

A Death Transformed: The Political and Social Consequences of Romas Kalanta's Self Immolation,
Soviet Lithuania, 1972

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Abstract

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“A Death Transformed: The Political and Social Consequences of Romas Kalanta's Self-Immolation, Soviet Lithuania, 1972” explores Soviet and post-Soviet interpretive narratives and political practices in response to two days of street demonstrations that followed the 1972 suicide of a nineteen-year-old man in Soviet Lithuania. My analysis reveals that Communist authorities and participating youth viewed the demonstrations as a struggle over the acceptable boundaries and content of modern Soviet youth culture. Despite extensive evidence that by 1972 youth were actively negotiating the boundaries of what were acceptable activities, Communist authorities and young people operated within an ideological framework that denied young people's capacity to express discontent with the Soviet system. In post-Communist Lithuania, social and political elites constructed narratives of May 1972 that reclaimed agency by representing the demonstrations alternatively as nationalist dissent, civil resistance or Sixties-style youth protest. The diversity of narratives reflected on-going debates about the nature of post-Communist Lithuanian identity. This work seeks to make significant contributions to the historiography of the Soviet Union and to scholarship on the politics of memory and European integration. It contributes to current scholarship that is re-conceptualizing the Brezhnev period in the Soviet Union, looking beyond stagnation to the dynamic relationships between Communist ideology and everyday life by revealing how political and social practices contributed to Soviet youth's identity formation. My analysis

counters an entrenched scholarly consensus that Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing demonstrations are explained by Lithuanian nationalism. My project also contributes to research on the politics of memory and European integration. While most work in this area has focused on the role of externally-imposed universalist values as a result of East European EU accession, my analysis of narratives of May 1972 in popular media and official commemorations reveals that internal debates about the form of post-Communist society have equally disrupted nationalist narratives.

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INTRODUCTION

On May 14, 1972, one week before US President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union, nineteen-year-old Romas Kalanta went to a neighbor's house with an empty glass jar and asked if he could have some petrol. Shortly after twelve o'clock on that Sunday afternoon, Kalanta sat down in the grass in front of the Kaunas Musical Theater. In that small city park, he poured petrol on himself and lit himself on fire. The flames were extinguished by nearby police officers. But Kalanta – his body badly burned – died eighteen hours later at the Red Cross Hospital.

Despite the Soviet authorities' insistence that Kalanta's suicide was the act of a mentally-ill young man, responses to his act have carried political, social and cultural consequences in the USSR and around the world from the immediate aftermath of his death to the present day. Two thousand people – mainly in their late teens and early twenties – took to the streets on the day of his funeral in one of the largest incidents of popular protest in Soviet Lithuania. The date of Kalanta's act is now a national memorial day and a monument is located at the site of his self-immolation. Although the May 1972 events are frequently discussed in the Lithuanian popular press, Kalanta's death and the ensuing street demonstrations have received limited attention by scholars of Lithuanian or Soviet history. When they are mentioned in works on the Soviet Union, the 1972 events in Kaunas are cited as examples of nationalist and/or anti-Soviet feeling in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LiSSR), yet without an analysis of their origins or of their deeper political and social consequences.¹

¹ Examples include Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights*, trans., Carol Pearce and John Glad (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985); Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Ben Fowkes, *The Disintegration of the Soviet Union: A Study in the Rise and Triumph of Nationalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). Vladimir Kozlov's extensive work on popular protest in the Soviet Union does not mention the 1972 events in Kaunas. Vladimir A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, trans., Elaine McClarnand MacKinnon (London; Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002). The only work to provide an extended analysis of Kalanta's death is V. Stanley Vardys, *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania* (Boulder, CO: East European

This dissertation, “A Death Transformed: The Political and Social Consequences of Romas Kalanta’s Self-Immolation,” explores Soviet and post-Soviet political practices and social interactions in response to two days of street demonstrations that followed the 1972 suicide of a nineteen-year-old man in Soviet Lithuania. My analysis reveals that Communist authorities and participating youth viewed the demonstrations as a struggle over the acceptable boundaries and content of modern Soviet youth culture. Despite extensive evidence that by 1972 youth were actively negotiating the limits of what were suitable activities, Communist authorities and young people operated within an ideological framework that denied young people’s capacity to express discontent with the Soviet system. In post-Soviet Lithuania, social and political elites constructed narratives of May 1972 that reclaimed agency by representing the events alternatively as nationalist dissent, civil resistance or Sixties-style youth protest. The diversity of narratives reflected on-going debates about the nature of post-Soviet Lithuanian identity. Differing interpretations of Kalanta’s act and the ensuing street demonstrations contributed to an expanded post-Soviet Lithuanian identity based on presumed European and universalist values.

This work seeks to make significant contributions to the historiography of the Soviet Union and to scholarship on the politics of memory and European integration. It contributes to current scholarship that is re-conceptualizing the Brezhnev period in the Soviet Union, looking beyond stagnation to the dynamic relationships between Communist ideology and everyday life by revealing how political and social practices contributed to Soviet youth’s identity formation. My analysis counters an entrenched scholarly consensus that Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing demonstrations are explained solely by Lithuanian nationalism. My project also contributes to

Quarterly (distributed by Columbia University Press, New York), 1978). However, Vardys did not have access to the majority of sources used in my research.

research on the politics of memory and European integration. While most work in this area has focused on the role of externally-imposed universalist values as a result of East European accession to the European Union, my analysis of narratives of May 1972 in popular media and official commemorations reveals that internal debates about the form of post-Communist society have equally disrupted nationalist narratives. This study also builds on and contributes to work on youth cultural practices and Soviet policies on youth in late Soviet socialism. Although studies on this subject have examined rock culture as protest under Communism and youth cultural practices from the late 1970s to the demise of the Soviet Union, there has been little examination of the “Sixties” as a wide-spread cultural phenomenon in the Soviet Union or of the conflicts between Soviet authorities and youth over the acceptable boundaries of youth cultural practices.

LITHUANIA: HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The medieval state, or Grand Duchy, of Lithuania, was consolidated in the 12th century. Stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, the Grand Duchy encompassed territory that includes present day Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and Moldova. A military and dynastic alliance with Poland in the 15th century resulted in the Union of Lublin, which established the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania in 1569. The federation of Lithuania and Poland lasted until the partitions of Poland and the absorption of the Lithuanian lands into the Russian Empire by the end of the 18th century. Like the rest of east and central Europe, the Lithuanian-speaking territory of Imperial Russia experienced the birth of a national movement in the late 19th century.

Led predominantly by Polonized intellectuals, the national movement resulted in a Lithuanian language press, literary works and the designation of “traditional” cultural forms.²

The collapse of the Russian empire in World War I provided the opportunity for some twenty leaders of the Lithuanian national movement to declare independence in 1918. The new state, the Republic of Lithuania, was established as a parliamentary democracy. However, in 1926, Antanas Smetona, who had served as the first president of Lithuania, led a coup that deposed President Kazys Grinius. Smetona governed as an authoritarian president until 1940. The onset of World War II led to the loss of Lithuanian independent statehood. Secret protocols of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact allocated territories to Germany and the Soviet Union, with Lithuania assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. In December 1939, Lithuania acceded to Soviet demands to station Red Army troops on Lithuanian territory. The Soviet ultimatum for the formation of a “pro-Soviet government” in Lithuania on June 14, 1940, led to the establishment of a “People’s Government” that then requested annexation by the Soviet Union and the deportation of approximately 10% of the Lithuanian population. The process of Sovietization of the new Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LiSSR) was halted by Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. Lithuania was under Nazi occupation from June 1941 to January 1945, during which time ninety-eight percent of the Lithuanian Jewish population was murdered.³

² See, for example, Egidijus Aleksandravičius, *Carų valdžioje: XIX amžiaus Lietuva [In the Tsarist Regime: Nineteenth Century Lithuania]* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 1996); Tomas Balkelis, *The Making of Modern Lithuania* (London: Routledge, 2009); Vytautas Petronis, *Constructing Lithuania: Ethnic Mapping in Tsarist Russia, Ca. 1800-1914* (Stockholm: Stockholm University: Distributor, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2007).

³ Arūnas Bubnys, ed. *The Holocaust in Lithuania between 1941 and 1944* (Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2005); Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003); Joseph Levinson, ed. *The Shoah (Holocaust) in Lithuania* (Vilnius: The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2006); Michael MacQueen, “Nazi Policy Toward the Jews in the Reichskommissariat Ostland, June-December 1941: From White Terror to Holocaust in Lithuania,” in *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*, ed. Zvi Gitelman, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

The return of Soviet troops in January 1945 consolidated the initial occupation and incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Thousands of Lithuanians retreated with the Germany army and ended up in displaced persons camps at the end of the war. Most of these were eventually allowed to immigrate to the United States, Canada, Australia or Europe. The post-war experience of Lithuania included the nationalization of private property, collectivization of agriculture and further deportations. Although partisan bands took to the forests and attempted to resist militarily the Soviet occupation, they were not able to sustain control of Lithuanian territory and most laid down their arms under an amnesty granted after Stalin's death in 1953. Antanas Šniečkus, first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, ran the LiSSR from 1940 until his death in 1974. In this role, Šniečkus was responsible for making final decisions about the response to Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations. He also mediated center-periphery relationships as the Lithuanian Communist officials explained the local events to Moscow.

Unlike its neighbors Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania did not experience an influx of Russian in-migration during the Soviet period. The republic's population remained at 80% ethnic Lithuanians, with Poles as the largest ethnic minority (12%). The 1970s saw the growth of dissident activities in Lithuania, including a broad-based Catholic dissident movement and numerous human rights dissidents. At the same time, most Lithuanians lived, were educated and worked within official Soviet social structures. In 1988, a popular front to support *perestroika* – known as Sajūdis – was formed, along with similar movements in Estonia and Latvia. Baltic demands quickly outpaced the reforms instituted by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Sajūdis was allowed to field candidates for election to the Congress of People's Deputies in March 1990 and for election to the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet in March 1990. Its candidates swept the elections and, on March 11,

1990, declared the reestablishment of Lithuanian statehood, although the Soviet Union itself was not dissolved until December 31, 1991.

The re-established Republic of Lithuania experienced the same types of post-communist political and economic transitions as their former socialist bloc neighbors. Lithuania established a parliamentary democracy with a president as head of state. Like other countries in Eastern Europe, the former Communists vied for political power with the former independence movements and new political parties. The Democratic Labor Party of Lithuania (formerly the Communist Party of Lithuania) won elections in 1992, followed by Homeland Union-Lithuanian Conservatives in 1996, and the Social-Democratic coalition in 2000. While grappling with economic transformations at home, Lithuania also turned its attention to integration with the West. Lithuania became a NATO partner country in 1991 and a member state of the Council of Europe in 1993. It was invited to become a full member of NATO in 2002 and joined in 2004. Lithuania submitted its membership application to the European Union in 1995 and became a member in 2004.

While the Soviet Union was in existence, scholarly work on Lithuania in the Soviet Union emphasized the role of nationalism and resistance. This holds true whether written by scholars of Lithuania or scholars of the Soviet Union.⁴ Since 1991, historiography of Lithuania has studied either the loss or gain of statehood. Most work on Lithuania on the Soviet period has emphasized Soviet aggression and the 1940 occupation or the implementation of Stalinism in the immediate post-war period. Historians working through the state-supported Genocide and Resistance Research Center have published extensively on Sovietization, including a monthly scholarly journal,

⁴ See footnote 1.

collections of documents and monographs.⁵ Very few historians are writing on Soviet Lithuania in English.⁶ Much of the English-language scholarship on Lithuania written since 1990 has addressed the independence movement of the late 1980s and the post-communist transition.⁷ There is a small but growing body of scholarship on Soviet Lithuania after Stalin but before *perestroika*. Produced primarily by a younger cohort of Lithuanian scholars trained in Lithuania, as well as in Western Europe and the United States, these works present a more nuanced view of Soviet Lithuania than one strictly defined by nationalism and resistance.⁸ It is into this body of scholarship that this dissertation presents a case study of the events of May 1972.

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE SOVIET “SIXTIES”

“The Sixties” stands as a period of cultural change and political activism by young people in their teens and twenties – whether positive and negative – in both West European and American

⁵ Representative works published by the Genocide and Resistance Research Center include Arūnas Streikus, *Sovietų valdžios antibažnytinė politika Lietuvoje (1944–1990)* [*The Anti-Clerical Policy of the Soviet Rule*], 2002; Liudas Truska, Arvydas Anušauskas, Inga Petravičiūtė, *Sovietinis saugumas Lietuvoje 1940–1953 metais* [*MVD–MGB organizacinė struktūra, personalas ir veikla*] (Soviet Secret Agencies in Lithuania in 1940-1953. The organizational structure, staff and activities of the MVD-MGB), 1999; *Lietuva 1940–1990: okupuotos Lietuvos istorija* [*Lithuania 1940-1990: the History of Occupied Lithuania*], editor-in-chief Arvydas Anušauskas, 2005, 2007; Juozas Starkauskas. *Represinių struktūrų ir komunistų partijos bendradarbiavimas įtvirtinant okupacinį režimą Lietuvoje 1944–1953 m.* [*Cooperation Between the Repressive Structures and the Communist Party in Establishing the Occupational Regime in Lithuania between 1944 and 1953*], 2007

⁶ Most notable is the work of Alfred Erich Senn, including *Lithuania 1940: Revolution from Above*. (Amsterdam: Ropodi, 2007) and *Gorbachev's Failure in Lithuania*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.)

⁷ See any issue of the *Journal of Baltic Studies*.

⁸ See, for example, Rasa Baločkaitė, “Pleasures of Late Socialism in Soviet Lithuania: Strategies of Resistance and Dissent,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 3 (2011); Saulius Grybkauskas, *Sovietinė nomenklatura ir pramonė Lietuvoje 1965-1985 metais* [*The Soviet Nomenklatura and Industry in Lithuania 1965-1985*] (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Instituto Leidykla, 2011); Vilnius Ivanauskas, *Lietuviškoji nomenklatura biurokratinėje sistemoje* [*The Lithuanian Nomenklatura in the Bureaucratic System*] (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, 2011); Vilnius Ivanauskas, “‘Engineers of the Human Spirit’ During Late Socialism: The Lithuanian Union of Writers between Soviet Duties and Local Interest,” *Europe Asia* (forthcoming); Dalia Leinarte, *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Reality. Life Stories of Lithuanian Women, 1945 – 1970* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

popular historical narratives. While public commemorations and discussions tend towards either valorization or denunciation of the unrest of the time period, recent scholarship has revealed a more nuanced view of youth activism and a complicated interplay between culture and politics. Looking at “the Sixties” as a generational conflict over changing cultural practices can overshadow deeper social and political demands made by students and workers at the time. Kristin Ross’ work on May 1968 in Paris challenges the dominant narrative of youth rebellion, for example, and instead argues that thousands of people in France engaged in a new kind of politics by refusing to abide by sociological categories.⁹ Additionally, scholars of West Germany have emphasized the role of the Nazi past in manifestations of generational conflict in the 1960s, as young people began to question their parents and grandparents actions and attitudes in Nazi Germany.¹⁰

Most work on the 1960s has focused on individual countries, even though the social and political conflicts and the cultural practices identified with the “Sixties” were not bound by territorial borders. However, an analysis of “Sixties” as a transnational historical movement in Europe and the United States reveals that domestic politics, international events (such as the Vietnam War) and shared cultural practices were intertwined. For the most part, however, conceptualizing a transnational “Sixties” has been limited to Western Europe and the United States.¹¹ While 1968 in Czechoslovakia and Poland has received attention by scholars of Eastern Europe, the “Sixties” as a

⁹ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 7.

¹⁰ Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweiss, eds., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹¹ Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007); Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, C. 1958-C. 1974* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998); Wilfried Mausbach, “Historicising 1968,” *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002).

shared event across the iron curtain rarely factors into transnational studies.¹² None of the existing works on a transnational “Sixties” include the Soviet Union.

Not only has the Soviet Union not been included in scholarship on the transnational “Sixties,” the 1960s in general have not received much attention by scholars of the Soviet Union.¹³ The post-Stalinist “Thaw” under Nikita Khrushchev and the 1980s as last decade of the Soviet Union – both periods of perceived dramatic change – have overshadowed the so-called “stagnation” of the 1960s and 1970s under Leonid Brezhnev. This label, however, ignores a Soviet society that continued to change and downplays significant tensions between the pronouncements of Soviet ideology and the everyday life of Soviet citizens during late Soviet socialism. In the post-Stalin period, modern technology and expectations of a “modern Soviet lifestyle” opened opportunities for Soviet citizens to engage in private leisure activities. As Kristin Roth-Ey and Lewis Siegelbaum have persuasively argued, access to both television and cars by the 1970s promoted an individualism that was at odds with the authorities’ continued emphasis on socialist collective values.¹⁴

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING YOUTH CULTURAL PRACTICES

Youth cultural practices in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have not been ignored; there is, in fact, a burgeoning scholarship on the topic. In this scholarship, “youth” is defined as

¹² One exception is Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), which includes individual chapters on Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland.

¹³ Notably, an edited volume on the Soviet “Sixties” will be published later in 2013. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming 2013).

¹⁴ Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built a Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2011); Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

people in their late teens through mid-twenties. This coincides with definition of “youth” used in the Soviet Union. The Communist Youth Organization (*Komsomol* in Russian and *Komjaunimas* in Lithuanian) designated “youth” as ages 14-28. Scholarship on post- World War II youth culture typically uses a similar age range, which will be used in this work as well.¹⁵ Over the last two decades, however, the ways in which scholars have conceptualized youth cultural practices has undergone a significant shift. The concept of “subculture” or “counterculture,” initially used to describe perceived deviance among youth, dominated early work on post-war youth cultural practices. In the West, “subculture” as a concept expanded “to refer to forms of cultural dissidence and rebellion that characterize eras of modernity.”¹⁶ More recently, the distinctiveness of youth cultural practices and the concept of “counterculture” as applied to youth cultural practices have been challenged. Scholarly work on youth cultural practices in the Soviet Union has followed the same trajectory.

Initial scholarship emphasized the oppositional nature of post-war youth cultural practices in Communist Europe, particularly rock and roll music. Sabrina Ramet’s work is perhaps the foremost example of this approach. Ramet assumes that

rock music has proven to be a political phenomenon because rock artists themselves often choose to make political statements through their music, lyrics, attire or performances and because regimes often make even politically innocent music

¹⁵ Jim Riordan, “Komsomol,” in *Soviet Youth Culture*, ed. Jim Riordan, (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 21. According to KGB documents, the majority of people who participated in the May 18-19 events in Kaunas were in their late teens and early twenties.

