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Making Sense of Post-Stalinism: The Lithuanian Writers' Community

> *Our republic is small, and small is our group of writers. I think we have every opportunity to get to know each other well and understand. Do not allow the unhealthy spirit of alienation to penetrate into our collective.*[1]

> (Algimantas Baltakis, 1970, Lithuania)

Introduction

This article seeks to analyse ethnic particularism in practice by investigating how Lithuania, on the periphery of the USSR, carried out the mobilization of a national ideology born of the ethnic particularity promoted by the state combined with the trajectories of local cultural elites. The national ideology in the cultural establishment of Soviet Lithuania was distinguished from other non-Russian ethnic republics by its strong, ethnically oriented elites (*nomenklatura*), its experience of statehood after World War I, and its ability to trace the roots of the statehood to the Middle Ages. The difference between Lithuania and Latvia or Estonia was that Lithuania had relatively few national minorities; thus all spheres of activity were fully dominated by the titular nation.

This reseach looks at local writers as the part of the official cultural establishment, revealing how these writers contributed to the development of national ideology, as well as how political control and national processes affected them. The essay is not about underground writers or

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[1] Stenogram of the 5th Congress of Lithuanian Union of Writers, May 27–28, 1970 (Lithuanian Archive of Literature and Art. f. 34. ap. 1, b. 566., l. 109).

dissidents who challenged the system more openly and associated them-
selves with political nationalism. Rather, it combines a diverse set of re-
search materials, including documents from both Lithuanian and Rus-
sian archives, interviews and memoirs, to examine members of cultural
organizations or artistic trade unions who ciculated their cultural pro-
duction via official channels.

My article deals with three generations of writers in the period from
1945 to 1988 and is focused on their activities and cultural production,
that helped to arouse nationalism in official frames. This analysis does not
reveal a static view of their activities, but rather a dynamic process shap-
ing and changing their practices, so that their contributions to the na-
tional ideology were determined by personal development, the influence
of their social milieu and the peculiarities of the Soviet epoch. The case
of writers is analysed in a broader context of not only literary production
but of cultural development overall.

De-Stalinization is the most fundamental consideration in an anal-
ysis of Lithuania. For all Soviet territories, de-Stalinization was probably
the most definitive of all the Soviet experiences since the Second World
War. It was the first major event to affect Lithuania at the level of Soviet
policy, as earlier major events such as the New Economic Policy (NEP),
the 1930s collectivization of agriculture and the Great Purges had not
extended to the Baltic republics. Writers and other local cultural elites
chronicled and interpreted the shift in their own way at the end of the
1960s. Studying the top elites in the Baltics tells us how different elites
on the Soviet periphery interpreted destalinization and the Thaw in the
1960s. This study also discusses the Soviet central authority and its cul-
tural policies towards its regional subjects.

The post-Stalinist period (from 1956) can be conceived as the time
of the disintegration of communist utopia.[2] The "national question"
vividly reveals these dynamics, illustrating not only what the state "pro-
moted", but also how local actors became subjects in the articulation and

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[2] A. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Com-
munist Utopia,* Stanford, 1995.

enforcement of ethnic policies. Starting with the observation that the Soviet system guaranteed a certain level of national development and a place for the interests of titular nations and local elites, it bears mentioning that the variety of local elites' interests and strategies, embodied specifically in the Soviet regions, resulted in the interpretation or even expansion of particularism. Numerous scholars have analysed Soviet policies that promoted ethnic particularism or shaped ethno-federalism.[3]

The diverse consequences of these Soviet policies are best explained through an understanding of how ethnic elites used state policies, creating their own distinct strategies.[4] For instance, applying political anthropologist F. G. Bailey's process-based approach to the strategies of local actors reveals how structural changes resulted from manoeuvring by individuals. Various studies on Soviet bureaucracy illustrate that informal practices and strategies were increasingly influential in institutions in the post-Stalinist period. Existing alongside the multitude of formal rules, such informal rules depended on social networks and everyday life. Informal circles[5] (*kruzhok*) of intellectuals drew on personal friendships to engage in activism using informal communication and mutual support among members, showing how the structure of relationships around a person or groups affected beliefs or behaviours, or drew boundaries, based on generational lines, intellectual lines or biographies. Despite the efforts of the Soviet partocracy, the *kruzhok* phenomenon remained important in any writer's *social milieu*, which helps to explain the different life and career trajectories[6] of cultural workers in different Soviet republics.

[3] Y. Slezkine, The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism, *Slavic Review*, 1994, vol. 53, no. 2, p. 414–452; R. G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, Indiana, 1991; P. Roeder, Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization, *World Politics*, 1991, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 196–233.

[4] F. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics*, New York, 1969.

[5] B. Walker, Kruzhok Culture: The Meaning of Patronage in the Early Soviet Literary World, *Contemporary European History*, 2002, vol. 11, no. 1, February.

[6] Even peasants made their trajectories in the face of collectivization, Sh. Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*, Oxford, 1994.

