an active conservator of the idea of Independent Lithuania and an encourager of fellow-countrymen. The resistance of the youth was both active (proclamations, demonstrations), and passive (celebration of February 16<sup>th</sup>, studying the history of Lithuania, wearing national symbols, going to church and marriage at church). The wave of the passive resistance rippled through Lithuania in the 1960s and the 1980s.

All the respondents indicated that they celebrated traditional festivals (Christmas Eve, Christmas, Easter, Midsummer Day). They said that it used to be as the resistance to the Soviet traditions thrust forcibly.

Respondent 11 mentioned that the Day of All Saints was a special day, when they remembered not only the dead, but also those who had died fighting for the state and the freedom of the nation. “We used to celebrate the Day of All Saints secretly. When it was dark, we went to the graveyard to light up candles, but we entered it not through the gates, but through gaps in the fence, as there were security people by the gates” (respondent 6).

In the middle of the 1950s, the day of All Saints was commemorated by wide political demonstrations in Kaunas and Vilnius<sup>63</sup>. It coincided with the political events in Poland and Hungary. After these events, the Day of All Saints became the form of passive resistance. The Soviet authorities did not apply open repressions against people celebrating the Day of All Saints in the 1970s and the 1980s.

The analysis of the celebration of national festivals shows that the youth sensitively reacted to the events of the life of the nation and they were never indifferent to independence and freedom of Lithuania. The youth was not

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<sup>63</sup> Lietuva 1945–1990 (Lithuania in 1940–1990), p. 524.

affected by the repressions of Stalin and people regarded them as brave heroes opposing the Soviet regime.

## Possession and usage of national symbols

The national symbols listed in the research were the interwar Lithuanian flags, national bands with the colours of the national flag, badges with national symbols.

4 respondents told that there were national symbols in their families (the Lithuanian flag, bands with the national anthem of Lithuania woven in, the coat of arms of Lithuania – Vytis) (17,22). Respondent 17 was beaten by the Soviet security officers because he dared to show the small Lithuanian national flag in public.

## Teaching of the history of Lithuania at home

The sound and critical evaluation of the past and the present – that is almost half of the programme for the future. Deepening the knowledge of the historic past of the nation, the cherishing of its traditions became the basis of the activity not only of the underground Lithuanian youth, but also of families as well. The role of history in the resistance was also acknowledged by the Party.

Hiding of the Lithuanian historical past and its falsification encouraged schoolchildren, students, people of the country to look for answers themselves. The historic past of the nation was interesting to the youth during the whole Soviet occupation period. Members of especially secret organizations searched for history books published in independent Lithuania, collected them, sought for the information about the past of Lithuania as well as wanted to understand better the political processes taking place in Lithuania<sup>64</sup>.

After carrying out the research it became clear that the respondents confirmed the assumptions of the researchers that during the Soviet times, a part of the society not only was interested in the history of Lithuania, but also taught their children about it at home “from old books of history they

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<sup>64</sup> J. R., Bagušauskas *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Resistance of Lithuanian Youth against the Soviet Regime and its Repression), p. 96.

found at home so that children learnt about the truth of the past. In Soviet Lithuania, the history of Lithuania was not taught" (respondent 15). Only one respondent (7) indicated: "All people were afraid to have books on the history of independent Lithuania. Some of them had them, but they risked and many of them suffered because of it. Such books were called 'anticommunist propaganda' by the representatives of the Soviet system". But most of the respondents (16) did not teach the history of Lithuania deliberately from the books published in the interwar Lithuania. "They learnt from the books published in the Soviet times" (respondent 18). Most of the respondents, despite of the decade they were born in, were satisfied with the knowledge about the past of Lithuania as provided at schools: "We learnt about it at school. There were some lessons about the history of Lithuania in the general curriculum of history" (respondent 23). "I did not teach my children the history of Lithuania deliberately. They learnt about it at school as much as they needed. I worked" (respondent 11).

There was no distinct resistance in families expressed in teaching the children about the past of the nation or them being interested in it themselves reading the books published before the Soviet times. It might have been determined not by the Soviet propaganda, but the absence of books of Independent Lithuania. The Party banned them, and families, who used to have them, either did not retain them or hid them.

## Conclusions

The Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1940. It banned the national flag, the national anthem, coat of arms, the books published in the interwar period that analysed the past of the nation, its achievements, fiction literature that contradicted the Soviet ideology. The Soviet ideology, proletarian internationalism were thrust to the Lithuanian society, and it was denationalized.

The Soviet authorities paid much attention to the family, and especially mother who educated children. The government acknowledged that her role in the education of the young generation was the most important, and therefore by all means it tried to attract women to the social, industrial, political work. The Soviet Constitution guaranteed the equality of men and women, and the family was regarded as the most important cell of the society.

The Soviet authorities, while carrying out the propaganda and passing laws, sought to make the family a pillar of the Soviet power and government.