¹⁶ David Chaney, *Lifestyles* (London: Routledge, 1996). This definition as applied to youth cultural practices is exemplified by the work of scholars at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. See, in particular, Dick Hebdige’s work, including *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979) and *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London: Comedia, 1988). See also, Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through rituals: youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (London: Routledge 1993)

political simply by reacting politically: as soon as something is censored or banned by political authorities, it becomes ipso facto politically charged.¹⁷

This starting point infuses her analysis of youth cultural practices adopted from the West and centered on rock and roll as inherently political and therefore “countercultural.” Ramet defines “counterculture” as “any culture which challenges the party’s official culture, which is premised on the concept of a single, legitimate interest.”¹⁸ Citizens of Communist-bloc countries participating in cultural practices involving rock music were, according to Ramet, explicitly engaged in activities that were opposed to Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. She points to the role of rock music as a key component of “counterculture” because it fostered contact with the West and articulated “the alienation of youth, with the danger that articulation of disaffection will serve to sustain and deepen it.” Although noting that rock music is not intrinsically anti-Communist, Ramet argues that “rock music has, empirically, often served as the vehicle for protest [in communist countries].”¹⁹ In an explicitly titled chapter “Rock Music and Counterculture,” Ramet traces “the dissenting role played by East European rock in the 1970s and 1980s.”²⁰ She emphasizes that Communist officials viewed the adoption of Western-style cultural practices as antithetical to the building of a new society because of “the introduction of cultural standards, fashions, and behavioral syndromes independent of party control; and a general numbness thought to foster political indifference and passivity.”²¹

Ramet focuses much of her analysis of rock culture on musicians themselves, who included explicit

¹⁷ Sabrina Petra Ramet, “Rock: The Music of Revolution (and Political Conformity),” in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*, ed. Sabrina Petra Ramet, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 214.

¹⁹ Ramet, 213-214.

²⁰ Ramet, 212.

²¹ Ramet, 215-216.

and subtle critiques of regimes in locally produced rock music in Poland, East Germany, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

Thomas Cushman similarly interprets communities formed around cultural practices of rock music as “countercultural,” sharing “values, perceptions, beliefs, and cultural symbols and codes which stand in opposition to the dominant, “normal” culture of Soviet industrial society.”²² His study of rock musicians (as opposed to rock music audiences) in Leningrad/St. Petersburg emphasizes the way in which Soviet citizens crafted “for themselves alternative experiences of freedom.”²³ Primarily based on oral interviews with rock musicians, Cushman’s work focuses on the uniqueness and separateness of rock music “counterculture” rather than on shared cultural practices among young people.

Ramet and Cushman took seriously cultural practices, especially those centered on rock music, and the ways in which these practices were adopted and adapted in Communist Europe. Their work, however, is limited by a focus on rock musicians, who formed a specific community, rather a view of the role of rock music and associated cultural practices in the lives of Soviet young people more broadly.²⁴ By focusing on rock music-centered groups that explicitly saw themselves in opposition to Soviet norms and values, Ramet and Cushman ignore the breadth with which rock music became integrated into the lifestyles of Soviet urban youth from the late 1960s on. This

²² Thomas Cushman, *Notes from Underground: Rock Music Counterculture in Russia* (Abany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 8.

²³ Cushman, xx.

²⁴ Artemy Troitsky’s memoir of rock music in the Soviet Union and Timothy Ryback’s book on rock music in Communist Eastern Europe also regard rock music as “countercultural”; however, their works are primarily narrative rather than analytical. Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (Boston; London: Faber and Faber, 1987). Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

narrow scope reifies rock music as political dissent and leads us to overlook how young people engaged in cultural practices associated with the “Sixties” and their interactions with Soviet authorities as the boundaries of a “modern Soviet lifestyle” were being defined.

By assuming a distinct “subculture,” clearly delineated from the official or dominant culture and from other subcultures, the “counterculture” approach to the study of youth cultural practices ignores large areas of commonality between groups that engage in specific cultural practices and between the so-called subcultures and the presumably homogeneous dominant culture.²⁵ On the other hand, an approach that looks at the how cultural practices overlap and at the fluid nature of various groups reveals that youth construct and hold multiple identities.²⁶ Additionally, the assumption that subcultures are inherently rebellious ignores the ways in which young people who have not defined themselves as oppositional to the official or dominant culture engage in similar cultural practices. A more nuanced approach to youth cultural practices makes visible tensions that are created when young people who are not “rebellious” come into conflict with authorities’ expectations about appropriate behaviors or values. This is particularly true when studying youth in the Soviet Union.

The adoption (and adaption) of Western youth cultural practices by Soviet youth opened spaces for activity outside the official structures of state and social organizations. Expanding the concept of youth cultural practices from rebellious “counterculture” does not, however, mean that tensions did not exist between authorities and youth over the acceptable boundaries of behavior and values. In her study of Russian youth during Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, Hilary Pilkington argues that

²⁵ Andy Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 1.

²⁶ Scholars who have challenged the theory of subculture as deviance and rebellion include Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985); Richard Jenkins, *Lads, Citizens and Ordinary Kids* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

their cultural practices were not adopted from a desire to rebel, yet they did challenge the existing political structure by forcing it to acknowledge the existence of spaces, particularly for leisure activities, that were not controlled by official Soviet organizations.²⁷ Pilkington focuses on the 1980s, when Soviet social control began to break down. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, Soviet leaders continued to emphasize a high degree of social control of young people.²⁸

Despite the authorities' ambivalence and even hostility towards the adoption of Western cultural practices by Soviet youth, young people themselves did not necessarily view their activities as antithetical to their position as Soviet citizens. Alexei Yurchak, in his work on "the last Soviet generation," contends that, in fact, Soviet young people were able to hold a love of rock music and a fondness for Western clothing styles while still being actively involved in Soviet institutions and forms – without considering these two elements to be in conflict.²⁹ Indeed, the 1960s and later decades saw an explosion of informal and unsanctioned cultural activities in the Soviet Union as Soviet citizens created private spaces primarily for leisure activities. Yurchak and others have documented the diversity of cultural and intellectual pursuits, clubs and hobbies that burst onto the

²⁷ Hilary Pilkington, *Russia's Youth and Its Culture: A Nation's Constructors and Constructed* (London: Routledge, 1994), 42.

²⁸ Pilkington, 71-73. Oleg Kharkhodian's work on Soviet society demonstrates the ways in which Soviet social and political practices became increasingly intrusive despite the move away from violence. Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁹ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Yurchak is not the only scholar to argue that young people were able to participate both in Western culture and official socialist activities without seeing these two as inimical to each other. Katherine Lebow, in her work on young workers in Nowa Huta in the 1950s argues against Western portrayals of "young East European rebels of the 1950s as anticommunist heroes championing American culture and Western-style individualism." Instead, she argues that "the youth dubbed as 'hooligans' and *bikiniarze* in Polish communist discourse can hardly be seen as 'resisting' or rejecting communism." She points out that "contemporary sources noted the apparent paradox that many of the same youth who spend their leisure time in ways entirely unacceptable to the Party were enthusiastic 'builders of socialism' during the working day." Katherine Lebow, "Kontra Kultura: Leisure and Youthful Rebellion in Stalinist Poland," in *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 72-73.

Soviet leisure scene in the 1960s, all of which represent “the experience of a faraway ‘elsewhere’— foreign languages and Asian philosophy, medieval poetry and Hemingway’s novels, astronomy and science fiction, avant-garde jazz and songs about pirates, practices of hiking, mountaineering and going on geological expeditions...”³⁰ The development of what Yurchak calls the “Imaginary West” was a particularly post-World War II phenomenon in the Soviet Union, with rock music just one of a diverse collection of products, images, objects and discourses active in Soviet society that was attributed to the West.³¹

Yurchak’s research attempts to answer a very specific question – why were Soviet citizens in their twenties and late teens in the late 1980s neither expecting the demise of the Soviet Union nor surprised when it came? A shared Soviet imagination of the West, Yurchak argues, developed not in opposition to the Soviet system but was, in actuality, enabled by the Soviet system. He asserts that an ambiguity in Soviet approaches to Western culture — framed alternatively as bad cosmopolitanism or good internationalism, even changing over time for the same element of culture – allowed young people to create styles of life based on Western cultures that they saw as congruent with being Soviet. Because Soviet critiques focused on extreme manifestations of Western culture, Yurchak argues, most Soviet young people could justify their own adoption of milder forms of Western culture.³²

Yurchak’s study focuses on young people who were, for the most part, participating in formal structures and who did not see their adoption or adaptation of Western culture as

³⁰ Yurchak, 160.

³¹ Yurchak, 161. Western cultural practices and material good were not the only things to attract the attention of Soviet citizens, Astrology and Eastern religions, martial arts and weight-lifting were among the many activities in which Soviet citizens engaged.

³² Yurchak, 164.

oppositional. In his analysis, Yurchak draws a fine line between dissatisfaction with the system and a political stance, while ignoring that the choice not to be political was perceived as a political act in the Soviet Union. Yurchak characterizes the various styles of living that exploded in the 1960s as *mye*, a Russian term which he translates as “being simultaneously a part of the system and yet not following certain of its parameters.”³³ Soviet young people sought a “politics of deep truths,” which Yurchak argues was not a rejection of Soviet values, but rather a desire to live them out more fully than was possible within official Soviet structures. He acknowledges official Soviet disapproval of Western-based cultural practices, yet he de-emphasizes conflict between Soviet authorities and the young people engaged in these cultural practices. While it is true that Soviet authorities did not consistently condemn Western culture, Yurchak’s analysis downplays Soviet authorities’ view of Western culture as a threat and young people’s adoption of Western lifestyles as resistance to expectations of proper behavior for Soviet youth. Additionally, Yurchak’s definition of late Soviet socialism as encompassing the late 1950s to the 1980s disregards the complexity of the political and social transformations that took place both within the Soviet Union and in the USSR’s relationship with the West over the post-war decades.

While not returning to a strict definition of “counterculture,” recent scholarship has demonstrated that Soviet authorities were ideologically and practically opposed to Western-based youth cultural practices in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even if young people were not explicitly oppositional to the Soviet system, youth cultural practices were viewed as resisting Soviet values and norms by both the authorities and by youth.³⁴ Leisure activity, in particular, was highly politicized in

³³ Yurchak, 128.

³⁴ Juliane Fürst’s work on Soviet youth in the immediate post-war years under Stalin also takes this stance. Fürst argues that “superficially conformist youth culture could contain subversive elements just as rebellious cultural behavior could draw on officially accepted norms and values” Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence*

the Soviet Union due not to the intentions of Soviet people engaged in activities but to the ideological framework that sought to shape citizens into “the new Soviet man.” Recreation was not valued in and of itself, but for its capacity to re-energize citizens in socialist countries for the work of building communism.³⁵ As the “Thaw” allowed for limited opportunities for personal choice, significant tension developed between the regime’s expectations of how Soviet citizens – particularly youth – should spend their leisure time and how they actually spent it.³⁶

The advent of mass media in the post-war Soviet Union profoundly shaped Soviet citizens expectations of what should constitute a “modern Soviet lifestyle.” Kristin Roth-Ey’s work on Soviet mass media in the postwar era emphasizes the significant tensions between the authorities’ view of the role of mass media and society’s engagement with mass media. In the USSR, culture for the masses under socialism was contrasted with the mass culture of capitalism. Within concepts of Soviet culture the fine arts – such as opera, ballet and literature – ranked above mass-media forms of culture and sought to raise the cultural tastes of Soviet citizens as part of their socialist achievements. As Roth-Ey explains,

Soviet culture was full of lessons to teach, typically via heroic role models, and of authorities to teach them; it had an inbred inclination for the collective, the public, and the declamatory. The audience itself was a perpetual work in progress,

of Mature Socialism (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13. Also Juliane Fürst, “The Importance of Being Stylish: Youth, Culture and Identity in Late Stalinism,” in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Julianne Fürst, (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

³⁵ Lebow; Anne White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture : Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland, and Hungary, 1953-89* (London: Routledge, 1990).

³⁶ Juliane Fürst, “The Arrival of Spring? Changes and Continuity in Soviet Youth Culture and Policy between Stalin and Khrushchev,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones, (London: Routledge, 2006); Ann Livschiz, “De-Stalinizing Soviet Childhood: The Quest for Moral Rebirth, 1953-1958,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones, (London: Routledge, 2006); White.

subordinate and needy; mass taste was untrustworthy by definition, and when the authorities tipped their hats to it, it was by way of concession.³⁷

Soviet citizens, however, began to engage in mass culture as private recreation despite the authorities' best efforts to maintain the pedagogical role of culture.

Culture was also part of “socialist consumption” in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union. As Roth-Ey explains, “This socialist, or Soviet, culture was as integral to the promise of communism as ample housing for all, men and women in space, and sausage on every table.”³⁸ Yet, as Soviet citizens were increasingly exposed to foreign mass media – foreign films shown in the Soviet Union, foreign radio broadcasts, magazines and music from foreign visitors – they compared the “modern Soviet lifestyle” to that of the West and found it lacking. As a result, Western cultural practices and consumer goods became the standard that Soviet citizens longed for.

The Soviet authorities' response to the influx of Western cultural practices in the life of urban Soviet young was much less benign than presented by Yurchak.³⁹ In contrast to Yurchak, Roth-Ey makes the important point that the influx of Western cultural practices (“infiltration” in the eyes of Soviet leaders) took place within the context of the Cold War. The borders between East and West had become more porous in the decades after Stalin's death and the threat of nuclear war might have necessitated a policy of peaceful coexistence and later *détente*, but both Khrushchev and Brezhnev believed that the struggle for ideological dominance was still a priority. Culture and mass

³⁷ Roth-Ey, 4.

³⁸ Roth-Ey, 2. Roth-Ey uses the term “masscult” to distinguish what the Soviets considered to be “the soulless and exploitative culture of the capitalist West” from Soviet mass culture.

³⁹ Zhuk points out that Yurchak interviewed people during the very difficult period 1994-1998, during the transition of Russian society to post-Soviet capitalism. As a result, Zhuk believes that many of Yurchak's interviewees tended “to idealize or exaggerate their ‘socialist experience’ as without conflicts—in contrast to the brutal reality of the ‘bandit capitalism’ during the Boris Yeltsin era.”

media were viewed, in fact, as an important weapon in the war between capitalism and communism. The ongoing ideological war meant not only demonstrating Soviet power abroad but also Soviet achievements at home. In particular, Soviet leaders sought to ensure that their people benefited from technological developments as evidence of a modern Soviet state and society. The result was an explosive growth in mass-media culture that fundamentally changed the way Soviet citizens interacted with culture and with the state.

In regional cities, unlike in Moscow or Leningrad, the rising expectations of “socialist consumption” combined with regional identity formation, further complicating attempts to mold young people into the “new Soviet man.” Sergei Zhuk’s study of youth cultural practices in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, looks at how young people’s identity formation as youth, as Ukrainians, and as Soviets, was deeply connected with the “images, sounds and ideas of the West.”⁴⁰ Despite Dnepropetrovsk’s lack of access to foreigners and foreign goods, Zhuk argues that cultural consumption became closely linked with identity formation in Soviet Ukraine. As Soviet goods and lifestyle opportunities failed to meet the promises of “socialist consumption,” Soviet Ukrainians, like many others in the Soviet Union, became fixated on Western cultural products – films, literature, and music.

The preoccupation on Western cultural products led to an increasingly Westernized Soviet culture even in the provinces. While Zhuk demonstrates that Western cultural consumption became “democratized” in the late 1970s, expanding to include working class young people, he argues that many of the young people listening to rock music and watching foreign films in the 1960s were the children of political elites in Ukrainian cities. This is an important distinction between Kaunas as a

⁴⁰ Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk, 1960-1985* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 8.

case study and Dniepropetrovsk. Like Dniepropetrovsk, Kaunas was a provincial city in a Soviet republic and therefore distinct from Moscow and Leningrad. However, while Kaunas was also a closed city until 1970, its population had much greater contact with the West through relatives who had emigrated after the Second World War. This resulted in greater exposure to Western cultural practices and artifacts by young people in Kaunas even though it was officially a closed city. It also meant that young people who engaged in Western culture practices represented a broader socioeconomic spectrum.

“LIFESTYLE” AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING SOVIET YOUTH

Soviet people not only had more access, officially and unofficially, to mass culture from the West, they also expected that they themselves should have the capacity to live a “modern lifestyle.” The expectation that Soviet-produced mass culture should achieve the same quality of production and entertainment as that of the West was also fed by Soviet propaganda. Roth-Ey argues that “Mass culture was more than just a symbolic good, in other words, more than just a sign of a modern lifestyle; it was a lived good, a modern lifestyle enacted and enjoyed.”⁴¹ The concept of “lifestyle,” as articulated by Andy Bennett, allows for an analysis of youth cultural practice in Soviet Lithuania that integrates lived experience with the broader social and political context – and allows for conflict between individuals and the state over cultural practices without categorizing that conflict as dissidence. Bennett draws on theorists such as Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Thorstein Veblen to define “lifestyle” as “actively constructed by particular social groups to mark themselves off from the wider society by establishing distinctive forms of collective identity.”⁴²

⁴¹ Roth-Ey, 17.

⁴² Bennett, 25. Sociologist David Chaney makes similar arguments about lifestyle as an analytical category in Chaney.

Although he acknowledges that, in the post-war West, “lifestyle” became more associated with market research, Bennett argues for using “lifestyle” as a category of analysis because it “remains receptive to the plurality of issues and circumstances that underpin the identity politics of contemporary youth cultures.”⁴³ The term denotes “observable patterns of social practices distinguishing groups of people who might be said, on the grounds of shared language or ethnicity, for example, to belong to the same cultural group....There are, therefore, life-style differences both within and between classes.”⁴⁴

“Lifestyle” as a theoretical framework, therefore, is useful for an analysis of the ways in which Soviet Lithuanian youth adopted and adapted elements of Western culture and the tensions that resulted between youth and authorities. By looking at Soviet Lithuanian youth’s activities in terms of cultural practices centered on leisure activities and consumption, such as listening to rock music, we can see the ways in which these cultural practices shaped their identity as Soviets, as youth, and as Lithuanians. We can also understand how these cultural practices came into conflict with Soviet ideological values of the early Brezhnev years and, therefore, became politicized by Soviet authorities and, at times, by young people themselves. At the same time, a distinction needs to be made between young people who sought to incorporate elements of Western youth culture – particularly rock music – into their modern lifestyle and those who sought to live out a fully “hippie” lifestyle. Several recent studies, as well as my own interviews, demonstrate that some young people who self-identified as hippies did so as a conscious and public resistance to Soviet cultural and social

⁴³ Bennett, 1.

⁴⁴ Jenkins, p. 41

norms and values.⁴⁵ However, the existence of explicitly “countercultural” young people in the Soviet Union does not mean that they define Soviet youth experience or identity-formation.