Standardizing the Role of Soviet Writers in the Stalinist State

A famous quote from a speech Josef Stalin gave at the home of Maxim Gorky in 1932 reveals the importance of writers in the cultural process: "Man proceeds in his life. However, you need to help him to transform his spirit. The human spirit is a very important production. You are the engineers of human spirits". Despite the abundance of utopian ideas in the Soviet vanguard and the prevalence of a variety of intellectual circles, Bolsheviks fulfilling utopian ideals increasingly attempted to impose standardizations that Soviet writers of the 1920s could not avoid. This standardization of cultural processes always aligned with some authors' strategies to be "close to power" and "to ensure appropriate supply". So great was writers' importance to the state that in 1919 the Politburo approved the Moscow Union of Professional Writers' application for inclusion in the uppermost food supply category.[7]

Standardization of the writer's role gradually increased as of the early 1920s. In June 1922, Leon Trotsky proposed monitoring young poets and writers to ensure their appropriate orientation, keeping lists of loyal authors, imposing censorship based on pedagogical style, and of course providing writers with some financial support.[8] This proposal was supported by Stalin – who mentioned the importance of organizing "Soviet oriented poets"[9] – and several other leaders, and was soon approved by the Politburo.[10] By the mid 1920s, their support of proletarian writers in particular had started to be more visible[11], and by the end of the decade

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[7] Postanovlenie politbiuro RKP (b) o prodovol'stvennom snabzhenii pisatelei, 16 avgusta 1919 g. , *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia inteligentsiia. Dokumenty CK RKP(b) – VKP(b), VChK – OGPU – NKVD o kult'turnoi politike, 1917–1953 gg.*, Moscow, 1999, p. 13.

[8] Zapiska J.D. Trockogo v Politbiuro CK RKP 9b) o molodych pisateliach i khudozhnikakh, 20 iiunia 1922 ,*Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia inteligentsiia*, p. 36–37.

[9] Zapiska I.V. Stalina v Politbyuro CK RKP (b) po povodu predlozhenii L.D.Trockogo o molodych pisatelyach i khudozhnikakh, 3 iiulia 1922 g., *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia inteligentsiia*, p. 38.

[10] Postanovlenie politbyuro CK RKP (b) 'O molodykh pisateliakh i khudozhnikakh', 6 iiulya 1922 g., *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia inteligentsiia*, p. 40.

[11] The Politburo's "Party Policies on Literature" (18 June 1925) recognized that there was still no hegemony of proletarian writers and that the party needed to help those writers earn the historic right to such hegemony. The Politburo also mentioned that *poputchiki* were needed to help pro-

it was clear that proletarian writers and their organization, RAPS (*Rossiiskaia Assotsiatsiia Proletarskikh Pisatelei*), were much preferred over various clubs or groups of literary people (*poputchiki)* regarded as insufficiently loyal.

The dynamics of the relations between the official writer (the intellectual) and the Soviet system are reflected in a large spectrum of authors' involvement, from deep involvement in the ideology at one extreme to retreat from the system as an ideological-political force on the other. Along the timeline of major events from the 1920s to the 1980s, one finds independent groups suppressed, alternative utopian representations diminished (even Mayakovsky's futurism became too suspicious). Stalinism implemented as the only legitimate utopia, introduction of socialist realism, the organization of the First Writers Congress, and the experience of the Great Purges and Second World War. The post-Stalinist period is identified as a time of significant changes, brought about, it should be emphasized, by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization. Hot-button topics ranged from legal *shestidesiatniki* status to illegal *samizdat* actions, from promotion of human rights (as seen with the Helsinki groups) to support of Russian nationalism using the image of the Russian peasant (i.e. images of the *Ruskij muzhyk* described in *derevenskaya proza*) welcoming perestroika.

A general picture emerges from the experiences of writers in population centers, mainly Moscow and Leningrad. In Soviet regions, certain specifics applied to internal dynamics and Soviet policies. First to be mentioned are ethnic processes, which were consciously not ignored, but managed by ordering affirmative action guaranteeing a certain amount of preferential support to national minorities.[12] Room was left for ethnic particularities, so those frames endured at the broader level of "*korenizatsyia*" policies in the field of culture during the 1920s and 1930s. In the prominent republic of Ukraine, for instance, where affirmative action

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fessionalize these proletarian writers, and that there were also trends favoring a new bourgeoisie. See Postonovlenie politbyuro CK RKP (b) "O politike partii v oblasti khudozhestvennoi literatury, 18 iiunia 1925 g.", *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaia inteligentsiia*, p. 53–55.

