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## **T**HE SOVIET SECRET SERVICES IN LITHUANIA (1940–1990). RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN LITHUANIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY SINCE 1991

The KGB was one of the main pillars of the Soviet occupational regime in Lithuania during 1940–90. The main targets of Soviet repression institutions in Lithuania helped the Soviets strengthen their power, supporting the establishment of the communist regime in occupied Lithuania and suppressing anti-Soviet resistance, thus controlling society. That is why historical research in independent Lithuania about the crimes of the Soviet regime is so important in dealing with the heritage of the Soviet system, in searching for the truth, implementing justice, retrieving the victims, and bringing to light the names of criminals against the Lithuanian nation.

Research on the Soviet secret services became possible just after 1991 when Lithuania regained its independence, and KGB documents became available. However, not all the documents remained in Lithuania. During the perestroika period, some were brought away to Russian archives. Today, the former KGB documents became state property and are open to everyone, though with some exceptions. A severe obstacle in researching the KGB in Lithuania is the lack of archive documents about its agents and operational activity because most of the files that were brought away or destroyed were agents' personal files as well as files on operational activity and correspondence between the KGB and Soviets and the Lithuanian Communist Party. Just a small part of such documents remain in Lithuania.

This article aims to describe Lithuanian historical research's main features on Soviet secret services activity in Lithuania after 1990.

## The Soviet Secret Services in Lithuanian Historiography

After regaining independence in 1990, considerable attention was paid to the crimes of the Soviet regime against the Lithuanian nation during Soviet occupation. Historians tried to evaluate the number of victims and name them, analyse the measures and forms of repressions, their targets and outcomes for Lithuania, and find out the organisers and executors' names. The characteristics of the repressive policy, targets, executors, the scales of deportations, and massacres of innocent people in the period 1940–1953 are reflected in works by Liudas Truska, Arvydas Anušauskas, Inga Petravičiūtė,<sup>1</sup> Nijolė Maslauskienė, Inga Petravičiūtė,<sup>2</sup> Vytautas Tininis,<sup>3</sup> and Eugenijus Grunskis.<sup>4</sup> They are valuable because they published documents of repressive institutions and the Lithuanian communist party, reflecting the organisation and implementation of repression. The most thorough researcher of Soviet terror forms, targets, and the mechanism of its implementation in 1940–53 is Arvydas Anušauskas.<sup>5</sup> With the help of archive materials, this author reveals the tragedy of postwar Lithuania, describes all the forms of repression that were used in the period, the conditions in concentration camps and deportation, and the suppression of armed resistance.

In researching the KGB's activities in Lithuania between 1954 and 1990, Anušauskas made some very remarkable contributions.<sup>6</sup> In his works, he analyses different aspects of the KGB: its structure, agent activity, and the struggle with anti-Soviet activity in Lithuania and abroad. KGB methods such as propaganda, discrediting, disinformation, its relationship with the communist party, and its repression policy are reflected in the book by Kristina Burinskaitė.<sup>7</sup> The KGB's system of agents and reliable people are

<sup>1</sup> L. Truska, A. Anušauskas, I. Petravičiūtė, *Sovietinis saugumas Lietuvoje 1940–1953 metais* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 1999), 416 pp.

<sup>2</sup> N. Maslauskienė, I. Petravičiūtė, *Okupantai ir kolaborantai: pirmoji sovietinė okupacija* (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2007), 608 pp.

<sup>3</sup> V. Tininis, *Sovietinė Lietuva ir jos veikėjai* (Vilnius: Enciklopedija, 1994), 335 pp.; V. Tininis, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944–1953*, vol. 3 (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2009), 522 pp.

<sup>4</sup> E. Grunskis, *Lietuvių tautos trėmimai 1940–1941, 1944–1953* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas: Pasaulio lietuvių bendruomenė, 1996), 303 pp.

<sup>5</sup> A. Anušauskas, *Teroras ir nusikaltimai žmoniškumui: pirmoji sovietinė okupacija* (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2006), 238 pp.; id., *Teroras 1940–1958 m.* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), 314 pp.

<sup>6</sup> A. Anušauskas, *KGB Lietuvoje: slaptosios veiklos bruožai* (Vilnius, Vilnius: „Atvažiavo meška“, 2008), 252 pp.; id., *KGB. Visiška slaptai* (Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2015), 464 pp.