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING POPULAR PROTEST IN SOVIET LITHUANIA

Resistance is central to most scholarly work on Soviet Lithuania, whether written by historians in the West or in post-Soviet Lithuania.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, as mentioned above, the street demonstrations that occurred in Kaunas in May 1972 have been mentioned as examples of Lithuanian resistance to Soviet rule in a number of books on the Soviet Union, particularly works on nationalism or dissidence. Accommodation to the Soviet system in Lithuania has only recently become the subject of scholarship.⁴⁷ Accommodation, however, did not mean that conflict did not exist between Soviet Lithuanians and Soviet authorities.

Although Vladimir Kozlov does not include the events in Kaunas in his work on popular protest in the Soviet Union, his analysis opens a new way of looking at the May 1972 street

⁴⁵ Recent studies on hippies in the Soviet Union include William J. Risch, “Soviet ‘Flower Children’. Hippies and the Youth Counter-Culture in 1970s L’viv,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 3 (2005). Mark Allen Svede, “All You Need Is Lovebeads: Latvia’s Hippies Undress for Success,” in *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, (Oxford: Berg, 2000). For work on Lithuanian hippies, see Živilė Mikailienė, “The Hippie Movement in Soviet Lithuania: Aspects of Cultural and Political Opposition to the Soviet Regime,” *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 60, no. 4 (2011). and Egidija Ramanauskaitė, “Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija sovietmečiu: hipių kultūrinės idėjos Lietuvoje,” *Kauno Istorijos Metraštis* 4, no. (2003).

⁴⁶ Notable examples published in the West include Thomas Remeikis, *Opposition to Soviet Rule in Lithuania, 1945-1980* (Chicago: Institute of Lithuania Studies Press, 1980); Vardys; V. Stanley Vardys and Judith B. Sedaitis, *Lithuania: The Rebel Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). The publications of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center in Lithuania emphasize resistance, such as Arvydas Anušauskas et al, *Lietuva 1940-1990* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Gyventojų ir Rezistencijos Tyrimo Centras, 2007). See also Zigmantas Kiaupa, *The History of Lithuania*, S.C. Rowell and Jonathan Smith, translators (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 2005).

⁴⁷ See, for example, the work of Vilius Ivanauskas on the Lithuanian Writers’ Soviet (“‘Engineers of the Human Spirit’ during Late Socialism: the Lithuanian Union of Writers between Soviet Duties and Local Interests” (*Europe Asia*, forthcoming 2013). As well as Vilius Ivanauskas, *Lietuviškoji nomenklatura biurokratinėje sistemoje [Lithuanian Nomenklatura in the Bureaucratic System]* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Instituto Leidykla, 2011).

demonstrations.⁴⁸ Kozlov argues that popular protest was more frequent in the 1960s because people still believed that the promised bright future was possible; therefore, perceived abuses of power and failure to meet the promises made by Soviet leaders created a sense of violation among Soviet citizens. As a result, unrest on the part of a small group of people in an urban setting could quickly turn into a popular protest. As in Kaunas, bystanders either formed a “passively empathetic crowd” or were drawn into the protest.⁴⁹ Kozlov points out that not all Soviet citizens had the capacity to engage in more sophisticated and articulate methods of communicating their discontent with Soviet abuses of power (such as letters to editors or complaint letters to specific agencies). Those who did not have such capacity could be drawn into other forms of protest, such as street demonstrations, that expressed an outcry against injustices.⁵⁰ The chants of “down with the police and their bananas” in the Kaunas street demonstrations, for example, indicates that young people were responding to a perceived abuse of power by the police.⁵¹

Yet the reasons for protest and the language available to express discontent were not always aligned. Kozlov points out that popular protest in Soviet Central Asia against widespread violations of legality were often tinged with anti-Russian graffiti.⁵² Saulius Grybkauskas demonstrates that worker-manager tensions in Soviet Lithuanian enterprises in the 1960s and 1970s were frequently framed in nationalist language even if the points of conflict were economic and employment-

⁴⁸ Kozlov.

⁴⁹ Kozlov, 161.

⁵⁰ Kozlov, 161.

⁵¹ “Bananas” was a slang term for rubber truncheons.

⁵² Kozlov, 306-307.

related.⁵³ This study will look closely at the ways in which the language of nationalism was used and, just as importantly, not used in descriptions of the May 1972 street demonstrations in Kaunas.

The meanings assigned to Kalanta's suicide and the ensuing street demonstrations raises the question of how to define resistance and opposition. In her study of resistance and compliance in the German Democratic Republic, Mary Fulbrook defines three modes of resistance – passive refusal, more active dissent and opposition.⁵⁴ Discontent with a system does not necessarily lead to behaviors of resistance. And, in fact, resistance and compliance were not mutually exclusive, but that they were practiced in degrees by groups or individuals in East European society. Additionally, expressions of discontent were not necessarily manifested in political resistance. James Scott's work on peasants in Malaysia demonstrates that forms of struggle between people and the state often “stop well short of outright collective defiance” and instead consist of prosaic and constant acts which he calls “everyday forms of resistance.”⁵⁵ In this study, the term “opposition” refers to outright, usually collective, acts of protest or defiance against the Soviet system; “dissidents” refers to organized, self-identified opponents to the Soviet regime; and “resistance” refers to various modes of passive and active refusals by Lithuanians to comply with Soviet rule. As will be evident in Chapters 5 and 6, most post-Soviet Lithuanian politicians, journalists and historians use the terms “resistance” and “opposition” interchangeably.

⁵³ Grybkauskas.

⁵⁴ Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the Gdr, 1949-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 11.

⁵⁵ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985).

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITIONS

Official commemorations and the establishment of public memory are about exercising control over what can serve as an appropriate representation or symbol. Official commemorations are designed to produce public memory, defined as “a set of beliefs and views that is produced from a political discussion that involves fundamental issues related to the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present.”⁵⁶ A useful definition of commemoration is “social and political [activities that involve] the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and in some instances, annihilation.”⁵⁷ The political discussion that surrounds the establishment of official commemorations reflects the contemporary situation in which the discussion takes place as much as the historical event that is being commemorated. The establishment of national holidays, for example, creates a notion of a shared past and shared values that should be celebrated. By defining specific dates through the values associated with them, producers of culture also implicitly generate a hierarchy of holidays, excluding certain values and historical legacies from official celebration.”⁵⁸ National holidays also serve to institutionalize public memory, in which “political elites, their supporters and their

⁵⁶ John Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 75.

⁵⁷ John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

⁵⁸ Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, “Introduction,” in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, ed. Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001), 2.

opponents [attempt] to construct meanings of the past and propagate them more widely or impose them on other members of society.”⁵⁹

Across post-Soviet space, newly independent countries including Lithuania have engaged in commemorative activity designed to strengthen national identities. Rogers Brubaker argues that the concepts of *nationalizing states* and *nation as practice* – rather than “nationalism” – are useful frameworks for an analysis of the post-Communist states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. He asserts that scholars must “understand the practical uses of the category of ‘nation’, the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action.”⁶⁰ According to Brubaker, elites in “nationalizing states” try to remedy a perceived incompleteness in the nation and “compensate for perceived past discrimination” through actions that “promote the language, culture, demographic preponderance, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the core ethnocultural nation.”⁶¹ Post-Soviet Lithuania, with – for example – its language and lustration laws to promote Lithuanian language usage and to remove from positions of political power and economic gain those who had worked as KGB agents and informants, qualifies as a “nationalizing state.”

Brubaker’s concept of *nation as practice* can also be applied to commemorative practices in analyzing the politics of memory in post-communist European states. The act of commemoration – by legislation, monuments, events and publications – involves practices that are often framed by conceptualizations of national identity and national history. The creation of a unified national

⁵⁹ Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, eds., *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 13.

⁶⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7.

⁶¹ Brubaker, 9.

narrative through commemorative practices can gloss over, suppress or even erase aspects of the past that were experienced or are remembered by certain segments of society. The drive to reclaim a Lithuanian national past through the establishment of national holidays, renaming street names and building national monuments also places it in this category.⁶² While Brubaker, in his later work, demonstrates that ethnopolitics often break down because people are more concerned about everyday issues than ethnicity, he argues that the breakdown occurs at the personal level and not at the level of state actors.⁶³ Attempts to establish a cohesive nationalist narrative of Romas Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations, however, broke down not only at the personal level, but also at the state level.

While official institutions at the state level often have a vested interest in presenting a narrative of history that supports the existence of the nation, commemorative activity at the local level may have other goals for the formation of identity. As a result, local and state level commemorative practices – or *vernacular* and *official* in John Bodnar's definition – can come into conflict. According to Bodnar, "Public memory emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions...Official culture relies on 'dogmatic formalism' and the restatement of reality rather than complex or ambiguous terms. It desires to present the past on an abstract basis

⁶² In post-Soviet Lithuania, Romas Kalanta has been commemorated through all three actions. May 14 was declared a national holiday (see chapter 5), a street in Kaunas was named for him and a monument was built in Kaunas at the site of his self-immolation.

⁶³ Rogers Brubaker and others, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

of timelessness and sacredness.”⁶⁴ Vernacular commemorations, on the other hand, “convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like.”⁶⁵

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This dissertation places the responses to Kalanta’s self-immolation in the broader context of social and political processes at play in Soviet Lithuania in 1972 and in post-Soviet Lithuania since 1988. It asks two overarching questions. Was the popular unrest in Kaunas in May 1972 a manifestation of broader social and political processes occurring in the Soviet Union and Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s? How has Kalanta’s death been commemorated in Soviet and post-Soviet Lithuania and what are the political and social imports of these commemorations? Chapters 1-3 address the first question, while chapters 4-6 address the second question.

Chapter 1 explores how post-Stalinist promises of socialist consumption and greater exposure to Western cultural artifacts and practices raised Soviet youth’s expectations of what constituted a modern lifestyle, as well as their expectations of freedom to engage in such a lifestyle. I argue that young Soviet Lithuanians’ identity as youth took precedence over identities as Soviet or Lithuanian – and that this brought them into real conflict with the authorities’ expectations of proper Soviet behavior and Soviet policies to mold young people for the goal of building full communism.

⁶⁴ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13-14.

⁶⁵ Bodnar, 14.

Chapter 2 addresses the question of why hundreds of young people publicly gathered both at the Kalanta home and at the place where Kalanta committed suicide on the day of his funeral. Despite the liberalizations of the post-Stalinist period, large, unauthorized public gatherings were rare. They remained politically and socially unacceptable and potentially physically dangerous should the police choose to break up a gathering by force. Using KGB interrogation statements from young people arrested for participating in the street demonstrations, I argue that young people had internalized the promises of post-Stalinist liberalization and expectations of greater personal autonomy. I also argue that that young people privileged youth identity over Lithuanian or Soviet identity in choosing to participate in the popular unrest.

Soviet authorities' responses to the popular unrest that followed Kalanta's self-immolation are the subject of chapter 3. Using KGB investigation documents along with Communist Party of Lithuania reports and speeches, I argue that the Soviet authorities' initial attempts to conceptualize what happened as the actions of fringe elements were constrained by ideologically acceptable discourses in the Soviet Union at the time. However, the demographics of the youth who were arrested forced the Communists to find a new discourse to explain their actions, one that emphasized the Party's failure to inculcate proper Communist values in youth rather than young people's capacity to express dissatisfaction with the Soviet system.

Chapter 4 presents a poem that was disseminated throughout Lithuania after Kalanta's suicide. I argue that the language of youth becomes submerged under language of nationalism in this process. As a result, Kalanta was constructed as a national martyr in popular memory in Soviet Lithuania rather than representative of post-war social processes and youth identity.

Chapter 5 then moves forward to post-Soviet Lithuania to analyze attempts to institutionalize Kalanta as a national martyr. Using parliamentary debates on a bill to designate the date of Kalanta's act as a national memorial day, I argue that internal social processes were as important as the external process of European Union accession in destabilizing a nationalist narrative of Kalanta's death. Alternative interpretations of Kalanta's act contributed to the formation of an identity based on perceived universalist values.

Chapter 6 analyzes narratives in the post-Soviet Lithuanian popular media of the events in Kaunas that presented the street demonstrations as representative of Sixties youth counterculture and youth protest. I argue that some Lithuanian elites have not only claimed a "return to Europe" as justification for European Union membership, but also a shared past with their age cohort in the West as teenagers listening to rock and roll and protesting on the streets.

CHAPTER 1:
THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN': YOUTH LIFESTYLES AND THE FIRST POST-STALIN
GENERATION⁶⁶

Soviet attempts to develop politically aware youth who understood their role and responsibilities under socialism competed with Western cultural practices that flourished in cities across the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s. Listening to rock music on foreign radio broadcasts or albums obtained from abroad and adopting Western hair and clothing styles became more commonplace among urban Soviet youth, including in Kaunas. Soviet young people saw themselves as participating in a broader youth culture and, based on their experience of post-Stalinist Soviet society, expected the freedom to do so. The young people who took to the streets in May 1972 demanded not only freedom for Lithuania but also freedom for hippies. In doing so, I argue, they articulated conceptions of freedom, both political and personal, that reflected their position as Soviet – not solely Lithuanian – youth. In this way, the events of May 1972 were a manifestation of the conflict between Soviet authorities and Soviet youth over divergent expectations of what constituted a modern Soviet lifestyle and what was considered acceptable behavior for Soviet youth.

Young people were a particular focus of Soviet policies because they represented the future of the Soviet state and communism. At the core of the Soviet project was the desire to create the “new Soviet man,” who would lead the progress of history toward communism. In order to achieve this goal, the Soviet government sought to politicize all facets of life by bringing what might be perceived as private, such as leisure activities and cultural preferences, into the public project of building communism. While the post-Stalin leadership repudiated certain tactics used by Stalin in

⁶⁶ Bob Dylan, “The Times They are a-Changin’”, released January 1964. It should be noted that, according to Sergei Zhuk, Bob Dylan was not particularly popular among Soviet youth, who “could not appreciate Dylan’s songs because they did not understand his lyrics in English and they preferred the more ‘rhythmic’ and melodious music of the Beatles and Creedence Clearwater Revival.” Zhuk, 89.

his efforts to achieve this goal, they did not reject the goal itself. Despite a turn away from the use of violence, “de-Stalinization” was accompanied by an increasingly intrusive state and Party apparatus designed to enforce conformity to Soviet ideological values, which targeted, among others, national groups and youth cultural practices.⁶⁷

In the two decades following Stalin’s death, Soviet society experienced significant changes in population demographics. The Soviet leadership’s attempt to define the post-Stalinist Soviet state and society with the continued goal of building communism resulted in a new emphasis on material well-being, and a new openness to the West. These changes had a particular impact on the ways in which Soviet citizens – especially youth – perceived of and engaged in leisure activities. The increasingly urbanized population enthusiastically engaged in the post-war promise of “socialist consumption.” That promise, however, appeared less and less appealing in comparison to cultural products introduced to Soviet citizens through growing interactions with the West. For many urban Soviet young people, access to rock music, and especially Western rock music, was an essential “lived good” for a modern lifestyle⁶⁸.

Young people in the Soviet Union who were in their teens and twenties the late 1960s and early 1970s shared expectations of material consumption and social freedoms that differed from that of their parents’ and grandparents’ generations.⁶⁹ Soviet leaders themselves viewed post-war youth through the lens of their own pre-war experience and considered “youth problems” as

⁶⁷ Kharkhordin.

⁶⁸ Roth-Ey, 17.

⁶⁹ Like Juliane Fürst’s work on young people in post-war Stalinist Soviet Union, I use generation in terms of a “hegemonic generational spirit”—those attributes and characteristics that made this generation different from other generations and were decisive in propelling social and societal development [which] naturally leaves out many youngsters whose experience was for various reasons of a different nature.” Fürst, 19.

representative of a “lack of revolutionary commitment and disengagement from the official collective.”⁷⁰ However, these differences caused tensions between older and younger generations regardless of the older generations’ experience of Stalinist Soviet society. Scholars working on youth in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union have emphasized that earlier generations of Soviet citizens, who experienced the “Great Break” of industrialization in the 1920s and 1930s and the Great Patriotic War (as World War II was known in the Soviet Union), had a heroic framework from which to build a Soviet identity.⁷¹ These studies are limited due to lack of attention to differing pre-war generational experiences yet similar post-war generational phenomena in non-Russian Soviet republics. In contrast to Russia, the parents and grandparents of the post-Stalin generation in Lithuania had experienced building the first modern Lithuanian nation-state in the 1920s and 1930s. Additionally, the Lithuanian experience of World War II was not one of heroic victory, but of Soviet, then Nazi German, then Soviet occupation with deportations, partisan fighting, and forced collectivization and nationalization of property just prior to the war and in the immediate post-war years. Despite the significantly different experiences of the older generations of Lithuanians from the same generations of Russians – as well as other Soviet national groups who were in the Soviet Union prior to the Second World War – the first post-Stalin generation of Soviet Lithuanians shared much in common with their age cohort across the country. In Kaunas, as in Lviv or Leningrad, the first generation to go through school after Stalin’s death could choose, to some extent, when to participate in officially sanctioned activities and when to engage in cultural practices outside the scope of Communist Party intervention.

⁷⁰ Fürst, 142.

⁷¹ See, for example, Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. Princeton University Press (Princeton, N.J.: 2001).

SOCIALIST CONSUMPTION AND A “MODERN LIFESTYLE”

By the end of the 1960s, the Soviet Union had a complex urban society, with a better educated, more mobile urban population.⁷² Urbanization of the Lithuanian population, similar to that in other Soviet republics, was the result of comprehensive post-war urbanization drive. From 1959 to 1970, the urban population in the Lithuanian SSR increased by 50% from 1.03 million to 1.56 million,⁷³ with the percentage of the population living in cities and towns rising from 28.3 in 1950 to 50.2 in 1970.⁷⁴ The population of Kaunas, Vilnius and Klaipėda grew dramatically, increasing by 82% from 1950 to 1965 in each city.⁷⁵ During the Soviet period, the Lithuanian SSR’s population was consistently 80% Lithuanian, indicating that urbanization was movement of ethnic Lithuanians rather than an influx of ethnic Russian migrants as occurred in Latvia and Estonia.⁷⁶

The post-Stalin period was characterized by a greater emphasis on the material well-being of Soviet citizens through “socialist consumption.”⁷⁷ The notion of socialist consumption was not new to Soviet ideology; it had already been articulated under Stalin. With the declaration that the Soviet Union had attained socialism in 1934, Soviet propagandists promoted images of prosperity. For Soviet authorities, a modern lifestyle was not defined solely by access to material goods but also by

⁷² Chaney, 451. Only thirty percent of the Soviet population was engaged in agriculture in the mid-1960s.

⁷³ *Demographic Yearbook 2009*, (Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania, 2010), 28.

⁷⁴ Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1990*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 364.

⁷⁵ Misiunas and Taagepera, 192.

⁷⁶ Misiunas and Taagepera, 353.