[12] T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*, Ithaca, 2001.

and *korenizatsiya* policies were most actively introduced, it was no coincidence that, in a meeting with Ukrainian literati on 12 February 1929, Stalin mentioned[13] that in the course of reinforcing a national culture, it was crucial to unify that national culture on the basis of common social content, and to devote maximum effort to this development. He assured his audience that the arrival of a single international language and a single international socialist culture was just too far in the future. Yet national processes were never one of Stalin's goals, but only a tool to enable fulfilment of other aims. After 1932 and 1934, when the method of socialist realism was introduced in the field of literature, he used this tool to ensure that the result of cultural production was *appropriate content* in the *appropriate channels*. During and after the Great Purges of 1937–1938, the open support for *korenizatsyia* policies diminished, and ethnic cleansing practices targeting disloyal national groups[14] became one of the Soviet leadership's top priorities.

Lithuanian Writers during Stalinism: Legitimizing the New Order, Experiencing Deadlock

In Soviet Lithuania, the Union of Writers (UW) was founded just after the initial Soviet occupation in 1940, at that time a number of writers actively participated in Lithuania's incorporation and legitimized the process. The UW was responsible not only for showing the advantages of the new system, but also for participating in the construction of historical memory. The latter was done by emphasizing the Nazis' brutality and the exploitative power of the Lithuanian "bourgeois regime" from 1918 to 1940, and by promoting local heroes of the war, labour, and acts of selflessness. This required " speeding up revolutionary visualization" of the new order, whilst the rest of the USSR had already experienced such visualization over approximately 20 years of evolution.

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[13] Iz nepravlennoi stenogrammy vystupleniia I.V. Stalina na vstreche s ukrainskimi literatorami, 13 fevralia, 1929, *Vlast' i khudozhestvennaya intelligentsia,* p. 102–107.
[14] T. Martin, op. cit., p. 26–27.

At a writers' meeting on 26 February 1944, Kostas Korsakas, head of the UW, mentioned that the "Lithuanian nation misses the spoken word from Lithuanian writers [...]. In Lithuanian villages, a redress of the harm done by the German occupier is taking place, and writers are welcome to participate in the process in order to visualize this reconstruction artistically. "[15] High party officials and ideologists understood the "visualization of achievements" and "mastery of the spoken word" as crucial for re-establishing Soviet control. Most of functionaries saw these tasks as much more relevant to literature than to other areas of culture, such as music or art and crafts. Literature was required to conform to an austere style based on the tradition of *socialist realism* that could not be changed, and to comply with ideological principles that prioritized the class struggle and distanced from bourgeois nationalism. The First Secretary of Communist Party Antanas Sniečkus, who held his position for over 30 years, announced the fight against bourgeois nationalism in history, literature, and arts at the local party plenum on 10–12 April 1945. In his speech, he stated, "we have to revise the cultural heritage of the Lithuanian nation, throwing out everything that was reactionary."[16] The main newspaper "Pravda" responded to this speech by stating that Soviet Lithuanian writers must take the line of the *socialist realism* principles defined by the great creators of socialism and by authoritative Soviet writers. During World War Two and the post-war period, Lithuanian writers, like the rest of the republic's cultural intelligentsia, were new participants in the game. During their activities in the Soviet territories not occupied by Hitler, they learned how to be *Soviet* writers. They also had an intensive contact with other writers from around the Soviet Union. One group, the so-called Muscovites (e.g. Antanas Venclova, Petras Cvirka), shaped the new writers' establishment.

These Lithuanian writers had the mission of visualizing Soviet achievements, but recognized that the demands made from above was

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[15] Tarybinių Rašytojų Pareigos ir Uždaviniai [Duties and Tasks of Soviet Writers], *Tarybų Lietuva*, 1944, vol. 93, (Lithuanian Archive of Literature and Art, f. 34, op. 1, d.1, l. 27).

[16] J. Lankutis (ed.), *Literatūrinio gyvenimo kronika, 1940–1960* [Chronicle of Literary life, 1940–1960], Vilnius, 1970, p. 87.

not an easy task. The *zhdanovschina*[17] in Lithuania showed that even major writers did not know how to produce texts that did not elicit complaints about their form or content. Like the Great Purges in Georgia, the *zhdanovschina* in Lithuania included macro terror or control policies that clearly signalled that Soviet writers' work could only – serve for processes of indoctrination. As Antonio Gramsci put it, they could not go against the party line (the interests of the proletariat) with their autonomous positions. For instance, starting in 1946, according to the Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party Kazys Preikšas, local writers did not attempt to write innovative books or poetry for nearly 10 years. The most favoured writings included various stories of the "Soviet order" (*Sovietskij stroj*) describing the emergence of *kolkhoz*es or depictions of New Soviet people (as seen in the literary work of Teofilis Tilvytis and Aleksandras Gudaitis-Guzevičius). To find legitimate themes permitting avoidance of a vulgar application of socialist realism was a serious problem. The *zhdanovshchina* also forced writers to exercise extreme precautions while producing texts, which clearly diminished the dynamics of the literary field. Even the Stalin Prize laureate Antanas Venclova, a local writer who once brought "Stalin's sun"[18], attracted the attention of the Lithuanian KGB for writing poetry about Vilnius without mentioning the Russians' role in retaking the city from the Nazis.