<sup>7</sup> K. Burinskaitė, *LSSR KGB ideologija, politika ir veikla 1954–1990 m.* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2015), 264 pp.

reflected in the publications of Nijolė Gaškaitė-Žemaitienė, Lina Okuličiūtė, and Kristina Burinskaitė.<sup>8</sup> Lina Okuličiūtė also analyses the structure of the KGB's personnel.<sup>9</sup> Burinskaitė and Okuličiūtė also analyse the KGB relationship with communist party, their interaction in implementing repressive policies, and their fight against anti-Soviet movements.<sup>10</sup> The KGB's activity against the Lithuanian diaspora is reflected in Darius Juodis's book<sup>11</sup> and Arūnas Streikus's article.<sup>12</sup> The KGB's activity in other spheres like the economy, the struggle against Western radio stations, the youth are reflected in the articles by historians Romualdas Bagušauskas, Nijolė Gaškaitė, Lina Okuličiūtė, and Saulius Grybkauskas.<sup>13</sup>

The brutal and continuous fight against the Catholic Church is explored in Vidas Spengla's solid work.<sup>14</sup> Arūnas Streikus's book is based on documents of the Lithuanian communist party and the KGB, giving concrete facts and analysing the tendencies of both Soviet governments and the KGB against the Catholic Church and the KGB's part in the

<sup>8</sup> N. Gaiškaitė-Žemaitienė, 'MGB-KGB agentūra okupuotoje Lietuvoje', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (1997), 97–105; ead., 'Specprieemonės KGB praktikoje', *Laisvės kovų archyvas*, no. 9 (1993), 203–09; K. Burinskaitė, 'KGB agentų rengimas užsienio žvalgybinėms užduotims ir jų veiklos vertinimas', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2018), 71–80; ead., 'KGB agentai: tipai, funkcijos ir keliami tikslai', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2019), 87–107; ead., 'Lietuvos ryšiai su Vakarais KGB voratinklyje', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2020), 97–120; L. Okuličiūtė, 'KGB agentūrinio-operatyvinio darbo įrankis – konspiraciniai (susitikimų) butai', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2008), 96–112.

<sup>9</sup> L. Okuličiūtė, 'LSSR KGB Kadruž skyrius 1954–1991 m.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2011), 117–31.

<sup>10</sup> L. Okuličiūtė, 'LSRS KGB vadovybė 1954–1990', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (2007), 65–90; K. Burinskaitė, 'LSSR KGB ir LKP CK santykių dinamika 1954–1990 m.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2011), 99–116; ead., 'Slaptosios tarnybos vieta totalitarinėje SSRS', *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, vol. 22 (2008), 117–43; ead., 'LSSR KGB kovos su antisovietiniu pasipriešinimu 1954–1990 metų politinės ir ideologinės prielaidos', *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, vol. 26 (2010), 94–111.

<sup>11</sup> D. Juodis, *Šiapus ir anapus kordono. Sovietų saugumo veikla prieš lietuvių išeiviją 1945–1991 m.* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2016), 471 pp.

<sup>12</sup> A. Streikus, 'Sovietų valdžios "darbas" su išeivija: manipuliavimas kultūriniais ryšiais', *Naujasis židinys-Aidai*, nos 4/5 (2006), 166–69.

<sup>13</sup> J.R. Bagušauskas, 'Užsienio radijo laidos tautos kovoje dėl laisvės sovietinio režimo metais', *Genocidas ir Rezistencija*, no. 2 (2001), 62–91; id., *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 1999), 446 pp.; N. Gaškaitė, 'Jaunimo pasipriešinimas ir jo slopinimas šeštajame – septintajame dešimtmetyje', *Laisvės kovų archyvas*, no. 19 (1996), 5–53; L. Okuličiūtė, 'Juožas Keliuotis KGB taikinyje 1956–1978 m.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (2009), 126–47; S. Grybkauskas, 'KGB veikla sovietinės Lietuvos pramonės įmonėse 1965–1985 m.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2009), 94–111.

<sup>14</sup> V.S. Spengla, *Bažnyčia, "Kronika" ir KGB voratinklis* (Vilnius: Katalikų akademija, 2001), 519 pp.

ensorship system.<sup>15</sup> It is noticeable that Soviet politics and KGB activity against the Catholic Church is most thoroughly researched compared to other anti-Soviet movement actors.

Scientific researchers are very important in evaluating the impact of the Soviet regime to Lithuania. However, memoirs of former dissidents and priests reflect the KGB impact on the most active anti-Soviet activists. To spread information to the international community about the Soviet secret service's crimes and the communist regime in Lithuania, some books are published in English and other languages, although they are written in less academic language to be more suitable for a popular audience.<sup>16</sup>

The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania works especially intensively in these fields. The Centre not only publishes books and articles on this topic but also KGB documents. The collection of documents have been published.<sup>17</sup> Also documents are put on the websites [www.kgbveikla.lt](http://www.kgbveikla.lt) and [www.kgbdocuments.eu](http://www.kgbdocuments.eu). The latter internet site is dedicated to the international community. In this form, they are widely available, because they are the best source about the KGB's actions, methods and structure. Still, there are many subjects that are still open. Of course, historians are limited by the lack of some types of documents. Further research on the KGB's structure, methodology and activity are ongoing.