⁷⁷ Polly Jones, “Introduction,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones, (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

the development of certain social values. In order to distinguish it from capitalist consumption, Soviet propagandists emphasized the “modern and didactic elements” of socialist consumerism and used a discourse of “culturedness...to articulate materialistic ambitions without the usual bourgeois connotation.”⁷⁸ Culturedness [*kulturnost*] would remain a crucial component of the post-Stalin concept of “socialist consumption.”

In post-Stalinist Soviet Union, “socialist consumption” was increasingly compared to a perceived Western standard of living. In the 1950s, the concept of “socialist consumption” manifested itself in Khrushchev’s emphasis on improving the living standards of Soviet citizens through increased housing construction and food production.⁷⁹ Khrushchev went even further by declaring that the Soviet Union would overtake the West in economic production and standard of living. Despite the promise of increased production of consumer goods for the Soviet population, the Soviet economy under Khrushchev remained focused on heavy manufacturing. Within a few years of Khrushchev’s departure from power, the Soviet leadership no longer referred to catching up to the West and no longer promised that Communism would be built by 1980.⁸⁰ Indeed, the planned economy was never able to produce sufficient quantity or quality of goods desired by the Soviet citizens. In the end, “Party leaders’ embrace of mass consumption provide to be a substantial liability for the Soviet system, especially in its competition with the capitalist West.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 119.

⁷⁹ For more on the post-Stalinist housing drive see Steven E. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Willson Center Press, Forthcoming).

⁸⁰ Mark Sandle, “Brezhnev and Developed Socialism: The Ideology of Zastoi?,” in *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, ed. Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 166.

⁸¹ Hoffmann, 145.

Soviet citizens experienced an increase in leisure time and more access to consumer goods in the new era of “developed socialism” introduced by General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in a speech to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1971. The Soviet regime’s goal was now “to build a better, more productive, and more humane society than capitalism.”⁸² The work week for the urban population had gone from six to five days by the end of the 1960s, allowing for greater involvement in leisure activities.⁸³ With the new emphasis on the consumer, Soviet citizens would engage in “socialist consumption,” as opposed to Western-style consumerism that turned people into “slaves of things.”⁸⁴ Young people, in particular, were expected to engage in the consumption of cinema, concerts, theatre, and fashion. Soviet citizens responded to the policies of “developed socialism” with optimism and expectations that they would overcome scarcity and provide a higher level of material well-being on par with the West.⁸⁵

The Soviet Union’s changing relationship with the West meant that its citizens were, in fact, much more aware of Western standards of living through increased contact with the West, facilitated by a partial opening of borders, the growth of cultural exchanges, and technical developments such as the spread of television and radio.⁸⁶ Contact with the West, it is important to note, was primarily unidirectional into the Soviet Union; Soviet citizens still had almost no opportunity to travel abroad. Soviet Lithuanians were allowed to receive letters and packages from relatives in the West beginning

⁸² Sandle, 167-168.

⁸³ Hilary Pilkington, “‘The Future Is Ours’: Youth Culture in Russia, 1953 to the Present,” in *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 370.

⁸⁴ Pilkington, 373.

⁸⁵ Sandle, 169. Also Roth-Ey.

⁸⁶ For more on cultural exchanges between the Soviet Union and the West, see Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

in the mid-1950s. Tourists were allowed to travel to Vilnius from 1959 and a trickle of émigrés began to visit.⁸⁷ Kaunas was opened to one-day visitors in 1970.⁸⁸ In addition to contact with relatives in and tourists from the West, Soviet citizens were increasingly exposed to television, radio and film from Western countries. Most notably, residents of northern Estonia were able to watch Finnish television. Two-thirds of Lithuania, including Kaunas and Vilnius, was able to watch Polish television by 1968, giving residents a window to a more liberalized and Westernized Communist country.⁸⁹

West European films, showing Western styles and standards of living, were shown in Soviet cities as a result of opening relations and provided Soviet citizens an opportunity to compare the results of developed socialism with a perceived standard of living in the West. Films from Italy, France, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark and the United States were shown in Kaunas from 1968 to 1972. These included the 1960 American film *The Apartment* with Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine; Truffaut's 1970 film *Domicile Conjugal*; and Italian films *Il Giorno della Civetta* (1968) and *Il Vigile* (1960). The films were immensely popular among young people in Kaunas. A Lithuanian interviewee recalled a movie that featured an American car.

[There were] queues waiting to get the tickets. And we would see these incredible cars with [convertible tops]. My God! And we would see how people were dressed. It was like fresh air, you know, to go to these movies. We didn't even care what the films were about. We could see the people from beautiful places.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Misiunas and Taagepera, 182.

⁸⁸ According to documents in the Kaunas City KGB Section files, 150 tourists from capitalist countries visited Kaunas in 1972. The document did not indicate when these visits took place (i.e., before or after the May events). "Kaunas City KGB Section Files," Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR. 1973. Fondas K-1, Ap. 1, By. 159. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania]. (accessed March 2009).

⁸⁹ Misiunas and Taagepera, 181.

⁹⁰ Arkadijus Vinokuras (Vilnius; March 21, 2011). Interview by author.

Soviet propaganda films also gave Soviet citizens a view of Western standards of living. The same interviewee described the response in Kaunas to a Soviet film about “fascist and bourgeois” Lithuanian émigrés living in Sweden. “People would never go to propaganda films but everybody wanted to see [what] Sweden looked like.”⁹¹

Televisions and radios in Soviet homes served as evidence of increased material well-being, yet they represented an opportunity for Soviet citizens to withdraw into a private realm of entertainment, away from participation in official cultural activities.⁹² Shortwave radios were mass-produced beginning in the late 1950s and sold across the Soviet Union so that even the remotest populations had access to official stations. However, ownership of shortwave radios also gave Soviet citizens the opportunity to listen to sanctioned and unsanctioned foreign broadcasts, such as Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, BBC, Radio Sweden and Radio Luxembourg. Foreign broadcasts in languages spoken in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were routinely but not always jammed. Broadcasts in Western languages – including stations broadcasting jazz and rock music – were rarely jammed.⁹³ The mass production of the reel-to-reel tape recorders in the 1960s enabled leisure activities centered around music, especially jazz and rock, often taped from the radio or from albums received from foreigners.⁹⁴ The Soviet production of mass media technology created an “internal paradox” in which state-produced technologies provided opportunities for the reception of the very ideas that the Soviet system was attempting to negate.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Vinokuras (Vilnius; March 21, 2011). Interview by author.

⁹² White, 151, 153. Roth-Ey, 17.

⁹³ Yurchak, 176-178. Roth-Ey, 133.

⁹⁴ Yurchak, 185-187.

⁹⁵ Yurchak, 175.

The Soviet Union began investing heavily in television in the late 1950s and Soviet TV became a massive political, social, and cultural institution. While Soviet leaders appreciated television's potential for propaganda delivery, they were concerned with the lack of control over viewing practices when people were ensconced behind closed doors watching and objected to the content of the foreign broadcasts which "delivered information that the regime did not want people to have, period."⁹⁶ Although Yurchak demonstrates that listening to foreign broadcasts became more commonplace in the Soviet Union by the 1980s, Roth-Ey maintains that what had been tolerated during the "Thaw's" greater openness to the West was less welcome by the late 1960s. She points out that "listening to something defined as *enemy voices*, however socially acceptable, was never altogether above suspicion in the eyes of the Soviet authorities."⁹⁷ With Soviet citizens listening to unofficial radio broadcasts and even official television broadcasts in the privacy of their own homes, Soviet authorities could not be assured that they were making the correct ideological interpretations of the mass media content they were consuming.

The role of leisure in Soviet society was brought to the fore in Soviet society as a result of the new emphasis on "socialist consumption." Leisure was important to socialist ideology because it allowed "time for purposeful self-improvement (under the tutelage, of course, of the Party)."⁹⁸ The leadership expected the population to participate in collective and sanctioned leisure pursuits that contributed to the maturing of "developed socialism." Soviet citizens, however, took advantage of the spaces opened up by liberalization and challenged directly or indirectly the state's ability to direct and control their leisure activities. Many Soviet citizens "either opted not to spend their free time in

⁹⁶ Roth-Ey, 133.

⁹⁷ Roth-Ey, 141.

⁹⁸ Lebow, 73.

official cultural institutions or else attempted to use the houses of culture for the activities which they preferred.”⁹⁹ While the regime made concessions for public-initiated use of official spaces, it resisted the development of autonomous cultural and leisurely activities.

The emphasis on socialist consumption and the capacity to compare the Soviet standard of living to a mass-media version of the West raised expectations among Soviet citizens for a material standard of living that Soviet consumer and services industries were not able to meet. In this context, objects viewed as representative of Western youth culture became “key units of currency (home-produced recordings, blue jeans, bell-bottoms, badges, and Western rock albums) and their exchange and sale became a central part of Soviet youth cultural practice.”¹⁰⁰ Youth cultural practices were strongly impacted by the process of urbanization, the emphasis on consumption and leisure activities, and the rising standard of living. The inability of the regime to meet the rising expectations for socialist consumption and the continued intrusiveness on the part of the state led to disillusionment, especially among youth, with the capacity of the Soviet system to provide a modern lifestyle.

SOCIAL CONTROL AND THE DANGERS OF A MODERN LIFESTYLE

Liberalization and openness to the West did not mean a relaxation of Communist ideological work within the Soviet Union but, in fact, resulted in its intensification. Soviet political and social changes – including a greater openness to the West – still took place in the context of the Cold War. Soviet authorities felt strongly that they were engaged in an ideological, if not military, battle with the

⁹⁹ White, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Pilkington, 371.

capitalist West. The Soviet leadership's policies and actions in the realm of mass media were undertaken with a sense of urgency because they were perceived as battles in the Cold War. This urgency can be seen in Brezhnev's 1971 report to the CPSU, when he emphasized that the CPSU's primary task was "to be able really to convey our ideological conviction in full to the masses, and approach the work of the communist education of the Soviet man in a really creative manner."¹⁰¹ He declared that the Soviet Union was "living under conditions of an unabated ideological war, which imperialist propaganda is waging against our country, against the world of socialism, using the most subtle methods and powerful technical means."¹⁰²

The regime's desire to liberalize in order to achieve the goal of building communism and its desire to maintain control over Soviet society meant that Soviet citizens were engaged in a constant negotiation of opportunities and limits. Despite the decrease in terror and liberalizations in society, Khrushchev's speeches in the 1950s consistently emphasized the need for mutual control of society, in order to enforce conformity to Soviet norms and values. His policies created "a system more meticulous and thorough in its attention to each individual than the more openly repressive Stalinist one it replaced."¹⁰³ The intensification of social controls was a response by Soviet authorities to their own liberalizations in other aspects of Soviet life. Policies that emphasized Soviet citizens as consumers of housing, technology and mass culture created great risks for Soviet society. The result

¹⁰¹ *Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, March 30, 1971*, (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Pub. House, 1971), 106.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Kharkhordin, 298.

was a paradoxical emphasis on individual well-being and private freedoms along with a “renewed attention to mobilizing the population to participate in public initiatives and collective life.”¹⁰⁴

Youth were a particular focus of the Party’s ideological work. As the current leaders aged, the next generation needed to be prepared to take their place.¹⁰⁵ Early in Brezhnev’s speech at the 24th Party Congress, he reminded Party activists that “Our duty is to pass on to the rising generation our political experience and our experience of resolving problems of economic and cultural development, to direct the ideological upbringing of young people and to do everything to enable them to be worthy continuers of the cause of their fathers, of the cause of the great Lenin.”¹⁰⁶ Brezhnev underscored that “the Party has been and shall go on giving much of its attention to the problems, cares and interests of young people. More than half of our country’s population are young people under 30. They are our future and our replacement.”¹⁰⁷ Soviet leaders struggled with the paradox that young people were imagined as the bearers of communism, yet they were proving to be resistant to socialization in this role and even to be a potential threat to the socialist project.¹⁰⁸ As Ann Livschiz argues, “Whilst Khrushchev unquestionably attempted to de-Stalinize Party and state attitudes towards youth, his uncompromising drive for re-ideologization meant that officialdom started to impact in a more intense and intrusive manner on the lives of Soviet young people.”¹⁰⁹ As

¹⁰⁴ Jones, 9.

¹⁰⁵ In 1971, the key leaders of the Soviet Union were primarily in their late 60s and early 70s. Brezhnev, CPSU General Secretary, was 65 years old. Premier Alexei Kosygin was 67 years old. Nikolai Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, was 68 years old. Mikhail Suslov, unofficial chief of ideology, was 69 years old.

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, March 30, 1971*, 93.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 88. The text comes from the official Soviet translation of Brezhnev’s speech into English.

¹⁰⁸ Jones, 9-10.

¹⁰⁹ Livschiz, 136.

a result, Soviet authorities insisted on active engagement and control of youth cultural and leisure activities. The active intervention in young people's leisure activities continued under Brezhnev, with the creation of youth clubs organized around blocks of flats in order "to keep so-called 'difficult teenagers' off the streets."¹¹⁰ By the late 1960s, Soviet cultural workers were concerned increasingly that young people in particular were abandoning the official ideology.¹¹¹

The novel *Arberonas* by Vytautas Bubnys, first published in 1969, provides an example of how Soviet authorities viewed the negative impact of Western lifestyle on youth.¹¹² The novel portrays one week in the life of a secondary school student, Arūnas Gulbinas. "I am always waiting for Sunday," Arūnas says in the first line of the book. Sunday – a day off from school and work, when he can sleep in and take it easy. Arūnas' attitude toward Sunday is indicative of his general attitude toward life. He is getting poor grades in school and spends his time listening to music on the transistor radio and hanging out with his friends. He is disrespectful of his elders, both his father and the school director. He does not take his responsibilities seriously as a member of the Communist Youth Organization and ignores the entreaties of his class leader, Žifara, to behave appropriately. Instead, he leaves silly verses signed "Arberonas" around the school. The novel makes it clear that Arūnas is under the influence of Western culture. He sings pop songs in English and dances the twist in his room on Sunday morning. His best friend Benas plays guitar and sings pop songs while sitting "American-style" [*amerikoniškai*] with his feet on the table. When his father

¹¹⁰ White, 41.

¹¹¹ White, 69.

¹¹² Vytautas Bubnys, *Arberonas*, Antras leidimas [Second edition] ed. (Vilnius: Vaga, 1972). Vytautas Bubnys was a Soviet Lithuanian writer who published ten novels and worked for the journal *Moksleivis* [*Pupil*]. He was a member of the CPSU until 1989 and was a founder of Sąjūdis. He served as a member of parliament from 1992 to 1996 with the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party.

is taken to the hospital on Saturday, Arūnas realizes that he has been engaged in “childish games” and that that the time has come to be an adult and take his life and responsibilities seriously.¹¹³

The Communist Youth Organization served as the key force to exert Soviet control over young people, especially those like the fictional Arūnas Gulbinas who engaged in Western cultural practices.¹¹⁴ In his speech to the 24th Party Congress, Brezhnev emphasized that “The Komsomol’s central task has been and remains to bring up young people in the spirit of Communist ideals and devotion to our Soviet motherland, in the spirit of internationalism, and actively to propagate the norms and cultural values of our society.”¹¹⁵ As the Komsomol increasingly assumed responsibility for the ideological training of young people it became more and more a mass organization of social control.¹¹⁶ Indeed, membership in official groups, including the Communist Youth Organization, continued to provide the most reliable access to recreation, higher education and jobs—and young Lithuanians also participated in official cultural activities or groups throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. The total membership of the Lithuanian Communist Youth Organization more than doubled from 1960 to 1965, growing from 131,012 to 226,311 in 1965. It continued to increase, rising to 281,853 in 1971.¹¹⁷ Over the same period, the total LiSSR population increased by 15%,

¹¹³ The novel was made into a film title *Mažieji Išpažintis* in 1972. In the paradox of Soviet mass media noted by Roth-Ey and Yurchak, the film launched the career of Vytautas Kernagis, the young musician who played Benas. Kernagis became a beloved Lithuanian folk rock musician and was a leader in the independence movement in the 1980s. The film was made in both Lithuanian and Russian languages and was distributed throughout the Soviet Union.

¹¹⁴ *Komsomol* in Russian; *Komjaunimas* in Lithuanian

¹¹⁵ Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, March 30, 1971, 93-94.

¹¹⁶ Pilkington, 370-371.

¹¹⁷ *Lietuvos Komjaunimas skaičiai 1919-1979 statistikos duomenų rinkinys* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1980), 68, 70. There was, however, a sharp drop off in the total number of new Komjaunimas members in Lithuania from 1965 (43,346) to 1966 (32,235). The annual new membership numbers then increased significantly over the next five years, reaching 42,496 in 1971.

from 2,711,000 in 1959 to 3,128,000 in 1970.¹¹⁸ Kaunas, in particular, saw steadily increasing numbers of new Komsomol members, from 34,838 in 1965 to 41,350 in 1971.¹¹⁹ The nineteen percent increase in Komsomol membership, however, was outpaced by the population growth in Kaunas. The city saw a forty percent population increase over the same time period, from 219,300 in 1959 to 306,200 in 1970.¹²⁰

In addition to formal Communist Youth activities, people's patrols comprised of Komsomol and Party activists assisted in the enforcement of law and order in public. Official figures show dramatic increases in the number of participants in people's patrols in 1960 and 1965, demonstrating the Soviet regime's "intention to make people take part in social control."¹²¹ "The scope of censured behavior extended well beyond codified legal or administrative edicts. The patrols could reprimand or detain people for such behavior as wearing loud or slovenly clothes, dancing with "unnatural jerky movements" and buying items from private speculators.¹²² While citizen patrols were not explicitly directed at youth, the categories of "offenses" include a number of activities primarily engaged in by youth, making them a likely target of the patrols' enforcement of social norms. School authorities also had responsibility for imposing Soviet expectations for young people's behavior and appearance. In my interviews in Lithuania, both men and women described instances in which young men were ordered by school authorities to cut their hair or in which their

¹¹⁸ T. Shabad, "The 1979 Census and Some Demographic Trends in the Soviet Union," *GeoJournal* 4, no. 1 (1980): 85.

¹¹⁹ *Lietuvos Komjaunimas skaičiai 1919-1979 statistikos duomenų rinkinys*, 98.

¹²⁰ Romualdas Neimantas, *Kaunas* (Vilnius: Mintis Publishers, 1982), 34.

¹²¹ Kharkhordin, 286.