The Ten-day Festival (*dekada*) of Lithuanian Literature and Art in 1948 and a similar *dekada* in 1954 (3–15 March) in Moscow revealed that unlike the previous *dekada*, e.g. that of Georgia in 1937, the Lithuanian *dekada*s had not made the headlines in major newspapers. In the case of the 1954 *dekada* local leaders – the party secretaries Antanas Sniečkus and Vladas Niunka, and the Lithuanian Council of Ministers' chairman,

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[17] The campaign against cosmopolitanism launched by Central Committee secretary Andrei Zhdanov in 1946. Initially the 1946 resolution of the Central Committee was directed against two literary magazines, *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, which had published supposedly apolitical, "bourgeois", individualistic works of the satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko and the poet Anna Akhmatova.
[18] This phrase referred to the August 1940 trip to Moscow by a group of local intellectuals to ask the Soviet government to admit Lithuania to the USSR. This visit facilitated the annexation of Lithuania and lent some legitimacy to the previous Lithuanian occupation. Current Lithuanian historiography presents this visit as a traitorous act.

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Mečislovas Gedvilas – rather than writers themselves or their reviewers – were the central representatives of Lithuanian literature. Dissociating local cultural life from bourgeois interwar Lithuania, they stressed that Lithuanian writers were developing an appropriate culture, and admitted that many lessons still need to be learnt. More attention was given to the Stalin Prize winner Aleksandras Guzevičius-Gudaitis, who wrote about the struggle for Soviet power, and writer Antanas Vienuolis, who had lived in the Caucasus and incorporated Georgian, Armenian and Azeri motifs into his literary work. An article written by Gedvilas highlighted Vienuolis's novel "Naudžiūnas Mansion" ("Naudžiūno dvaras"), which showed the nation suffering under the conditions of the bourgeois order and exposed the enemy's intentions to portray previous Lithuanian history as a golden age.

During the 1954 *dekada*, few enthusiastic panegyrics came to Lithuanian writers from central colleagues, though they also made some patronizing remarks and even criticism. "It's too little to create an image of the hero that is "correct in every respect"," said Georgiy Munblit: "We still have to make it attractive, exciting the reader's heart. Lithuanian writers have not always mastered this art." V. Lidina spoke about the young writer Avyžius, who does not believe in the characters he creats and tries to explain, "chew" the idea of the "story". Sergei Antonov focused on many Lithuanian writers' fear of showing life in all its complexity, clashes and contradictions. Giving the example of the stories written by Jonas Šimkus, Antonov revealed a didactic and cautionary scheme alongside the artistic expression.[19]

Despite the growing number of local writers and poets, we must acknowledge that Lithuanian writers adapted very little to the prevailing culture under Stalinism. Until the post-Stalinist period, local writers neither settled on a stable pattern to ensure the incorporation of ethnohistoric themes, nor became a proactive vanguard producing a revolutionary culture for the newly established Soviet Lithuania. Adaptation of simple schemes of socialist construction (*stroitel'stvo*) did not build

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[19] Sovershenstvovat' masterstvo prozaikov, *Literaturnaja gazeta*, 1954 O3 11, p. 1.

up enough authority for a dominant generation of writers, except a few people who inherited significant cultural capital from the pre-war period (e.g. Antanas Venclova).

Making Sense of De-Stalinization

Khruschev's speech at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party on the 25 February 1956 was a key event in Soviet cultural life. Khrushchev's Thaw not only inspired the emergence of a new generation, the so-called "shestidesiatniki"20, but also turned them to critique various errors of Stalinism in favour of a better socialism. This new generation graduated from Soviet universities, where they mostly studied literature (or journalism or other literary fields21). This generation was more educated than their senior colleagues and was also more affected by de-Stalinization and belief in the idea of creating a better form of socialism. At its core, this generation was connected to cosmopolitan ideas and humanist individualism.22 Its members read "the reform-minded journal "Novy Mir", had a passionate respect for high culture, and listened to the songs of the balladeers Bulat Okudzhava and Vladimir Vysotsky on their tape recorders".23 Such figures as Evgeni Yevtushenko, Vassili Aksionov, and Andrei Voznesensky, who brought modernism to Soviet literature, did not dominate in the cultural institutions (the Union of Writers was still controlled by rather Stalinist-type personalities like Alexei Surkov and Georgi Markov). However, they earned enormous popularity in the society and were acknowledged by some officials at certain levels and were able to participate in official channels, publishing and disseminating

[20] J. Furst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-war Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism*, Oxford-New York, 2010.

[21] Many of them came from the Institute of Philology, Literature and History (Moscow), in 1941 included into Moscow university.

[22] V. Zubok, *Zhivago's Children. The Last Russian Intelligentsia*, Cambridge–Massachusetts–London, 2009.

[23] S. Fitzpatrick, Cultivating their dachas, *London review of books*, 2009, vol. 31, no. 17, see http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n17/sheila-fitzpatrick/cultivating-their-dachas

their production (though some, such as Joseph Brodsky, became increasingly marginalized for taking more open positions).