I could state that it partially succeeded in it. Most of the respondents said that the government took care of the family and the education of children.

The research revealed that families resisted the Soviet occupation passively. The spiritual resistance was the most active, and it was very difficult for the Soviet authorities to suppress it. Going to theatre and church was the most evidently expressed form of spiritual resistance.

The Soviet government affected the family and the youth through education institutions – schools. It revealed the attitude of respondents towards the unidealized history. The respondents saw no threat for the young people's awareness with regards to the national issues (the attitude towards the past of the nation). I dare state that the Soviet system affected families in this field most of all.

An important form of the spiritual resistance of the family was the celebration of national festivals. All respondents stated that during the Soviet period they knew about the Independence Day of Lithuania – February 16<sup>th</sup>, but they did not celebrate it often, they were afraid of repressions. The most distinctive resistance was the commemoration of the Day of All Saints. It was a massive tribute to the heroes of the nation. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the Soviet authorities tried to quell demonstrations, visiting of the graves, but in the 1970s and 1980s they did not forbid it, but were very watchful to avoid meetings and demonstrations of people.

In families, the national symbols of Lithuania were not expressed as a form of resistance against the Soviet system. Only few respondents had them, cherished them and regarded them of special importance.

## **Rodzina litewska – rdzeń pokojowego oporu wobec sowieckiej okupacji**

### **Streszczenie**

Litwa znalazła się pod okupacją Związku Radzieckiego w 1940 roku. Litewskiemu społeczeństwu narzucono sowiecką ideologię i proletariacki internacjonalizm w celu denacjonalizacji.

Sowieckie władze poświęcały dużo uwagi rodzinie, w szczególności matkom, które wychowywały dzieci. Władze centralne zdawały sobie doskonale sprawę z tego, że matki odgrywały najważniejszą rolę w wychowaniu młodego pokolenia i dlatego wszelkimi sposobami usiłowały zaangażować je w pracę społeczną, przemysłową i polityczną. Sowiecka konstytucja gwarantowała równouprawnienie mężczyzn i kobiet a rodzina była uznawana za najważniejszą komórkę społeczną.

Badania wykazały, że rodziny stawiały bierny opór sowieckiej okupacji. Najbardziej aktywną formą był opór duchowy i władzom sowieckim bardzo trudno było to stłumić. Chodzenie do teatru i kościoła było najbardziej widocznym czy oczywistym wyrazem oporu duchowego.

Ważną formą duchowego oporu rodzin było też obchodzenie świąt narodowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rodzina, denacjonalizacja, opór duchowy, ideologia sowiecka

### **Lithuanian Family – a Hearth of the Unarmed Resistance against the Soviet Occupation**

#### **Abstract**

The Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1940. The Soviet ideology, proletarian internationalism were thrust to the Lithuanian society, and it was denationalized.

The Soviet authorities paid much attention to the family, especially to a mother who educated children. The government acknowledged that her role in the education of the young generation was the most important, and therefore by all means it tried to attract women to the social, industrial and political work. The Soviet Constitution guaranteed the equality of men and women, and the family was regarded as the most important cell of the society.

The research revealed that families resisted the Soviet occupation passively. The spiritual resistance was the most active, and it was very difficult for the Soviet authorities to suppress it. Going to theatre and church was the most evidently expressed form of spiritual resistance.

An important form of the spiritual resistance of the family was the celebration of national festivals.

**Key words:** family, denationalization, spiritual resistance, Soviet ideology

### **Литовская семья – основа мирного сопротивления против советской оккупации**

#### **Абстракт**

Литва попала под оккупацию Советского Союза в 1940 году. С целью денационализации литовской общественности удалось навязать советскую идеологию и пролетарский интернационализм. Советская власть уделяла большое внимание семье, в особенности матерям, воспитывающим детей. Центральные власти понимали, что матери играли самую главную роль в воспитании молодого поколения, и поэтому всеми способами старались их вовлечь в общественную, производственную и политическую работу. Советская Конституция гарантировала мужчинам и женщинам равные права, а семья считалась самым важным общественным звеном.



Исследования показали, что семьи оказывали довольно пассивное против советской оккупации. Самым активным сопротивлением являлось сопротивление духовное, которое для советской власти было очень трудно подавить. Посещение театра и церкви было наиболее реальным и очевидным выражением духовного сопротивления. Важную роль в духовном сопротивлении играло также празднование национальных праздников.

**Ключевые слова:** семья, денационализация, духовное сопротивление, советская идеология

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**Virginija Jurėnienė**, prof. dr historii, pracuje na Wydziale Filozofii i Kulturoznawstwa Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego Wydziale Humanistycznym w Kownie (*Vilniaus universitetas Kauno fakultetas*). Zainteresowania badawcze: polityczna i socjalna aktywność kobiet litewskich w XX–XXI wieku.

e-mail: virginija.jureniene@khf.vu.lt