¹²² Kharkhordin, 287.

hair was forcefully cut or shaved. Men frequently demonstrated how they would tuck their hair into the collar of their coat or under a cap so that it wouldn't be seen.¹²³

In line with the emphasis on “culturedness” as a key component of socialist consumption, Soviet authorities expressed concern that contemporary youth leisure activities were not appropriately “cultural.” The Lithuanian newspaper *Flag of Communism* stated in 1966,

Bad signals about the activities at the local cultural palace have reached the Party organization. Dances go on until late in the night without any program. Such dances are being organized for no known reason....None are organizing any amateur activities, or discussions of films or books, or any sort of cultural event....The director of the cultural palace has been made responsible...to coordinate her work plans with the bureau of the Party organization, in order that cultural events become truly cultural.¹²⁴

These types of condemnations by official entities reveal the authorities' concern that youth were not engaged in appropriate activities. As these newspaper articles demonstrate, local Soviet authorities believed that youth in Lithuania were not reading books or watching films that contributed to their proper development as politically aware Soviet young people. Instead they were attending dances that had no purpose other than, presumably, enjoyment of leisure time.

MODERN LIFESTYLE AS A SITE OF PERSONAL AUTONOMY

Despite the increased intrusiveness of the state and Party apparatus in attempting to exert control over Soviet society, the regime's move away from violent forms of repression greatly

¹²³ Ričardas Gužas (Kaunas, Lithuania; April 20, 2011). Interview with author; Edmundas Janušaitis (Kaunas; February 2, 2011). Interview with author; Kristupas Petkūnas (Kaunas, Lithuania; July 15, 2011). Interview with author; Dalia Šnieškienė (Kaunas; February 12, 2011). Interview with author; Aurelijus Varnas (Kaunas; February 7, 2011). Interview with author.

¹²⁴ “Not by Bread Alone,” *Flag of Communism*, January 23, 1966. Cited in Egidija Ramanauskaitė, “Lithuanian Youth Culture Versus Soviet Culture,” in *The Baltic Countries under Occupation: Soviet and Nazi Rule, 1939-1991*, ed. Anu Mai Kõll, (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003), 321.

reduced the political and social costs of engaging in non-sanctioned activities, especially those associated with cultural practices and lifestyle. Young people took advantage of social and political liberalizations, which led to a flourishing of non-sanctioned cultural activities. While the state may not have yielded its prerogative to interfere in Soviet youth's lives, limited liberalization gave young people the confidence to express their desire not to obey the state's attempts at control.¹²⁵ This led to a flourishing of non-sanctioned youth cultural activities – including poetry and literary groups, folklore and ethnographic clubs, the bard movement, ecological groups, and what Yurchak calls “the faraway elsewhere” – in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lithuanian young people's participation in unsanctioned cultural activities mirrors that documented among Russian youth. As an example, ethnographic hiking groups became popular in the 1960s, sending young people into villages to explore the natural environment and record old Lithuanian songs and folktales. The first ethnographic expedition organized by students at Vilnius University was conducted by the *Kraštotyros Draugija* [Local Heritage Study Society] in 1963. Other student organizations, the *Žigeiviai* [Hikers] and “Tourist Clubs” soon followed, with the goal of reconnecting with peasant traditions.¹²⁶ The first folklore ensembles were formed in 1968. Young people went to the countryside to seek out unstylized folksongs and unique regional traditions, which they then performed. This attempt to engage in “authentic” folk culture rejected the stylized folk traditions intended to demonstrate the place of Soviet nationalities on the Marxist historical timeline. Young people in the ethnographic and folklore groups wanted to look beyond socialist

¹²⁵ Livschiz, 132.

¹²⁶ Guntis Smidchens, “A Baltic Music: The Folklore Movement in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, 1968-1991” (Dissertation, Indiana University, 1996), 119.

content in national forms and to find an older, pre-Soviet ethnographic tradition.¹²⁷ Similar groups were formed in Kaunas, centered at Kaunas Polytechnical Institute (KPI). The hiking club *Ažuolas* [Oak Tree] was formed in 1967. *Ažuolas* members organized hikes and ethnographic expeditions in the Lithuania countryside.¹²⁸

The young people who participated in the ethnographic clubs and folklore ensembles found ways to work within official structures. They would receive permission to hold evening programs by claiming that they were marking a significant day in Lenin's life or they would invite former Soviet partisans to speak at the beginning of the program. Groups might propose an itinerary of "Soviet partisan" trails in order to receive Communist Youth Organization funding for ethnographic trips.¹²⁹ Yurchak argues that use of official discourse as a frame for alternative forms of activities attests to the fact that Soviet young people believed in the form if not the content.¹³⁰ However, these examples can also point to a conflict between official attempts to control young people's leisure activities and young people's attempts to exercise their own control of leisure activities. Members of the ethnographic groups found ways to present their activities within the official framework because they knew that the activities they wanted to engage in would not be acceptable. These ethnographic groups did receive semi-official sanction. Vilnius University professors, for example, participated in ethnographic expeditions. A KPI dean allowed photographs from a folklore gathering to be posted

¹²⁷ For a detailed analysis of the use of ethnography in the Soviet Union, see Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

¹²⁸ Laima Anglickienė, "Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija sovietmečiu: Žygeivių klubas „Ažuolas“ [Youth Cultural Resistance in the Soviet Period: Hiking Club 'Ažuolas']," *Kauno Istorijos Metraštinis* 4, no. (2003): 166.

¹²⁹ Anglickienė: 169.

¹³⁰ See Yurchak.

in his department.¹³¹ Rather than evidence of lack of conflict between Soviet authorities' and young people's expectation of what was appropriate for leisure activities, this indicates that authorities were themselves negotiating what was acceptable in the changing political and social landscape.

Through hiking clubs and folksong ensembles, young people synthesized national identity and personal autonomy in their leisure activities through their engagement with traditional Lithuanian peasant culture. This combination drew the attention of the Soviet authorities. Despite official orders to discontinue the Kernavė Midsummer celebration in 1968, the organizers proceeded with the festival. The KGB openly conducted surveillance of the event and brought in participants for interrogation after they returned to Vilnius. In 1971, the leader of the Vilnius University club *Ramuva* was dismissed from the faculty and the organization was banned.¹³² After the street demonstrations in May 1972, ethnographic groups in Kaunas were also disbanded. While ethnographic activities continued in Soviet Lithuania, they were closely monitored by the Soviet authorities.

Although limited to urban parts of the Soviet Union, the number of young people who participated to some degree in Western-influenced cultural practices increased significantly by the late 1960s.¹³³ As discussed above, access to images of the West through film and television, music of the West through short-wave radio broadcasts and material goods from the West brought in by tourists and received by mail from relatives abroad meant that youth lifestyles and cultural practices

¹³¹ Anglickienė: 170.

¹³² Smidchens, 122-123.

¹³³ Youth cultural practices modeled on an image of Western youth culture were not new in the 1960s. *Stiliagi* listened to swing and jazz music and emulated a stylized, flamboyant Western clothing style in the 1950s. Young people who adopted a *stiliagi* lifestyle were a small minority, primarily in Moscow and Petersburg, and were harshly repressed under Stalin. See Mark Edele, "Strange Young Men in Stalin's Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953," *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 50, no. (2002). See also Fürst.

in Soviet cities came to resemble more closely those of their counterparts in the West. However, the “consumption of foreign cultural products was (and still is) a process of selective borrowing and appropriation, translation, and incorporating into the indigenous cultural context.”¹³⁴ The adoption of Western cultural practices in Soviet Lithuania was influenced by a number of factors. First of all, access to information was circumscribed. The films and other visual artifacts were not necessarily direct portrayals of Western lifestyles or leisure activities. Young people saw photographs of hippies and youth in the West primarily through Soviet anti-Western propaganda. These were often more extreme portrayals of dress and cultural practices. Foreign films were not necessarily recently produced. For example, the 1960 American film *The Apartment* was not shown until a decade later and clothing styles in the United States had changed by then. Soviet youth often had to construct dance moves from still photographs. Jack Kerouac’s 1957 novel *On the Road*, was published in Soviet Lithuania in 1972; as a result beatniks and hippies were not necessarily distinguished as different groups in the same way that they were in the West. Material goods were also not available for Soviet young people to have the same level of consumption or same clothing styles as Western young people. Soviet youth had to create their own clothing items or receive them from relatives in the West. English language instruction was limited in Soviet Lithuania so young people often did not understand the lyrics of the Western rock music to which they listened.

Studies of the adoption of Western youth cultural practices in Moscow have emphasized the involvement of children of high Communist and even KGB officials. Some scholars have argued that the capacity of Soviet youth to adopt Western-influenced lifestyle and cultural practices was a

¹³⁴ Zhuk, 7. Pilkington and Yurchak also emphasize the ways in which Western cultural practices were adapted to local cultural contexts.

benefit of privilege.¹³⁵ To a certain extent this was true in Kaunas. Kaunas had been the interwar capital of Lithuania and the political and social elites who fled to the West with the return of the Soviet Army in 1944 were now the ones sending packages and letters to their relatives who remained. As a result, young people who had access to material goods, such as jeans or rock albums, from the West were primarily from pre-war Lithuanian elite families. Yet these families were not typically privileged in Soviet Lithuania. Young people of all strata, included from those whose families had been deported and had returned from Siberia, engaged in Western cultural practices.

Importantly, the “courtyard culture” of young people in Kaunas meant that access to cultural artefacts – particularly music – and cultural practices were shared across social boundaries. As a result of urbanization and the housing drive, young people in Kaunas grew up in apartment buildings and spent much of their leisure time socializing with other youth in the courtyards of these buildings. A number of interviewees told me that they initially heard rock albums from friends who had relatives in the West. However, the number of young people who were listening to rock music from the West exceeded those who had relatives in the West. The courtyard culture also crossed ethnic boundaries. Interviewees emphasized that within their circle of friends listening to rock music in Kaunas were Lithuanians, Russians and Jews.

Rock music was at the core of what many young people saw as a modern lifestyle. The most frequent response when I asked about youth culture and young people’s lives in the late 1960s and

¹³⁵ Dr. Česlovas Laurinavičius raised this point about Soviet Lithuania in his capacity as my supervisor at the Lithuanian Institute of History. Zhuk also argues that until the late 1970s, only young people from Soviet elite families had access to and engaged in Western cultural practices and artifacts. While Zhuk and others have focused on children of Soviet officials who had access to Western cultural products as a result of their parents’ positions, “privilege” in Soviet Lithuania could have a different definition – access to Western cultural goods through relatives in the Lithuanian diaspora.

early 1970s was “it was about the music; we loved rock music.” Young people in Soviet Lithuania listened to rock music primarily on BBC and Radio Luxembourg.¹³⁶ They eagerly awaited the latest song by The Doors, Jimi Hendrix, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and the Animals.¹³⁷ The Polish rock band *Czerwone Gitary* [Red Guitar] was also popular. Listening to rock music did indeed become a pursuit that drew young people out of the orbit of official recreational activities for youth. Young people in Kaunas would gather in homes and listen to rock music on the radio and on home-made recordings or albums sent by relatives abroad. A circle of teenagers would gather at the home of a young woman named Hana, whose parents let them listen to music in an upstairs room in the house where the family lived.¹³⁸

Young people not only listened to rock music, they also made rock music. Teenagers, primarily young men, formed bands and copied the music they heard on the radio or on albums from the West. Informal jam sessions in homes led to the formation of amateur bands. Ričardas Kolaitis, who formed the band *Decima* with several classmates, explained that they would listen to Radio Luxemborg and practice playing their favorite songs.¹³⁹ However, they did not speak English so they did not understand the lyrics. Over time, the band began to write their own lyrics in Lithuanian to the songs that they learned from the radio.¹⁴⁰ *Decima* played together from 1968 to

¹³⁶ Voice of America was considered the “jazz station” and most of my respondents were less interested in listening to jazz music in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

¹³⁷ Although much has been written about the influence of the Beatles in the Soviet Union, they did not rank high in my interviewees’ lists of favorite bands. The Beatles craze entered the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. See, for example, Leslie Woodhead, “How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin,” (UK: 2009).

¹³⁸ Hana Šumilaitė (Kaunas; July 7, 2011). Interview with author.

¹³⁹ Ričardas Kolaitis (Kaunas; June 1, 2011). Interview with author.

¹⁴⁰ This was a common practice by amateur bands in Soviet Lithuania. However, because these songs were rarely recorded and forty years has passed, most of the lyrics are lost.

1972. The band was allowed to play at local youth functions in Kaunas, although they never received formal recognition. Faced with the influx of rock music from the West, Soviet authorities allowed “vocal-instrumental ensembles” to perform officially. VIAs, as they were known, were the Soviet attempt to produce ideologically acceptable music that would appeal to young people. These bands were expected to play a strict Soviet repertoire and while “they could be youthful, electrified, even shaggy-haired,” Soviet authorities were quite clear that VIAs were not “rock bands.”¹⁴¹

Musicians in VIAs received professional status and were paid for performing, unlike the many amateur bands that flourished at the time. No matter how they were officially described, young people viewed a number of the amateur bands and VIAs involved in the Kaunas music scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s as rock bands.¹⁴² *Aitvarai* [*Kites*] (1967-1976) was formed by students in KPI’s Construction Department. The group first performed in the 1967 KPI student festival. They toured outside of Lithuania to Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Armenia and East Germany in the early 1970s. The band *Gelės* [*Flowers*] (1970-1972) coincidentally played its final concert on May 14, 1972, in the town of Kėdainai. *Gintareliai* [*Amber People*] (1966-1973) began as a Beatles cover band and later represented the Soviet Union abroad, playing concerts in Finland, the UK and the Congo. The band *Kertukai* [*The Tough Guys*] (1966-1971) was the only local Kaunas band to receive official designation as VIA. The hippie group “The Company” even generated its own rock band, *Raganiai* [*Sorcerers*] (1969-1972).

¹⁴¹ Roth-Ey, 165.

¹⁴² These bands were mentioned in interviews and also appear in YouTube videos of Soviet Lithuanian rock music. Details about the individual bands comes from the encyclopedia Mindaugas Peleckis, ed. *Lietuvos rokas ištakos ir raida* [*Lithuanian Rock: Origins and Evolution*] (Vilnius: Mintis, 2011).

Like the ethnographic groups, many of the rock bands attained semi-formal status through the Kaunas Polytechnical Institute.¹⁴³ Students in KPI's Automotive Department formed an informal "big beat" fan club in 1967 and met in one student's apartment to listen to rock music. The students registered the club as a KPI student group in 1969. Each week the group would gather at the institute to listen to records and record music on a *magnetifone* reel-to-reel tape recorder.¹⁴⁴ The KPI club organized the first rock concert – called a "pop session" – in the spring of 1971. Nathanas Gitkindas, a member of *Raganiai* [Sorcerers], one of the most well-known rock bands in Kaunas, described the mood at the time. "In the firmament of Kaunas rock, an unutterable tension and excitement was felt. All the invited groups...[held] their tickets clasped to their breast...Fans scavenged around Kaunas, searching for a ticket." On the day of the concert, "people flocked to the hall at least four hours before the beginning of the concert. After some time, I opened the heavy curtains of the hall and I couldn't believe what I saw...No less than several thousand stood by the hall's windows, and how many people stood by the main entrance, it's scary even to think." In addition to a huge crowd of people, Gitkindas saw a crowd of security police (KGB), police officers, military soldiers, and fire and medical response units. When the "country's caretakers," as he ironically calls them, tried to put a stop to the concert, the leaders of the pop club refused and

¹⁴³ According to *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* 3rd edition, "In 1972 the Kaunas Polytechnical Institute included departments of automation, engineering economics, light industry, machine building, mechanics, radio electronics, electrical engineering, chemical technology, construction and sanitation engineering, as well as evening, correspondence and preparatory divisions; there are also evening departments in Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys. It has a graduate school, 68 subdepartments, and four special-problem laboratories and 18 laboratories in various special fields. The library has holdings of around 1.4 million volumes. In the 1972–73 academic year the institute had 15,000 students, with 1,000 instructors, including 23 professors and doctors of science, and 415 docents and candidates of sciences." *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya (Great Soviet Encyclopedia)* 3rd ed. (Moscow 1969–1978), s.v. "Kaunas Polytechnical Institute." (www.rubricon.com, accessed online January 2013).

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Antanas Stancevičius, Algimintas Piligrimas, and Algimintas Šešelgis, pop club members in Enrika Striogaitė and Rimantė Tamoliūmienė, eds., *Laisvės proveržiai sovietiniame Kaune nuo slapto pogrindžio iki atviro protesto [Breakthrough of Freedom in Soviet Lithuania from Secret Underground to Open Protest]* (Kaunas: Kauno Apskritis Viešojo Biblioteka, 2007), 97-101.

pointed out that they had permission from the institute's rector and the Communist Youth League. It was at this moment, Gitkindas remembers, the pop club leaders and participating bands realized that the authorities were afraid of such a large crowd.¹⁴⁵ KPI's student-run pop club continued to organize concerts and dances, as attested to by a number of my interviewees.¹⁴⁶

Rock music was also a place where national and youth identities intersected. The most well-known example of Lithuanian lyrics set to a Western rock song was the poem *Trakų Pilis* [*Trakai Castle*] sung to the melody of The Animals' song "House of the Rising Sun."¹⁴⁷ The poem by the priest Maironis, who was active in the late nineteenth century Lithuanian National Revival, bemoans the ruined state of Trakai Castle as representative of Lithuania's lost glory.

Old castle! Long centuries echoed your name!
Great men rose to glory with you!
You saw the Great Vytautas' power and fame,
His regiments on a review.
Where now is your might that was dazzling with glory?
Where is your antiquity lauded in story?¹⁴⁸

While the ethnographic groups sought to discover an authentic folk culture in rural Lithuania, the use of a nineteenth century poem as the lyrics for a modern rock song reveals how Lithuanian young people integrated traditional Lithuanian culture with elements of a modern lifestyle.

While most young people interested in Western culture limited their activities to listening to rock music, growing their hair a bit long or adapting styles of dress, a few chose to adopt a more fully alternative lifestyle. Self-proclaimed "hippie" groups formed in Kaunas and Vilnius in Soviet

¹⁴⁵ Personal remembrance by Nathanas Gitkindas in Striogaitė and Tamoliūmienė, eds., 91-95.

¹⁴⁶ Janušaitis (Kaunas; February 2, 2011). Interview with author; Kolaitis (Kaunas; June 1, 2011). Interview with author; Varnas (Kaunas; February 7, 2011). Interview with author.

¹⁴⁷ "House of the Rising Sun" was included on a record released by the Soviet recording label Melodiya.

¹⁴⁸ Translated by Lionginas Pažūsis. <http://members.efn.org/~valdas/maironis.html> (accessed February 4, 2012)

Lithuania, as well as in other parts of the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁹ While these self-consciously “countercultural” groups were a small minority of young people in Soviet Lithuania, “hippies” were to take on a perceived, if not actual, role in the events in Kaunas in May 1972. These young people engaged in public lifestyles that explicitly rejected Soviet behavioral norms.