The picture at the Soviet peripheries differed slightly from that at the centre. De-Stalinization played a particular role in Lithuania by broadening the opportunities for discussion of ethnic issues. Following Michel Foucault, "discursive formations" (organized dispersion of statements), which can also encompass ethno-historic lines (as a certain type of knowledge), look like a rather dynamic process carried out on the basis of a set of relations.[24] In Lithuania, de-Stalinization also led to an increasingly dynamic local literature, an explosion of the "national" narrative within the literature, and a power shift in the writers' establishment. Given the recent loss of Lithuania's state sovereignty, the historical legacy from the end of the *zhdanovshchina* until Khrushchev's Thaw was perceived more as a threat than an opportunity (an opportunity seized by Georgians and other titular nationalities at the time). Thus, the younger generation brought changes. Eduardas Mieželaitis introduced Soviet Lithuanian literature to newer forms and ideas. Mieželaitis, who received a Lenin Prize for his poem "Man", written in 1960, represented the line of human universalism.[25] His impact was not limited to literary processes in Lithuania: later on, Robert Rozhdestvensky recognized that a real *miezhelaytisatsia* [Mieželaitilisation] process was affecting young Russian poets. De-Stalinization boosted the importance of the literary circle creating more space for alternative positions than the Stalinist period had offered.

In many cases, different influential circles had ties to the leading figures of a particular generation. In the 1960s, for example, a few rival generations coexisted in the republics. In Lithuania, the first generation was

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[24] M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London–New York, 2002.

[25] Early on, Mieželaitis's universalism was not locally supported. His poem "Man" first gained support outside the republic, at the central level. It was first published in Russian; the success legitimated it and then the poem was published in Lithuanian. Mieželaitis's growing authority opened doors to the local literary dynamics, which increasingly promoted ethno-nostalgia rather than the ideas of human individualism. Mieželaitis himself was a supporter of Lithuania's literary heritage. Vilius Ivanauskas' interview with literature reviewer Vanda Zaborskaitė (March 19 and 26, 2010).

the only that had actively participated in legitimizing the Soviet order in occupied Lithuania. The 1960s saw a more significant shift favouring a new configuration of the UW. The older generation clearly could not meet the demands for ethnic development and new forms, whereas the younger generation combined greater attention to demands for ethnic expression with intensified "search for newer forms".

The second generation included the names of Justinas Marcinke-vičius, Alfonsas Maldonis, Algimantas Baltakis, Mykolas Sluckis, Algir-das Pocius and Vytautas Bubnys. These writers, who at the outset of their careers had been supported by their patron Mieželaitis[26], entered the stage during Khrushchev's Thaw and embodied the spirit of *shestidesi-atniki,* searching for new forms. In the mid 1960s this group gained a leading position in the writers' establishment. The Thaw and literary pro-cesses in Moscow (involving the *shestidesiatniki* and related phenomena) created more room for the expansion of Lithuanian literature's bounda-ries of form and content. The generational experiences of Marcinkevičius and Baltakis coincided with the generation of Yevtushenko, Rozhdest-venski, Voznesensky and Aksionov, and over time these writers all became friends. This generation of Lithuanian authors introduced new literary forms and began to speak of national heritage, combining the ideas of Soviet-type universalism with a growing emphasis on ethno-historical narratives. Lithuanian identity is rooted in multiple sources of national myths (orientation to the medieval state vs. 19th-century peasant-orient-ed nationalism after the fall of the Lithuanian-speaking nobility).

This Lithuanian generation of the 1960s actively manoeuvred be-tween strict and moderate top party officials. For instance, in 1970 at the Congress of UW, the editor of the journal "Pergalė", Algimantas Baltakis, accused young writers of daring to question not only the classi-cal Soviet writers, but also the authority of the prominent poet Justinas Marcinkevičius. In the 1970s Marcinkevičius's dramas were performed in Vilnius National Drama Theatre and were enormously popular among

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[26] Vladislav Zubok includes among the *shestidesiantiki* not only people from the same genera-tion, but in some situations those born in the 1920s, whose particular experiences were later shaped by the atmosphere of the 1960s. Zubok, op. cit..

1. Algirdas Pocius and Eduardas Mieželaitis. Ca 1960

local audiences, including some members of the Lithuanian *nomenklatu-ra* circles. His historical drama "Mažvydas" told the story of the publica-tion of the first Lithuanian book in the 16th century. Its pronunciation of the word "Lie-tu-va" (Li-thu-a-nia) with special intonation not only gripped theatre audiences, but was also later chanted at mass meetings held in Vilnius during the national revival at the end of 1980s.