## Conclusions

Research about the Soviet secret services in Lithuania can be described differently. Chronologically, they deal with two periods: 1940–1954 and 1954–1990. Thematically, they have researched the secret services' structure, methods, and their struggle against armed and unarmed anti-Soviet movements; they have also paid attention to their actions against the Catholic Church, dissidents, emigrants, individuals and organised resistance as well as their activities in the spheres of economy and culture. The Soviet secret services are treated in Lithuanian historiography as the main supporters of the Communist regime and responsible for suppressing

<sup>15</sup> A. Streikus, *Sovietų valdžios antibažnytinė politika Lietuvoje (1944–1999)* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2002), 374 pp.; A. Streikus, 'Ideologinė cenzūra Lietuvoje 1956–1989 m.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (2004), 43–67.

<sup>16</sup> K. Burinskaitė, L. Okuličiūtė, *KGB in Lithuania in 1954–1991* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2010), 48 pp.; A. Anušauskas et al., *Lithuania in 1940–1991. The History of Occupied Lithuania* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2015), 592 pp.; R. Tracevskis, *The Manor of Horror: The Soviet-Era Mass Grave in Vilnius* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2013), 56 pp.; A. Streikus, 'Lithuanian Catholic clergy and the KGB', *Religion, State & Society*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), 63–70.

<sup>17</sup> K. Burinskaitė, L. Okuličiūtė, *KGB slaptieji archyvai 1954–1991 m.* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2011), 563 pp.

anti-Soviet movements. Research on the KGB's activity against specific anti-Soviet groups and their agents is still dominant in historiography because Lithuanian society is highly interested in such issues. However, today more and more topics about the structure, methods and functions of such secret services are becoming essential. At present we have a clearer picture of the Soviet secret services in Lithuania.

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## **Radzieckie tajne służby na Litwie (1940–1990). Badania i ocena w historiografii litewskiej od 1991 roku**

**Streszczenie:** W niepodległej Litwie historyczne badania zbrodni reżimu sowieckiego i działań KGB są ważnym aspektem mierzenia się z dziedzictwem

systemu sowieckiego, docierania do prawdy, dochodzenia sprawiedliwości, odnajdowania ofiar systemu i ujawniania nazwisk zbrodniarzy przeciwko narodowi litewskiemu. Badanie sowieckich tajnych służb stało się możliwe po 1991 r. i odzyskaniu przez Litwę niepodległości oraz uzyskaniu dostępu do dokumentów KGB. Nie wszystkie dokumenty jednak pozostały w kraju. W okresie pieriestrojki część z nich została przeniesiona do archiwów rosyjskich. Luki materiałowe są dużą przeszkodą w studiowaniu działań KGB, zwłaszcza jej agentury. Badania nad tajnymi służbami sowieckimi działającymi na terenie Litwy można opisywać na różne sposoby. Z punktu widzenia chronologii dzielą się na dwa okresy: 1940–1954 i 1954–1990. Z perspektywy tematyki badania tajnych służb skupiają się na ich strukturach, metodach działania, związkach z partią komunistyczną oraz zwalczaniem zbrojnych i pokojowych ruchów antysowieckich. Uwagę zwracano także na walkę z Kościołem katolickim, dysydentami, emigrantami, a także na jednostkowy i zorganizowany opór w dziedzinach gospodarki i kultury.

**Słowa kluczowe:** KGB, Litwa, historiografia

**Kristina Burinskaitė** (ur. 1980), dr, jest litewską historyczką, doktorat uzyskała na Uniwersytecie Wileńskim. W swoich badaniach skupia się na działaniach sowieckich tajnych służb, w tym m.in. ich metodach i pozycji w ramach systemu sowieckiego. Autorka książek na temat KGB i artykułów na temat różnych aspektów tajnych służb sowieckich, występowała na konferencjach krajowych i międzynarodowych w USA, Szwecji, Danii, Austrii i Polsce. W latach 2012–2016 wykładała na Uniwersytecie Wileńskim. Obecnie pracownik Centrum Badania Ludobójstwa i Ruchu Oporu Mieszkańców Litwy.

**Abstract:** Historical research in independent Lithuania of the crimes of the Soviet regime and the activities of the KGB is vital in dealing with the heritage of the Soviet system, in searching for the truth, implementing justice, retrieving the victims, and bringing to light the names of perpetrators of the crimes against the Lithuanian nation. Research on the Soviet secret services became possible just after 1991 when Lithuania regained its independence, and KGB documents became available. However, not all the documents remained in Lithuania. During the *perestroika* period, some were brought away to Russian archives. The lack of documents is a big obstacle in researching KGB activity, especially KGB agent activity. Research on Lithuania's Soviet secret services can be described in different forms. Chronologically, scholars deal with two periods: 1940–1954 and 1954–1990. Thematically, they researched the secret services' structure, methods, relationship with the communist party, the struggle with armed and unarmed anti-Soviet movements. They have also paid attention to

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the secret services' struggle against the Catholic Church, dissidents, emigrants, individual and organised economic and cultural resistance and their activities in the spheres of economy and culture.

**Keywords:** KGB, Lithuania, historiography

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