The hippie group “The Company,” which formed in Kaunas in the mid-1960s, provides an example of young people who fully embraced an alternative lifestyle founded on Western rock culture and concepts of personal freedom. In interviews in the late 1980s and early 1990s, members of the “The Company” emphasized the apolitical nature of their resistance. They saw themselves as part of a movement promoting personal freedom and nonconformist cultural practices. This “cultural conflict,” according to ethnographer Egidija Ramanauskaitė, opposed the cultural traditions and control of older generations. Rather than articulating a political program, the young people who participated in “The Company” sought personal freedom to express their own values and live their own lives. In my interviews, members of “The Company” and others involved in self-identified hippie groups in Kaunas in the late 1960s and early 1970s also described their lifestyle as cultural resistance to Soviet norms.¹⁵⁰

The non-conformist “hippie” lifestyle was perhaps the most visible attempt to create a lifestyle as a site for claiming personal autonomy. According to Vinokuras, the comparison between Soviet reality and their image of life in the West,

formed our way of life, our views of life, and the confrontation [between us and Soviet society] was imbedded, so to say, because we saw the gray life, [the] type of Soviet everyday life, gray, ugly, full of lies, authoritarian, no open ideas, sex didn’t exist, [the] narrow

¹⁴⁹ For work on hippies in Vilnius, see Mikailienė.

¹⁵⁰ Egidija Ramanauskaitė, “Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija sovietmečiu: hipių kultūrinės idėjos Lietuvoje,” *Kauno Istorijos Metraštis* 4, no. (2003).

mindedness of the society itself. We confronted it ourselves, at least a part of this we got from the West...what we got [made] us put the light on what we have, on what we are.¹⁵¹

This differentiation between what hippies perceived as their values and the values and norms of Soviet society were expressed externally by clothing and hairstyles. As Vladas Rukšas described, “We wore bell bottoms and decorated them; one guy even put lights on his and had a battery that made them light up. When we walked down the street, people would stare, from buses they would all look out the window.”¹⁵² Given the limited availability of clothing, especially Western style clothing, at the time, many hippies sewed their own clothes in order to express their individuality. While most of the hippies whom I interviewed emphasized that they simply wanted the personal freedom to live their own lives and that their lifestyle as hippies was not about challenging the political state, they were very conscious of being public about their decision to live an alternative lifestyle. Arkadijus Vinokuras expressed,

it is necessary to emphasize that we, the Kaunas hippies, consciously grasped that our whole activities, our lifestyle had to be seen. We did not hide. And this was our power. Was this a conscious decision? I think that at the beginning – no. When the KGB and Komsomols began to take provoking action against us – rounding us up, threatening us – we consciously perceived our own meaning.¹⁵³

This deliberate choice to be public was made even though they knew it would bring attention of and harassment by authorities, possibly even jail or institutionalization in a mental hospital.

Hippies did not necessarily draw a distinct line between their identity as hippies and their national or even religious identity. In fact, some hippies explicitly incorporated national identity into their “hippie” practices. According to Ruksas, in the 1960s “I and Alfreds were also involved in national costumes so we would make hippie clothes with national styles or decorations. We were

¹⁵¹ Vinokuras (Vilnius; March 21, 2011). Interview by author.

¹⁵² Vladas Rukšas (Kaunas; June 27, 2011). Interview with Author.

¹⁵³ Personal remembrance by Arkadijus Vinokuras in Striogaitė and Tamoliūmienė, eds., 83-85.

going our own way, living on the farm in Latvia and learning how to live the old national way. We used pagan designs, pre-Christian religions. Others were going in different directions as hippies.”¹⁵⁴ The hippie community to which Rukšas belonged was comprised primarily of Latvians and he spent much of his time in the Latvian SSR.

While young people living out a hippie lifestyle may have considered themselves to be apolitical, their attempt to withdraw from structured public life was viewed as a political act in a system that politicized the personal and the private. The influence of Western culture on the hippie lifestyle placed it squarely within the context of the ideological war. The Soviet view of hippies as evidence of the sharpening of capitalist decline can be found in a 1967 article “Hipi” in the journal *Mokslas ir Gyvenimas* [Science and Life].¹⁵⁵ While the article acknowledges that hippies themselves opposed the ideals of bourgeois society, it equally criticizes the hippies’ “false revolution” based on “beatnik” nihilism. Images with the articles show hippies in wild dress or undressed, living in tents or dancing on a street. In this way, hippies were framed as antithetical to Soviet norms for youth behavior and dress. Yet, in another paradox, such media coverage provided the only model for many Soviet young people to develop their own “hippie” lifestyle.

In the spring of 1972, the Soviet Union appeared strong internally and on the world stage. As the country was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the world expectantly awaited US President Nixon’s trip to Moscow in May 1972 to complete negotiations on the first Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty and expanded trade

¹⁵⁴ Rukšas (Kaunas; June 27, 2011). Interview with Author.

¹⁵⁵ The article does not appear in the journal’s Russian language version *Nauka i zhizn*.

agreements.¹⁵⁶ However, the youth problem had not been solved. Across the Soviet Union, including in Lithuania, young people “continued to find alternative platforms of collective experience, pursue interests different from those receiving official sanction, and to deplore the bureaucratic, out-of-touch Komsomol. If anything, the policies introduced hardened the fronts between official and unofficial youth cultures.”¹⁵⁷ Faced with reversals in official policies of liberalization and resistance from both the Party and state bureaucracy, young people became discouraged by the limits of change within the Soviet state. Additionally, youth disillusionment was aggravated by the increasingly complex socio-economic conditions with which the younger generation was faced in the 1970s – trends such as a strain on urban infrastructure, underemployment, an emphasis on manual labor rather than professional positions, all of which had begun in the late 1960s.¹⁵⁸ The tensions that had been building between youth and authorities were to come to a head in Kaunas.

¹⁵⁶ The country’s name was officially changed from Soviet Russia to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922.

¹⁵⁷ Fürst, 149.

¹⁵⁸ William Tompson, *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2003), 102.

CHAPTER 2:
*TAKING IT TO THE STREETS: YOUNG PEOPLE RESPOND TO KALANTA'S SUICIDE*¹⁵⁹

The tension between increased personal autonomy that had been allowed since Stalin's death and the Soviet state's continued insistence on maintaining a relatively high degree of control over society is crucial to understanding the popular unrest in Kaunas in 1972. The post-Stalin political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union were marked by inconsistent political liberalization, greater exposure to the West, and debates over the role of youth in building a communist society. By the late 1960s, Soviet citizens' expectations of a rising standard of living, improved material consumption and increasing personal autonomy, especially in leisure activities, were not being met under "really existing socialism." By identifying Kalanta's act and the ensuing demonstrations solely as a manifestation of nationalism, existing scholarship neglects other, perhaps more important, social and political processes at work in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and early 1970s. Dissatisfaction with constraints on consumption and leisure, along with a lack of fear of state violence, were equally behind young people's response to Kalanta's self-immolation. Yet participants' descriptions of their involvement in the street demonstrations downplayed their own capacity to express discontent with the Soviet system.

¹⁵⁹ "Takin' It to the Streets," The Doobie Brothers (Released 1976)

KAUNAS, MAY 18-19¹⁶⁰

Despite limited public information about the young man who had set himself on fire in front of the Musical Theater on Sunday afternoon, word of his act spread through the city of Kaunas. People talked about it in their workplaces, in schoolyards and on city buses. Kalanta's funeral was scheduled for Thursday afternoon, four days after his self-immolation. The authorities announced on the radio that a forensic-psychiatric commission had determined that Kalanta suffered from schizophrenia, but other rumors circulated about the reasons for his death. Some people heard that he had killed himself as a result of a fight with his girlfriend. Others speculated that his death had something to do with the hippies who congregated in the city center.

Local authorities were concerned that the funeral, the time and date of which was evidently known by the inhabitants of Kaunas, would attract attention and took action to prevent it from becoming a public event. During the week, Party activists engaged in "explanatory work" designed to promote the "correct appraisal" of Kalanta's death. Men in suits came to classrooms in secondary schools throughout the city and warned the young people to stay away from the site of Kalanta's self-immolation in the city center. They emphasized that the young man who had killed himself was mentally ill and that there was no reason to attempt to attend his funeral.¹⁶¹ In the days after Kalanta's suicide, the authorities increased their presence on the streets. Police and Komsomol

¹⁶⁰ The following account is based on the KGB's full report of the events following Kalanta's self-immolation "Spravka [Memorandum]," Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR, 1972? Fondas K-1 Ap. 3, By. 793, 142-149. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed January 2009), as well as on interrogation statements taken by KGB after the street demonstrations in Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR, Fondas K-1, Ap. 58, Byla 47644/3. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius, Lithuania. (accessed May 2009), and interviews conducted by the author in 2010-2011. Details for which there is general agreement in the sources are not individually cited.

¹⁶¹ A number of the people whom I interviewed formally as well those with whom I talked informally about the events following Kalanta's death, described authorities showing up in their schools in the few days between Kalanta's self-immolation and the funeral.

brigades patrolled Laisvės Alėja. In the square in front of the Musical Theater, men in plainclothes – assumed to be KGB agents – watched everyone who came by. Official concern of a sympathetic public response was not unfounded. Throughout the week, people attempted to lay flowers at the site of Kalanta’s self-immolation. KGB officials and police officers immediately removed any flowers left on the site.¹⁶²

The KGB took measures to prevent Kalanta’s funeral from becoming a mass public event. On Thursday morning, May 18, the local authorities decided that the family should hold the funeral two hours earlier – at 2:00 pm instead of 4:00 pm – and should move it to a different cemetery than originally planned. Despite the last minute changes, about 250 friends and family members joined Kalanta’s parents and brothers in the funeral ceremony. KGB agents observed the funeral and took photographs of the participants, but allowed it to be held.¹⁶³

Ignoring the warnings not to attend Kalanta’s funeral, young people began showing up at the Kalanta house on Thursday afternoon. They came after getting off work or leaving school. Many came with a friend; some came with a family member. Most had heard that the funeral would take place on Thursday afternoon and wanted see it¹⁶⁴. The KGB claimed to have information that the

¹⁶² In interviews and informal conversations, I was told that people tried to lay flowers at the site but were chased off by KGB agents and policemen. However, no one knew of anyone arrested for bringing flowers to the square.

¹⁶³ Reports and investigative materials related to Kalanta’s self-immolation and the funeral are located in “Baudžiamoji byla Nr. 20-2-036-72 dėl Romo Kalantos mirties fakto [Criminal Case Nr. 20-2-036-72 on the Fact of Romas Kalanta’s Death],” Kauno miesto prokuratūra [City of Kaunas Prosecutor] Lietuvos TSR Prokuratūra [LiSSR Prosectuor]. May-June 1972. Fondas R-1724, Ap. 1, By. 33-34. Kauno Apskritis Archyvas [Kaunas Regional Archives], Kaunas. (accessed August 2009).

¹⁶⁴ A number of those questioned said that they knew about the funeral because people were talking about it. While it is a possibility that there were individuals encouraging young people to gather at the Kalanta home or at the site of his immolation, there is no evidence of this in the interrogation statements.

hippies would attempt to interfere with the funeral and stationed police at the house; however, they took no action to prevent people from gathering.

The crowd quickly grew larger than the authorities expected. By 4:00 pm, about five hundred people were gathered in front of the Kalanta family home in the Viliampolė neighborhood just northeast of the city center.¹⁶⁵ They spilled out into Panerių street, stopping traffic. As word spread through the crowd that the funeral had already taken place, the crowd became agitated and blamed the authorities for depriving them of the opportunity to participate.¹⁶⁶ One young man, identified later as Vytautas Kaladė, jumped on the hood of a truck and shouted that they should go to the place where Kalanta had burned himself.¹⁶⁷ The young people who had shown up at the Kalanta home expecting to participate in a funeral process now formed a mass procession of their own. The crowd walked along Panierių Street and then turned left to walk down the hill and crossed the bridge over the Neris River. The young people passed along the edge of the old town and moved down Laisvės Alėja, stopping traffic on the major street through the city center. Along the way, members of the crowd began to shout “*Valio* [Hurray].” As they walked the three kilometers to the city center they shouted “Freedom for Lithuania,” “Freedom for hippies,” and “down with the police and their bananas [rubber truncheons].”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

¹⁶⁶ Someone in the crowd called out “show us a portrait of Romas, we want to see Romas” and the demand for a portrait swept through the crowd. According to some statements, a family member brought a photograph of Romas Kalanta outside and lifted it up for the crowd to see. However, other participants stated that a photograph was not brought outside.

¹⁶⁷ Kaladė, a 25-year old stage hand at the Kaunas State Drama Theater, was later prosecuted for instigating a “disturbance of public order.”

¹⁶⁸ “Свободу Литве [Freedom for Lithuania]” and “Свободу хиппи [Freedom for hippies]” in “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? ; “Laisvę Lietuvai [Freedom for Lithuania],” “Laisvę ilgiems plaukams [Freedom for hippies (long-haired people)]” and “Šalin milicija ir bananus [down with the police and their ‘bananas’]” in “Baudžiamoji byla 09-

The police were present on the street but took no action to stop the growing crowd as it moved into the city center; nor did the police stop people from gathering in front of the Musical Theater. One young woman who was at the Kalanta home described how she and a friend thought they could get to the city center faster on the bus than by walking with the crowd. She explained, “all the traffic was stopped on the streets. After the bus finally crossed the bridge, we could see police everywhere but they didn’t do anything about all the people. We got off the bus and walked the rest of the way to Laisvės Alėja.”¹⁶⁹ Arriving individually or in small groups, several hundred people had already gathered at the site of Kalanta’s self-immolation before the crowd from the Kalanta home arrived. The two groups merged, filling the small square in front of the Musical Theater and the wide boulevard of Laisvės Alėja. Those closest to the spot under the trees where Kalanta committed suicide formed a circle in the grass and several members of the crowd gave speeches. People laid flowers at the base of the tree by the burned piece of ground. At one point the crowd began to sing traditional Lithuanian songs. Young people, leaving school or work or just out for a walk on a spring evening, saw the crowd and continued to join it, swelling the numbers to upwards of 2,000. They ignored the police with megaphones who ordered them to disperse.

Suddenly a rumor began to spread that Kalanta’s father had been arrested and was being held at the militia headquarters at the other end of Laisvės Alėja. “Let’s go release Kalanta’s father,” one young man yelled and the crowd began to move westward down Laisvės Alėja. By this point, after approximately two hours, the police were prepared to take action. Reserves from the militia

2-013-72 [Criminal Case 09-2-013-72],” Investigator of high priority cases]; Kauno Miesto VK VRV (Vidaus Reikalū Vadybos) Tardymo Skyrius [Investigation section of Kaunas Internal Affairs Department] Lietuvos TSR Prokuratūra (Ypatingai Svarbių Bylų Tardytojas) [LiSSR Prosecutor. May-July 1972. Fondas K-1, Ap. 58a, By. 47644/3 (five volumes). KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Kaunas. (accessed January 2009).

¹⁶⁹ Šnieškienė (Kaunas; February 12, 2011). Interview with author.

academy had been brought in, as well as brigades of Communist Youth Organization and Party activists. The police, armed with rubber truncheons, had formed a cordon at one end of Laisvės Alėja in front of a church that had been converted into a sculpture gallery.

When the crowd of young people reached the gallery, the police took action to disperse it. Most of the young people surged back toward the Musical Theater while others scattered down side streets. Once the police engaged the young people, the demonstration turned violent. “Guys were ripping up the benches along the sidewalk and throwing stones at the police,” one man remembered.¹⁷⁰ Eyewitnesses described people running everywhere and the police chasing them, attempting to beat them with rubber truncheons. The police dispersed the crowd and by 7:30 pm, it appeared that the authorities had gained control of the streets. The unrest, however, continued late into the evening. By 9:30 pm, groups of young people roamed the streets; some trying to make their way to the site of Kalanta’s self-immolation, others provoking altercations by throwing stones at the police and through windows in buildings along Laisvės Alėja. At one point, a police motorcycle was set on fire. The police once again gained control of the streets, arresting four hundred and two people by the end of the day.

On Thursday afternoon, at the site of Kalanta’s suicide, several speakers had called on the young people to gather each day at 3:00 pm to honor Kalanta’s memory. Despite the police’s actions on the previous day, young people came to the city center on Friday afternoon and once again congregated in the square in front of the Musical Theater. The crowd quickly reached at least fifteen hundred people. On this second day of unrest, the authorities took more severe actions. Using MVD units and military troops from a base on the outskirts of Kaunas, they broke up the

¹⁷⁰ Varnas (Kaunas; February 7, 2011). Interview with author.

crowds. No one was arrested on this second day; instead young people were thrown into waiting vans and taken to warehouses where they were beaten.¹⁷¹

The use of force ended the street demonstrations in Kaunas in the spring of 1972. The police, KGB officers and Komsomol brigades continued to heavily patrol the streets for the next several weeks. A curfew was enforced and young people were not allowed to gather in public places. Even a pair of teenagers on the street was likely to be questioned by the police about what they were doing and where they were going. Schools were equally restrictive. Teachers watched students more closely and prevented them from congregating during breaks between classes.

INTERROGATING THE SOURCES: KGB INTERVIEW STATEMENTS

An analysis of KGB interrogation statements of young people who participated in the street demonstrations reveals the political practices through which young people defined their relationship to post-Stalinist Soviet authority and society. Although the interrogation statements do not contain a record of questions asked, they do address three main topics: why Kalanta committed suicide, what the nature of the street demonstrations was, and why the young people participated. The young people's varying explanations of why Kalanta immolated himself demonstrate that the instability in the meaning assigned to his act began immediately after it occurred. While they themselves were not sure of Kalanta's motivation for suicide, these young people saw themselves as participating in an event that manifested a common identity as youth and, to some extent, youth

¹⁷¹ The KGB documents state that "more severe measures were taken" by the police, MVD troops and Soviet party activists. ("Spravka [Memorandum]", 1972?) In interviews and informal conversations, participants and others who were in Kaunas in May 1972 described a process of rounding up young people and either beating them on the street or transporting them to other sites where they were beaten. In several cases, they stated that Komsomol activists were involved in the beatings. This would be in line with the use of Komsomol brigades to enforce proper public behavior as discussed in Chapter 1.

discontent with the current social and political situation. Importantly, the young people interviewed expressed little fear on the day of the funeral at the prospect of participating in a large, unauthorized public gathering. They denied that they had done anything wrong by simply being present on the street, even when identifying the events as a protest against the Soviet system.

Of the four hundred and two people arrested on May 18, the KGB investigation files contain interview statements (*liudytojo apklausus protokolai*) from fifty-two individuals who participated to some extent in the street demonstrations (see Table 1).¹⁷² Several of the individuals were interviewed two or three times with a statement from each interview. Most of the second or third statements indicate that individuals were asked to identify whom they knew in photographs taken by KGB operatives during the May 18 events.¹⁷³ The statements rarely indicate what questions were asked, although it is possible to infer certain questions based on common elements contained in the statements. The statements were primarily handwritten, presumably by a KGB official or stenographer because the handwriting for many of the statements is the same. Each statement is signed at the end by the person from whom it was taken.