Translations of Lithuanian texts into the Russian language ap-peared in the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. A letter from the Lithuanian UW in 1975 mentioned that "we need to thank interpret-ers, firstly our Russian friends. Since 1970, 64 books have been published in central publishing houses."[27] Dissemination of Lithuanian cultural

[27] The Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts, f. 631, op. 30, d. 1676, l. 25–26.

production received strong support from the Lithuanian Literature Commission of the USSR UW. Bella Zaleskaya, a consultant specializing in Lithuanian literature, began her work on this commission in the early 1960s and stayed in that postion until the breakup of USSR, making personal friendships with prominent Lithuanian writers, helping them promote their books at the central level and get the books translated and reviewed.

Local *shestidesiatniki* writers, however, pushed acceptable boundaries by shifting the perspective from the Lithuanian *people* to the Lithuanian *nation* and Lithuanian *history*. Thanks to his UW networks and privileged status, Marcinkevičius was able to open up a legal channel to say more than his colleagues dared. The end of the 1960s was also significant for two other reasons. First, Lithuanian literature gained more recognition among the central literati. Second, after years of constraints, Lithuanian cultural workers had more opportunities to contact with the Lithuanian émigré community in the West, meeting moderate expatriate visitors to Lithuania and using other channels (correspondence, literature from the West, etc.) to strengthen the ties to Lithuanian émigrés. A decade later, in 1980, the Secretary of the USSR UW, in a meeting evaluating the literature of the Baltic republics, acknowledged that more effort was needed to combat reactionary Baltic emigration[28] as an open expression of anti-Soviet sentiment.

In the cases of Marcinkevičius and his colleagues Baltakis, Maldonis, Bubnys and other writers, a *kruzhok* alliance incorporating personal friendships and mutual support within the cultural establishment was an active force for ensuring the dynamism of younger authors[29]. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, this alliance helped to integrate the

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[28] Meeting of Secretariat of the USSR Union of Writers Board, September 23, 1980, protocol No. 22. The Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts, f. 631, op. 30, d. 1928, l. 1–8.

[29] Grouping in literature *(grupovshchina v literature)* had been constantly criticized as undesirable behavior under Stalin, and this attitude persisted throughout the Khruschev and Brezhnev periods. See Vospominania K.L. Zelinskogo "Vecher u Gorkogo" (26 oktyabr'a 1932 goda), *Mezhdu molotom i nakoval'nei. Soiuz sovetskikh pisatelei SSSR. Dokumenty i kommentarii*, Moscow, 2011, p. 161.
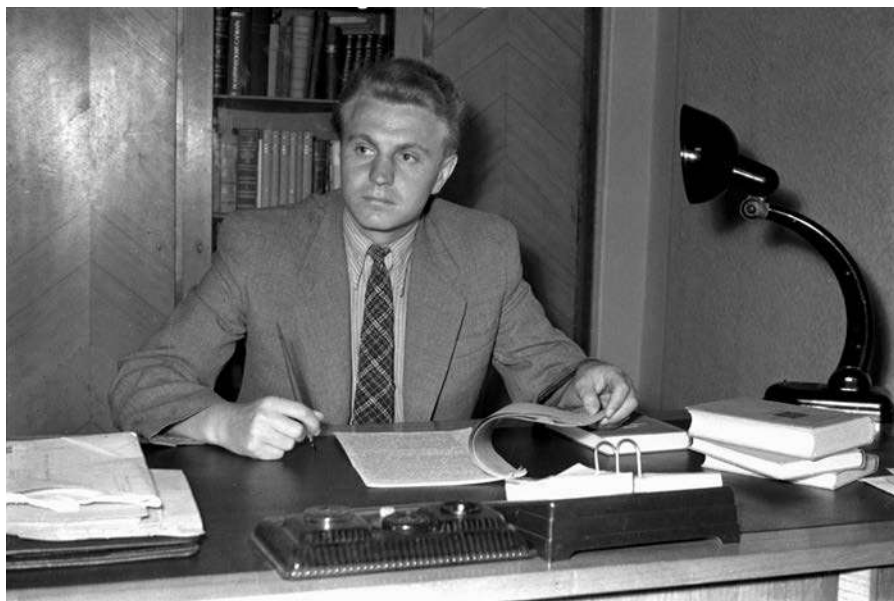
2. Poet Justinas Marcinkevičius. Ca 1960

shestidesiatniki generation into the main body of the local writers' organization. These writers were colleagues who shared personal friendships and also lived near each other in Vilnius neighbourhoods.[30] They periodically rotated their leadership positions in the writers' establishment (e.g. positions in the UW, posts at journals, etc.), which strengthened the status of particular writers within the *kruzhok* (e.g. Marcinkevičius, Baltakis and Maldonis played considerably greater roles than had their former patron Mieželaitis). Significantly, this generation held their positions until the national revival in 1988. Several authors from this circle (i.e. Marcinkevičius, Maldonis and Bubnys) were elected leaders of Sąjūdis, the organization embodying the national movement.

[30] V. Ivanauskas, *Lietuviškoji nomenklatūra biurokratinėje sistemoje. 1968–1988* [Lithuanian Nomenklatura in the bureaucratic system. 1968–1988], Vilnius, 2011.