KGB interview statements are, of course, problematic sources. While investigative reports state the total number arrested, there are no full lists of arrested individuals in the investigation files. There is no indication why these fifty-two statements are the only ones in the files. It is not evident whether these were the only statements that were taken or if others were not filed or filed separately and later lost or destroyed. There are no transcripts of the KGB interviews and no indication of

¹⁷² “Baudžiamoji byla 09-2-013-72 [Criminal Case 09-2-013-72]”, May-July 1972. The files do not include initial interrogation statements from any of the eight individuals eventually charged with instigating the street demonstrations. All interrogation statements cited in this chapter come from these investigation files.

¹⁷³ “Baudžiamoji byla 09-2-013-72 [Criminal Case 09-2-013-72]”, May-July 1972. The criminal investigation files contain photographs of the street demonstrations and the gathering at the site of Kalanta’s self-immolation. Numbers were pasted on individuals in the photographs whom the investigators were attempting to identify.

what kind of duress might have been applied to the young people who were questioned. The interview statements are all dated in late May and early June with no indication if other interviews were held with the individual prior to the one for which a statement exists or if the individuals were in detention from May 18 to the date of the interview.

Despite these concerns, a careful analysis of the statements can still provide certain types of information about the young people who participated and how they talked to authorities about the nature of the street demonstrations and their participation in them. Of the fifty-two people whose interview statements are in the files, forty were teen agers, while twelve were twenty years old or older.¹⁷⁴ Seventeen of the young people were members of the Communist Youth Organization, while one was a candidate member of the Communist Party.¹⁷⁵ The remaining thirty-four were identified as “*nepartinis* [not affiliated with the Communist Party].” Sixteen were female; thirty-six were male. All of those questioned were residents of Kaunas. Although the participants were apparently asked if they or others were drunk, the statements themselves do not appear to be shaped to identify either hooliganism or nationalism as the primary motivation for participation. The statements contain a few flashes of evident sincerity; for example, the young woman who said she shouted “freedom for *ilgauplaukai* [long-haired people]” because she found young men with long hair attractive.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ The three oldest participants for which there are interrogation statements were 24, 27, and 28. The interrogation statements represent a younger demographic than the statistics provided by the KGB for the total 402 people who were arrested. For the extant interrogation statements, over one-third were under 18 and nearly half were age 18-21. KGB statistics stated that, of those arrested for participation in the street demonstrations, 25% were under age 18, 17% were age 18-21, and 28% were 21-25.

¹⁷⁵ At one-third, the percentage of Communist Youth Organization members in the extant interrogation statements was higher than the one-quarter with party affiliation of the 402 people arrested.

¹⁷⁶ Virginija S. interrogation statement.

Table 1: Participants of the May 18 demonstrations from extant KGB interrogation statements

Name	Statement Date ¹⁷⁷	Birth Year	Age in 1972	Work/School	Party Affiliation ¹⁷⁸
Antanas T.	1972-05-22	1957	15	Radio factory	<i>Not identified</i>
Ilona K.	1972-05-31	1956	16	8 th grade student	VLKJS member
Laimutė R.	1972-05-20	1956	16	Temporarily unemployed	VLKJS member
Liuda A.	1972-07-06	1956	16	10 th grade student	VLKJS member
Nijolė V.	1972-05-24	1956	16	Trade school student	VLKJS member
Ričardas D.	1972-05-22	1956	16	8 th grade student	none
Vidmantas M.	1972-05-26	1956	16	Polytechnical school student	none
Viktoras Š.	1972-05-20	1956	16	Professional-technical school student	none
Algimantas S.	1972-07-06	1955	17	Professional-technical school student	none
Algirdas A.	1972-07-05	1955	17	Factory worker	VLKJS member
Arūnas S.	1972-05-22	1955	17	10 th grade student	none

¹⁷⁷ A number of participants were questioned more than once. The dates in this column reflect the earliest dated statement in cases with multiple statements. In most instances, the second interrogation statement was signed in mid-June or early July.

¹⁷⁸ VLKJS (Visos Sąjungos Lenino Komunistinio Jaunimo Sąjunga) is the Lithuanian acronym for the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth Organization.

Birutė Š.	1972-05-28	1955	17	Professional-technical school student	none
Eugenijus Z.	1972-07-13	1955	17	11 th grade student	VLKJS member
Gintautas P.	1972-05-23	1955	17	Not employed	VLKJS member
Mindaugas P.	1972-07-10	1955	17	Construction worker	none
Nadiežda M.	1972-07-12	1955	17	Worker	none
Remigijus K.	1972-05-26	1955	17	11 th grade student	none
Ričardas T.	1972-05-22	1955	17	10 th grade student	none
Roma K.	1972-07-06	1955	17	Factory worker	none
Virginija S.	1972-05-25	1955	17	10 th grade student	VLKJS member
Zigmas K.	1972-05-29	1955	17	Pharmacy	none
Algirdas M.	1972-07-11	1954	18	Taxi lot automechanic	VLKJS member
Audra K.	1972-07-12	1954	18	Not employed or enrolled in school	none
Janina J.	1972-05-28	1954	18	Not working or studying	none
Kęstutis P.	1972-06-13	1954	18	LiSSR Society for the Blind Training Complex [Lietuvos TSR Aklųjų draugijos mokymo kombinatas)	none
Rimantas J.	1972-05-22	1954	18	Professional-technical school student	VLKJS member
Rimas G.	1972-05-24	1954	18	11 th grade student	none
Romualdas V.	1972-05-30	1954	18	Auto repair	none

Vladas K.	1972-06-15	1954	18	Forestry student	VLKJS member
Antanas Č.	1972-07-11	1953	19	Factory worker	none
Henrikas F.	1972-05-20	1953	19	Not employed or enrolled in school	none
Liudmila R.	1972-05-24	1953	19	Radio factory	VLKJS member
Rima R.	1972-07-07	1953	19	Temporarily not employed or enrolled in school	VLKJS member
Rimgaudas U.	1972-05-24	1953	19	Construction worker	none
Rita S.	1972-05-24	1953	19	Trade school student	none
Stasys S.	1972-05-22	1953	19	Professional-technical school student	none
Valentinas S.	1972-05-22	1953	19	Furniture manufacturer	none
Viktoras M.	1972-06-15	1953	19	Polytechnical school student	none
Vytautas P.	1972-05-21	1953	19	Beer manufacturer	none
Danutė K.	1972-06-15	1952	20	Seamstress, but not currently employed	none
Janina P.	1972-06-13	1952	20	Factory worker	none
Vaclovas R.	1972-06-12	1952	20	Printing house	none
Virginija L.	1972-05-26	1952	20	Sewing manufacturer	none
Vytautas M.	1972-06-16	1952	20	Taxi lot automechanic	none
Irma B.	1972-07-05	1951	21	Factory worker	VLKJS member
Albertas K.	1972-05-22	1950	22	Factory worker	none
Aleksandras K.	1972-05-20	1950	22	Locksmith	none

Vytautas K.	1972-05-29	1950	22	Not listed	Candidate, CPSU
Algirdas M.	1972-05-28	1948	24	Worker	VLKJS member
Antanas V.	1972-05-21	1945	27	Driver	VLKJS member
Kazys J.	1972-05-23	1944	28	Not employed or enrolled in school	none

THE UNSTABLE MEANING OF KALANTA'S SUICIDE

The interrogation statements reveal that multiple interpretations of Kalanta's act existed in the immediate aftermath of his self-immolation. While the differing explanations for Kalanta's suicide demonstrate that young people and others in Kaunas were speculating about the causes of his suicide, it is not clear what generated the various explanations. Internal KGB documents also speak of a "hippie plot" to take advantage of the suicide, but there is no evidence that the KGB itself spread a rumor that Kalanta himself was part of a hippie plot. The existence of multiple explanations in late May and early June indicates that the official version that Kalanta was suffering from schizophrenia was not fully accepted by the Kaunas population.

The young people gave two primary explanations for Kalanta's suicide, that he killed himself because his girlfriend rejected him or that his death was part of a hippie protest. Based on the consistency with which this topic was addressed in the interview statements, it appears KGB interrogators specifically asked many of the young people if they knew why Kalanta committed suicide. As a secondary school student expressed "some said the hippies cast lots, some said a girl didn't become his girlfriend." He explained that he did not know exactly but it was a pity to him

that a youth would burn himself.¹⁷⁹ In fact, most of the young people claimed no personal opinion about Kalanta's motivation, instead presenting these explanations as what they had heard from other people. Even those who acknowledged that they knew Kalanta personally maintained that they did not know why he killed himself.¹⁸⁰ Only one person mentioned that Kalanta had written in a notebook that he no longer wanted to live.¹⁸¹ While a number of the young people stated that they knew the official explanation that Kalanta was mentally ill, even these young people often added other possibilities such as the hippie plot and a broken heart. These alternative explanations for Kalanta's act reveal that the meanings assigned to his death were unstable from the moment it occurred.

Although the rumor that Kalanta's suicide was part of a hippie plan appears to have been quite widespread, the hippies' motivations for this plan were as unclear to the young people as Kalanta's own motives. While most simply stated they heard that a group of hippies drew lots to choose someone to immolate himself, one secondary school student stated that she heard a hippie organization had selected two people to immolate themselves and one to commit suicide by jumping off the radio factory tower.¹⁸² Only a few of those questioned gave a specific reason for the hippie plan, identifying it as "a fight against Soviet power."¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Arūnas S. interrogation statement.

¹⁸⁰ Antanas Č. interrogation statement.

¹⁸¹ Laimutė R. interrogation statement. The young woman's statement did not explain how she knew about the notebook, which was not included in official announcements about Kalanta's suicide.

¹⁸² Ilona K. interrogation statement.

¹⁸³ Aleksandras K. and Viktoras Š. interrogation statements. Although KGB investigators blamed hippies for instigating the street demonstrations, there is no evidence that the authorities spread a rumor that Kalanta himself was a hippie. Instead the investigation and public statements emphasized that Kalanta was mentally ill. See Chapter 3.

THE NATURE OF THE STREET DEMONSTRATIONS

Although the young people were not sure about Kalanta's motivations for suicide, they were clear that the crowds on the street on May 18 had gathered to honor him. While this was more obviously true of those who initially congregated at the Kalanta home for the funeral or even at the site of Kalanta's self-immolation, it was also cited by those who joined the crowd as it grew. A young factory worker explained that "from the conversation of the people who were gathered, [my friend and I] understood that...many people, especially youth, had come to the city park to honor Kalanta's memory."¹⁸⁴ A young man stated that he heard "shouts in the crowd about the one who immolated himself: 'Hurray for Romas,' 'Build a monument to Romas.'"¹⁸⁵

References to actions that could be deemed "nationalist" did appear in descriptions of the street demonstrations. One young woman said that "Lietuva [Lithuania]" was spelled out with flowers at the place where Kalanta had immolated himself.¹⁸⁶ Several people stated that the crowd sang Lithuanian national songs, although they also reported that the crowd did not know the words and the singing died out.¹⁸⁷ Some observers attributed nationalist motivations to the crowd. A twenty-two year old worker described a balding man, approximately forty years old, who "had great joy that there are still young Lithuanian patriots."¹⁸⁸ Despite these examples, the majority of those interviewed did not emphasize nationalist motivations on the part of the crowd. They reported that the crowd shouted "freedom for hippies" and "freedom for youth" as frequently as "freedom for Lithuania."

¹⁸⁴ Roma K. interrogation statement.

¹⁸⁵ Albertas B. interrogation statement.

¹⁸⁶ Birutė Š. interrogation statement.

¹⁸⁷ Birutė Š. and Vytautas P. interrogation statements.

¹⁸⁸ Albertas K. interrogation statement.

While some participants reported political aspects to the protest, these were similarly deemphasized in the statements taken by KGB interrogators. According to several of the interrogation statements, members of the crowd shouted “we don’t like Soviet authority; we will fight for freedom” and “we will fight for freedom and independence.”¹⁸⁹ None of the young people who were questioned, however, claimed political motivations for themselves or for the majority of participants. A young man stated, “While watching the others, not the hippies, I understood that they approved of the shouted slogans only sort of as joking. I didn’t see political content in those shouts.”¹⁹⁰ As evident from the previous quote, many of the participants associated the street demonstrations with the hippies, even though they themselves were not hippies. Most of those questioned who were at the Kalanta home identified a “young man with long hair” as the instigator of the march to the city center. When questioned about the main actors during the impromptu memorial service and the march to the police headquarters, others also identified young men with long hair or unnamed hippies as the instigators. The young people who were questioned attributed to the hippies a desire for social and personal freedom, not solely political freedom. An eleventh grade student explained, “I understood the shouts to mean that hippies felt freedom, which is similar to anarchy, was a necessity.”¹⁹¹ An eighteen year old worker noted “I understood ‘hippie’ as youth with long hair or behaving freely (behaving how they want).”¹⁹²

Even given an incentive to downplay nationalist or political intentions, descriptions of the street demonstrations as a youth event still took center stage in the interrogation statements. A

¹⁸⁹ Viktoras Š. interrogation statement.

¹⁹⁰ Rimas G. interrogation statement.

¹⁹¹ Rimas G. interrogation statement.

¹⁹² Kęstutis P. interrogation statement.

tenth grade student described that “there were girls and guys more or less my age...I understood that a youth demonstration was occurring.”¹⁹³ Several of the participants reported that members of the crowd called for a recognition of youth. A eleventh grade student said that individuals laying flowers in the park called on youth to gather every May 14 and declared that this date would be Lithuanian youth’s liberty day.¹⁹⁴ Another student said that that the crowd shouted “Let this place unite as a symbol of youth.”¹⁹⁵ Although they did not explicitly refer to previous altercations between the police and young people, many of those questioned noted that the crowd shouted “down with the police and their bananas [rubber truncheons],” providing an indication that there had been previous run-ins between young people and the police.¹⁹⁶

Despite initial public portrayal of the crowds as “hooligans,” there is little evidence in the interview statements that the young people intended to engage in destructive behavior. Very few of the young people who were questioned admitted to drinking alcohol prior to joining the crowd and these were primarily older males, for example, a twenty-two year old and a twenty-four year old

¹⁹³ Ričardas T. interrogation statement [“buvo merginos ir vaikinai maždaug mano amžiaus..supratau kad vyksta jaunimo demonstracija”].

¹⁹⁴ Eugenijus Ž. interrogation statement (“taip pat sakė, kad reikia jaunimui susrinkti kiekvienais metais gegužės 14 d. prie susideginimo vietos ir, kad ta diena bus Lietuvos jaunimo laisvės diena”).

¹⁹⁵ Ričardas T. interrogation statement (“tegul ta vieta būria jaunimo simboliu”).

¹⁹⁶ CPL documents refer to “behaved in a disorderly and undisciplined manner at music concerts, basketball games, boxing matches and other events.” Such interactions in the context of leisure activities reveal a potentially broad-based youth discontent in Soviet Lithuania. “Postanovlenie biuro tsentral’nogo komiteta KP Litvi ob usilenii politicheskoi i organizatorskoi raboti v sviazi s antiobshchestvennimi proiavleniiami v g. Kaunase [Decree Concerning the Need to Strengthen Political and Administrative Work in Connection with the Anti-Social Developments in the City of Kaunas],” The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania. May 30, 1972. Fondas 1771, Ap. 247, By. 79. LKP Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [Communist Party of Lithuania Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed May 2009).

worker.¹⁹⁷ The majority of the statements either denied that drunkenness was a component of the street demonstration or do not mention it at all.

THE POWER OF CURIOSITY: YOUNG PEOPLE EXPLAIN THEIR ACTIONS

Nearly all of the young people explained to the authorities that they themselves only participated in the demonstrations out of curiosity. Some expressed curiosity about the funeral of a young man who committed suicide and therefore went to the Kalanta home or to the city park. Others claimed that they saw the large crowd – or, in particular, noticed that it was a large crowd of young people – and joined out of curiosity. Indeed, the crowd that gathered on Thursday, May 18, was the largest unofficial public gathering the young people would have seen or even heard about in Soviet Lithuania. Although they likely heard stories of repression and violence from their parents and grandparents who experienced Soviet occupation and Stalinism, these young people would have had no personal experience of repression and violence in post-Stalinist Soviet Lithuania. The young people who participated in the street demonstrations expressed no expectation that such a large, unsanctioned public gathering would be met with violence by the authorities.

Young people with no personal connection to Kalanta were drawn to his funeral out of curiosity about the young man who had committed suicide so dramatically. One young woman explained that she was not employed or in school so she had free time and was curious to see the funeral. Once at the Kalanta home, she went with the crowd to the city park because she wanted to see what would happen.¹⁹⁸ A seventeen year old worker said simply that the funeral of a young man

¹⁹⁷ Aleksandras K. and Algirdas M. interrogation statements.

¹⁹⁸ Janina J. interrogation statement.

was interesting to her so she decided to attend.¹⁹⁹ Both Kalanta's self-immolation and the date and time of the funeral were common knowledge in Kaunas by Thursday, May 18. A tenth grade pupil said, "I knew from people talking that Kalanta's funeral would occur on May 18 at 16:00 and I decided to attend his funeral. I wanted to see what would happen so I also went to the city park."²⁰⁰

Only a few participants said that they knew Kalanta personally. A young man, who was a member of the Communist Party, said that he decided to go to the funeral because he was acquainted with Kalanta.²⁰¹ A student at the polytechnical school explained that he was in the same class with Kalanta from second through eleventh grade, therefore, he decided to attend his funeral. Even those young people who said they attended the funeral because they knew Kalanta gave curiosity rather than personal connection as the reason for participating in the street demonstrations. When the crowd began to march to the city center, the polytechnical school student said "I went out of curiosity to see what else would happen."²⁰² Other young people who acknowledged knowing Kalanta personally or by sight identified curiosity as their reason for participating. Several young people mentioned that they knew Kalanta by sight, usually from youth dances. Two young people knew who Kalanta was because they lived in his neighborhood.²⁰³

Given the nearly unanimous use of "curiosity" as an explanation for participation, it is apparent that the young people believed that it was an acceptable explanation of their actions to give

¹⁹⁹ Nadiedža M. interrogation statement. Despite this young woman's Russian first and last names, her interrogation statement was taken in Lithuanian.

²⁰⁰ Liuda A. interrogation statement. This young woman has a Russia first name and Lithuanian last name. Her interrogation statement was taken in Lithuanian.

²⁰¹ Vytautas K. interrogation statement.

²⁰² Viktoras M. interrogation statement.