3. 4th Congress of Union of Writers of Soviet Lithuania in Vilnius. 1965

At this point, the real challenge for the second generation was the third generation. Boasting such leading lights as Tomas Venclova, Marcelijus Martinaitis, Sigitas Geda, Jonas Juškaitis and Juozas Aputis, the third generation was more affected by modernism, structuralism and the school of semiotics centred around Yuri Lotman. They covered various content, from formalism or cosmopolitan values (Venclova) to archaic expressions of Lithuanian culture (Martinaitis and Geda). They also criticized the "exaggerated popularity of Marcinkevičius". In the 1970s, when the Brezhnev Doctrine (1968) opposed any liberalization of the communist system, this new generation was constantly criticized by the second generation. The writers who did not try to stay on the fringes of local networks and accept the compromise situation of "being in, but without claim to managing positions", were left out of the game. For instance,

4. Antanas Venclova,
his wife Eliza and son
Tomas Venclova. 1959

Tomas Venclova, a member of dissenting Moscow circles who later joined the Helsinki Group defending human rights, was not accepted into the local UW in 1972. Interestingly, the Russian dissident poet Joseph Brodsky, a good friend of Tomas Venclova although not a prominent official writer, had used a Lithuanian topic in Russian unofficial poetry with his poem "Lithuanian Divertissement". Literature reviewer Andrei Ustinov, a participant in several literary *kruzhki* in the 1980s, acknowledged[31] that this poem influenced the mystification of Lithuania among young literati as something really Western – the Non-Us or the Other – in culture, cities, and nature.

[31] Vilius Ivanauskas' interview with Andrei Ustinov (30 May 2013) .

Conclusions:
Defining Self-Centred Cultural Elites in Lithuania

This article has demonstrated that the legal space opened for ethnic particularism in the Soviet system led to stagnation in the cultural development in Lithuania during the Stalin era. The lessened top-down regulation in the post-Stalin period allowed local elites greater room for manoeuvre. A number of factors contributed to the different trajectories of different republics' literary elites in this later period: the situation in the Stalin era, historical development, the generations dominating a given republic's cultural establishment, the local elites' positions with regard to the centre, and the centre's attitude towards different regions.

Table:
Ethnic particularism in the Stalinist and Post-Stalinist periods

	Stalinist period	Post-Stalinist period
Lithuania	Ethnic particularism in theory, deadlock in practice.	Ethnic particularism in theory and practice, ensured by local elites and from above.

There were several reasons for the small-scale of ethno-historical ambitions in Stalinist Lithuania compared to the post-Stalinist period. The cultural connection between Lithuania and the centre was weaker than it was in other republics such as Georgia. Meanwhile, Lithuanian local elites, having recently lost their state sovereignty, felt stronger pressure to avoid historical topics that reminded people of the ideals of an independent Lithuanian nation-state.

The period of the Thaw brought change to the cultural development in the Soviet peripheries. In Lithuania, de-Stalinization presented a real challenge to the older generation by keeping it from establishing a stable pattern for the cultural work. Yet it increased the possibilities

for younger generations of writers in Lithuania as they combined their "search for new forms" with the ethno-historical values.

However, this example shows how local elites used the resources and possibilities available to manoeuvre by interpreting or even expanding ethnic particularism. Lithuanian UW members clearly exhibited a characteristic localism (*mestnichestvo*), Lithuanian writers maintained a more peripheral position and participated relatively weakly in the "friendship of nations" (*druzhba narodov*) channels of the Soviet cultural establishment. Each Soviet republic had its UW, however Lithuanian UW had less members in this artistic trade union than did other Soviet republics of similar size. According to the data from 1969 in the separate UW of the republics[32] there were 285 Georgians, 320 Armenians and 263 Azeris. Baltic writers had far fewer representatives: 149 Latvians, 118 Estonians, and 105 Lithuanians. On the other hand, the UW of the Baltic republics had more members than did the Central Asian republics: 177 Kazakhs, 74 Tajiks, 78 Turkmen, 140 Uzbeks, and 101 Kyrghiz. Compared with their Baltic colleagues, Caucasian writers were also much better represented in the UW of Russian Federation[33], including 12 Georgians, 43 Armenians, 7 Latvians, 7 Estonians and 2 Lithuanians members.

Alongside membership numbers, the degree of contact between centre and periphery also revealed different levels of participation of Lithuanians and Georgians in Soviet literary processes. The USSR Minister of Culture Yekaterina Furtseva had never been to Lithuania and wasn't interested in the republic's cultural development. An increasing number of recognized central writers started coming to Lithuania after the 1960s. The local younger generation developed extensive relations with Moscow *shestidesiatniki* poets such as Yevtsuhneko, Rozhdestevski and Voznesenski.

Contacts between the local nomenclatura of the republics and USSR leaders were also meaningful – as was the absence of such contacts. Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov and

[32] Statistical report on the USSR UW, August 1, 1969. Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts, f. 631, op. 45, d.165, l. 2.
[33] Ibid.l. 5–6.

Konstantin Chernenko being the first *personas* of the Soviet state, never visited Lithuania. Mikhail Gorbachev visited Lithuania once in 1990, a year before the breakup of the USSR, attempting to convince local leaders not to take actions that were too radical. Lithuania usually was more on the sidelines. During the 45 years of post-war Soviet rule, only a few Lithuanians made the carrier to the top management of all-Union ministries, only a few Lithuanians numbered among the low- or middle-ranking officials of the Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and not a single Lithuanian was in the Politburo. Meanwhile, Georgians - like Stalin, Lavrentiy Beria, and Sergo Ordzhonikidze – were over-represented in the central structures of the Soviet state from the very beginning. Analyses have illustrated[34] that under the leadership of Antanas Sniečkus (1945–1974) and Petras Griškevičius (1974–1987), the Lithuanian partocracy maintained comparatively closer ties with local elites, diminishing their participation at the central level and maintaining more self-centred (republic-level oriented) positions.

The Lithuanian cultural establishment did not demonstrate much activism at the All-Union level, so Lithuanian ethno-cultural symbolism was not so widespread throughout the USSR as the ethno-cultural symbolism of the Caucasian republics of Georgia and Armenia. To some extent Lithuanian cultural production also reproduced itself across the USSR, but the majority of local artists did not orient themselves towards careers outside the republic.

Undeniably, the *druzhba narodov* channels increased the visibility of the Lithuanian cultural sphere in other Soviet and even other socialist-bloc lands, widely spreading the names of particular composers, writers, artists, filmmakers and photographers. In general, however, Lithuanians did not have such distinguished positions as those held by their Georgian counterparts. As late as 1988, in a speech at the all-Soviet Congress of Unions, Lithuanian representative Petras Bražėnas argued that even in this congress, Lithuanians were sometimes perceived as Latvians and vice

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[34] See S. Grybkauskas, *Sovietinė nomenklatūra ir pramonė Lietuvoje 1965–1985 metais* [Soviet nomenklatura and industry in Lithuania 1965–1985], Vilnius, 2011; V. Ivanauskas, op. cit.

versa.[35] However, the self-centred orientation of Lithuanian cultural life resulted in metaphorical presentations of "being West", based on less participation in mainstream Soviet culture, and on being relatively autonomous from the rest of the USSR (in other words, on "prestige" localism and more extensive contacts, especially with the United States, than many other Soviet nations had with their Western diasporas). The geographical term "being the western part of the USSR", the historical fact of "being the latest annexed part of the USSR", and a continued relationship with Lithuanian émigré circles also contributed to such perceptions. Nevertheless, it all reveals not only distinct trajectory expressing "national culture", but also a continuum and even an increase in ethnic particularism in Soviet Lithuania, where elite strategies played a significant role.

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Vilius Ivanauskas

Lietuvos sovietinių rašytojų bendruomenė ir postalinizmo reikšmė

Santrauka

Kultūros elitas sovietmečiu aktyviai dalyvavo sovietizacijos politikoje. Kūrybinės są-jungos, tokios kaip Rašytojų sąjunga, nebuvo vien profesinės organizacijos: jos priva-lėjo prisidėti prie visuomenės indoktrinacijos; atsižvelgdamos į oficialiuosius ideolo-ginius reikalavimus jos nuspręsdavo, kas yra „tikrasis" rašytojas, dalyvavo nustatant socialistinio realizmo ribas literatūros lauke. Sovietiniai rašytojai buvo viešai žinomi ir populiarūs visuomenėje asmenys. Jų vaidmuo ir statusas tuometinėje sistemoje buvo ypač svarbus, nes jie aktyviai skleidė sovietinės ideologijos vertybes bei sovietų val-džios pasiekimus.

Šis straipsnis nagrinėja, kaip praktiškai literatūriniame gyvenime reiškėsi etninis partikuliarizmas, kokie buvo pagrindiniai jo etapai, specifika ir svarbiausios figūros. Nagrinėjama, kaip sovietinė Lietuva, būdama viena iš sovietinių respublikų, užtikrino nacionalinės ideologijos sklaidą bei kaip ši sklaida sutapo su vietinio kultūros elito kūrybos ir veiklos trajektorijomis. Straipsnis parodo, kaip postalininiu laikotarpiu kultūriniam isteblišmentui priklausantys rašytojai užsitikrino daugiabriaunį santykį su sistema, kaip jie dalyvavo nacionalinės ideologijos sklaidoje, kaip rašytojus veikė politinės kontrolės instrumentai ir nacionaliniai procesai. Skirtingų kartų rašytojų kūrybinės veiklos analizė leidžia konstatuoti augančius etninius (lokalius) interesus bei didėjantį atstumą tarp oficialiųjų tikslų ir kultūrinio visuomenės sluoksnio kas-dienybės.