²⁰³ Antanas Č., Henrikas F., Ilona K. and Vytautas M. interrogation statements.

to authorities. Certainly, young people who were acquainted with Kalanta would have had an incentive to downplay their personal connection with a young man who had publicly committed suicide and been declared mentally ill. Curiosity also served to downplay political or nationalist motivations that might be unacceptable to authorities. An eighth grade pupil stated “I have to note that I participated in the procession on May 18 only from curiosity and that I had no other aims.”²⁰⁴

The size of the crowd, which the young people repeatedly referred to as “huge” (*didžiulis*), drew many of the young people who did not intend to attend the funeral but who instead joined the crowd after seeing it on the street. In some cases, they noticed a crowd gathered outside the Kalanta home. One young man said that he saw a lot of people gathered at the Kalanta house after leaving work about 3:30 in the afternoon and he went out of curiosity to see what was going on.²⁰⁵ In other cases, they noticed a crowd in the city center. Another, on his way home from work about 6:00 p.m. stated that he was surprised to see a lot of people gathered in the city park and went to see what was happening.²⁰⁶ An eleventh grade student explained that he went past the city park on his way home from school because his house was nearby. He saw many young people placing flowers in the place where the self-immolation had occurred so he went to see what was happening.²⁰⁷ A student at a technical school stated that he was out walking around the city at about 4:30 p.m. When he walked past the Musical Theater, he saw a lot of people gathered and went to take a look.²⁰⁸ Similarly, a young worker said that he was on his way to visit a friend at about 4:00 p.m. He saw a crowd of

²⁰⁴ Ričardas D. interrogation statement.

²⁰⁵ Remigijus K. interrogation statement.

²⁰⁶ Rimantas U. interrogation statement.

²⁰⁷ Rimas G. interrogation statement.

²⁰⁸ Rimantas J. interrogation statement.

people walking and shouting on Laisvės Alėja and he went along with the crowd.²⁰⁹ A student at a technical school saw a large crowd on Laisvės Alėja after leaving work and joined in as they marched to the police headquarters.²¹⁰

Based on the extant interrogation statements, the age of the participants was the primary attraction for young people who joined the crowd. A technical school student stated that “on that day, when I saw a large crowd of noisy youths, it personally interested me.”²¹¹ Similarly, an eleventh grade student said that “he went along with the kids.”²¹² A tenth grade student explained “I stood near the circle of shouting youths and I also shouted ‘long live the long-haired ones [hippies]’.”²¹³ A number of young people also remarked that joining with other young people was a liberating experience. As a worker declared, “It wasn’t important to me what the shouts meant; I was caught up in the spirit of the other shouters. It was interesting and cheerful. [I wanted] to be with the others...to behave uninhibitedly and freely.”²¹⁴

In their explanations to the authorities, the young people claimed they were not doing anything wrong when they joined the crowd. Some argued that they weren’t actively participating, simply watching the event. A tenth grade pupil summed up the sentiments expressed by the young people, “Neither I nor my friend...joined a disturbance against public order. We didn’t do anything

²⁰⁹ Vytautas P. interrogation statement.

²¹⁰ Algimintas S. interrogation statement.

²¹¹ Vladas K. interrogation statement.

²¹² Euginijus Ž. interrogation statement.

²¹³ Virginija S. interrogation statement.

²¹⁴ Nadiedža M. interrogation statement.

bad and only looked at what happened.”²¹⁵ Others acknowledged that they participated in the march and shouted slogans, but still denied that their actions were unacceptable. A young woman pointed out that she did not think that she was engaged in anything “bad” when she joined the crowd in its march from the Kalanta home to the city center.²¹⁶ Another student at a technical school also noted that he joined in the noise-making without thinking that he did “something bad.”²¹⁷ Given that these statements appear in interrogation statements, it is difficult to determine if they express genuine opinions or are solely an attempt to downplay their participation in what was clearly not acceptable to the authorities.

The demographics of the participants in the street demonstrations and their explanations of why there were on the street were incorporated into the Soviet Lithuanian authorities’ interpretations of the events of May 1972. The KGB investigation and Communist Party reports drew on these statements, but also added their own interpretive framework in order to understand what happened on the streets of Kaunas.

²¹⁵ Liuda A. interrogation statement.

²¹⁶ Audra K. interrogation statement. This young woman has a Lithuanian first name and a Russian last name. Her interrogation statement is in Lithuanian.

²¹⁷ Vladas K. interrogation statement.

CHAPTER 3:
THE KIDS ARE (NOT) ALRIGHT:
KGB AND COMMUNIST PARTY INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE POPULAR UNREST IN KAUNAS²¹⁸

Both the state security services (KGB) and the Communist Party in Lithuania (CPL) wanted to know what caused the events of Thursday, May 18, and Friday, May 19, 1972. The results of the KGB's investigation informed the Communist Party's attempt to define the nature of the crowds on the street. However, the two state entities approached the events from very different perspectives. The security services were more concerned with the practicalities of identifying individuals who could be prosecuted as instigators of the street demonstrations. Communist Party officials focused on developing an ideological narrative of the events. As a result, internal KGB investigative documents repeatedly use "anti-social" and "anti-Soviet" without clarification of what these terms meant and what might distinguish them. The KGB infrequently used the term "nationalist" to designate aspects of the street demonstrations. The internal CPL reports and speeches, on the other hand, reveal that Communist Party officials attempted to distinguish more specifically the reasons for young people's participation in the street demonstrations. The CPL leadership's initial attempts to conceptualize what happened as the actions of "marginal elements" in Soviet society were shaped by official discourses of criminality and Cold War politics. In their attempt to explain the nature of the unrest, the character of the participants, and the cause of their participation, Communist officials consciously rejected nationalism as a cause and instead blamed hooligans and hippies. However, the demographics of the youth who were arrested forced the Communist leadership to consider other ideologically acceptable explanations as to why school and university students, including Communist Youth League members, would engage in street demonstrations. As a result, Soviet authorities used the political practice of "self-criticism" (*samokritika*) in meetings of Party activists to identify the

²¹⁸ "The Kids are Alright," The Who (released 1965).

participants as “politically unaware youth,” situating the events in Kaunas within the broader context of Soviet “youth problems” and yet denying young people’s capacity to express discontent with the Soviet system.

THE KGB INVESTIGATION: PRACTICALITIES OVER IDEOLOGY

In the weeks following the events of May 18-19, an investigative task force formed by the Kaunas Prosecutor’s office and the LiSSR KGB focused on practical outcomes. Their attempts to define the nature of the demonstrations were closely tied to attempts to find culprits for prosecution. A May 23 memorandum, a May investigative memorandum, a June 12 description of KGB investigative activities, and two undated memoranda reveal that the KGB sought to identify what they called the “actual causes” of the street demonstrations, to identify individuals for prosecution, and to explain their own actions in response to Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations.

Table 2: List of Selected KGB Investigation Documents

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
May 23 memorandum	Memorandum ²¹⁹	May 23, 1972
Investigative memorandum	Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972 ²²⁰	May 1972

²¹⁹ “Spravka [Memorandum],” Informatcionno-analiticheskogo otdeleniia KGB pri CM Litovskoi SSR [Information analysis division of the LiSSR KGB]. May 23, 1972. Fondas K1 Ap. 3, By. 793, 161-163. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed January 2009).

²²⁰ “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavlennii v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972],” Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete ministrov Litovskoi SSR [LiSSR KGB]. May 1972. Fondas K-1 Ap. 3,

Action Plan	Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A. ²²¹	June 12, 1972
Undated memorandum	Memorandum ²²²	1972?
June memorandum	Memorandum on Anti-Social and Nationalist Manifestations That Took Place in the Republic after May 14, 1972 ²²³	June? 1972

In its attempt to “expose the motives of the anti-social manifestations,” the investigative group determined that neither Kalanta’s suicide nor the street demonstrations on the day of his funeral were part of a planned nationalist protest.²²⁴ The KGB did view Romas Kalanta’s self-immolation on May 14 as the catalyst for the unrest following his funeral; therefore its first objective

By. 793, 150-153. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed January 2009).

²²¹ “Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniiu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniakh obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.],” Komiteta gosbezopasnosti pri sovete ministrov Litovskoi SSR [LiSSR KGB]. June 12, 1972. Fondas K1 Ap. 8, By. 199, 32-43. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania]. (accessed January 2009).

²²² “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? Although undated, the memorandum was filed with other documents from May-June 1972.

²²³ “Spravka ob antiobshchestvennikh i natsionalisticheskikh proiavlenniakh v respublike imevshikh mesto posle 14 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Anti-Social and Nationalist Manifestations That Took Place in the Republic after May 14, 1972],” Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri soviete ministrov Litovskoi SSR [LiSSR KGB]. June? 1972. Fondas K-1 Ap. 3, By. 793, 154-160. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed January 2009). The memorandum was written in June 1972 at the earliest because it refers to the June prosecution of those accused of instigating the demonstrations.

²²⁴ “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavlennia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]”, May 1972.

was to determine the causes of Kalanta's act. Based on interviews with family members, friends, and school officials, KGB investigators determined that Kalanta did not act from political, anti-social or religious motives.²²⁵ The KGB also "paid attention to possible anti-Soviet, nationalist and anti-social elements" in the street demonstrations. Both the investigative memorandum and the action plan asserted that investigators found no evidence that the unrest resulted from nationalist and anti-Soviet motivations or had been planned in advance.²²⁶

According to investigators, the young people who gathered at the Kalanta home had been incited to disturb the social order by "hostile and anti-social elements" who took advantage of the crowd. In the investigative memorandum, the KGB reported that unnamed individuals "utilized the situation that had arisen to provoke anti-social actions."²²⁷ The action plan reported that once the crowd reached the site of the self-immolation, "hostile, anti-social elements" incited the crowd to disobedience through speeches and anti-Soviet and nationalist slogans.²²⁸ In particular, investigators identified hippies as the ones who provoked the crowd into "disturbing the public order." The KGB put forth a preliminary conclusion that the "mass social disturbance" was incited by young

²²⁵ "Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavleniia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]", May 1972. "Материалов, указывающих на возможность принадлежности Каланты к какой-либо группе политического, антиобщественного или религиозного направления не получено."

²²⁶ "Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniiu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniikh obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]", June 12, 1972.

²²⁷ "Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavleniia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]", May 1972.

²²⁸ "Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniiu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniikh obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]", June 12, 1972.

individuals who were followers of the hippie movement. Having provoked the crowd into disturbing the public order, these individuals then attempted to utilize it for undefined “anti-Soviet aims.”²²⁹

The KGB reports drew the line, however, at calling the majority of young people on the streets “anti-social” or “anti-Soviet.” The documents glossed over naming the motivations that brought young people to the Kalanta home that day, asserting simply that the crowd formed spontaneously. The KGB explained that young people were susceptible to the provocations of “anti-social” elements because they were “carried away” by their infatuation with hippies and believed that Kalanta was “one of their own.”²³⁰ At the same time, the KGB distinguished the hippies whom they blamed for inciting the crowd to disturb the public order from “hooligans” who committed acts of vandalism during the evening of May 18. The action plan reported that “anti-social elements” threw stones, broke windows, and even committed arson by setting fire to a police motorcycle and the roof of a public building.²³¹

The KGB’s determination to identify specific individuals who were responsible for provoking the disturbances resulted in the compilation of demographic data about the young people in the streets. On May 18, the police arrested four hundred and two people. Most of them were arrested for engaging in the street demonstrations; a few were arrested for acts of hooliganism.

²²⁹ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? The report does not specify what these anti-Soviet aims were.

²³⁰ “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavleniia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]”, May 1972.

²³¹ “Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniuu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniiax obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]”, June 12, 1972.

While it is unknown whether the statistics from those arrested are representative of the full crowd, the KGB reported that

402 people were detained, including 351 men and 51 women. Among their number were young people: 99 people under age 18, 69 people between 18 and 21 years of age, 111 people between 21 and 25 years old, and 65 people over 25 years of age. 97 were members of the Komsomol, 192 were workers (the vast majority of whom had less than one year of work experience), 37 were civil servants, 44 were university students, 57 were in high school, 42 were students at a technical college, and 20 were unemployed [*bez opredelennykh zanyatiy*].²³²

According to the undated memorandum, the majority of the detainees were released, although Party and Komsomol organizations at their respective enterprise and academic collectives were expected to carry out “discussions of their actions.” Thirty people, however, were charged under administrative rulings and at least three were subjected to criminal prosecution.²³³

The KGB quickly identified two young men as the “instigators” of the demonstrations; eventually eight people were prosecuted for their involvement in the demonstrations. The investigative memorandum accused Vytautas Kaladė of inciting the unrest as revenge against the Soviet authorities “for supposedly causing offense to him” by arresting him twice for “appearing in indecent dress in a public place (in accentuated decrepit clothes and barefoot).” It accused Rimantas Baužys of carrying “anti-Soviet signs” that said “think about why such a young man would leave this life.”²³⁴ Three men and one woman –Kaladė, Baužys, Antanas Kačinskas and Virginija

²³² “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? The extant investigative files do not include a full list of all 402 people arrested for participation in the street demonstrations. The KGB statistics do not identify ethnicity of participants.

²³³ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? The memorandum does not identify the names of the thirty three people who were charged. This memorandum states that three people were charged under criminal codes. Because names are not listed, it is not clear whether these are three of the eight individuals who were prosecuted in June for their participation in the unrest.

²³⁴ “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavlennia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]”, May 1972.

Urbonavičiūtė – were charged with turning the gathering at the Kalanta home into a mass anti-social manifestation. Four men – Jonas Prapuolenaitis, Juozas Macijauskas, Vytautas Žmuida and Kazys Grinkevičius – were charged with vandalism and public drunkenness for throwing stones and breaking windows later in the evening on May 18.²³⁵

The documents also explained what actions the police and KGB took to prevent “the possibility of an anti-social disturbance [occurring at the funeral] that could become anti-Soviet” and why these actions failed to prevent the street demonstrations.²³⁶ The Thursday funeral was moved from the announced time of 4:00 pm to 2:00 p.m. and operatives were sent to the Kalanta home to maintain control. Insufficient manpower in the face of such a large crowd was cited as the reason for the lack of intervention by the authorities when the crowd first gathered at the Kalanta home and marched to the city center. The documents affirmed, however, that, as a result of the “efficient work of the police and members of the public,” the crowd was dispersed by 7:30 that evening. According to the report, the authorities were better prepared on May 19. Although the crowd that began gathering shortly after 3:00 pm quickly grew to fifteen hundred people, it was just as quickly dispersed by police personnel, brigades of Party activists, and MVD troops, preventing the “anti-social manifestation” from turning into “mass disorder and rioting.”²³⁷ In the aftermath of the

²³⁵ Criminal investigation files, Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SS [LiSSR Soviet Ministry Committee for State Security]. Fondas K-1, Ap. 58s, By. 47644-3. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed January 2009). All were ethnic Lithuanians.

²³⁶ “Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniuu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniiaakh obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]”, June 12, 1972. The action plan laid out the investigative actions taken by the KGB after the “flagrant disturbances of social order” that took place in Kaunas on May 18-19, documenting each step of the investigation leading up to charges against those determined to be responsible for the unrest.

²³⁷ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

events, the KGB made clear that it acted quickly to figure out who was responsible for the street demonstrations. According to the May 23 memorandum, the KGB had to dig through “fantastical rumors” and “narrow-minded, sensationalist interpretations” to determine the origins of the events that occurred on May 18-19.²³⁸

The KGB’s analysis of the causes of and participants in the street demonstrations reveals that the distinction between categories of “anti-social,” “anti-Soviet” and “nationalist” was not always clear cut. The KGB either was unconcerned with distinguishing between “anti-social” and “anti-Soviet” or had difficulty applying these terms consistently to the street demonstrations. A brief summary in an undated memorandum is an example of how KGB descriptions utilized these terms without specifically distinguishing between them:

On May 18, 1972, on the day of R. Kalanta’s funeral and on May 19 in Kaunas group actions that disturbed the social order occurred. A number of anti-social and nationalist elements were mixed in to add a political character. With these goals, they shouted, distributed pages, and wrote graffiti with nationalist content.²³⁹

While the reports do not specify the content designated as nationalist, a slogan such as “Freedom for Lithuania” might obviously be so labeled. Presumably chants such as “freedom for hippies” and “down with the police and their bananas” qualified as anti-social content. Certainly, “nationalist slogans” were not the only content labeled as anti-Soviet. Descriptions of urban riots and disorders during the Khrushchev period sometimes mention “anti-Soviet outbursts” although they rarely identify the content of these statements.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, May 23, 1972. The report also explains that this effort had drawn the KGB’s attention away from preparing for the upcoming visit of United States President Richard Nixon.

²³⁹ “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennovo proiavleniia v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Anti-Social and Nationalist Manifestations That Took Place in the Republic after May 14, 1972]”, June? 1972.

²⁴⁰ Kozlov, 153.

The fluidity of the labels “anti-Soviet” and “anti-social” is evident in descriptions of fliers posted in the city overnight between Thursday evening and Friday morning. Twenty fliers promoting “freedom for Lithuania,” “freedom for hippies,” “long live May 18” and “down with the red scum” were designated as “anti-Soviet.” However, fliers that appealed to youth to gather at the site of Kalanta’s self-immolation on May 19 were identified as “anti-social” with the intention of provoking youth into disturbing the public order.²⁴¹ The same slogans that were categorized as “anti-Soviet” when they appeared on fliers were not necessarily categorized as “anti-Soviet” when shouted by participants in the street demonstrations. In its description of what happened in the public garden, the investigative memorandum noted that the crowd “shouted slogans” such as “Freedom for youth,” “Freedom for hippies,” “Freedom for Lithuania,” and “Go away, militia!” without designating the slogans as either anti-Soviet or anti-social.²⁴² The action plan was the only report to state that the crowd shouted nationalist slogans along with insulting the police.²⁴³ If indeed the use of “anti-Soviet” versus “anti-social” by the KGB can be distinguished, the terms appear to differ in the implied assignment of agency to the action. It appears that the KGB viewed “anti-Soviet” acts as a deliberate choice to separate oneself from the socialist collection. “Anti-social” acts, on the other hand, were more aligned with “bad behavior.”

²⁴¹ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

²⁴² “Spravka po materialam rassledovaniia massovo anti-obshchestvennogo proiavlennii v gor. Kaiunase 18-19 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Investigative Materials of the Mass Anti-Social Manifestations in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972]”, May 1972.

²⁴³ “Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniuu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniakh obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]”, June 12, 1972.

THE KGB: BLAMING HOOLIGANS AND HIPPIES

The KGB did distinguish acts of hooliganism committed later in the evening on May 18 from the general “anti-social manifestations.” The undated memorandum and the action plan specifically referred to the “hooligan actions” of individuals in the crowd who engaged in altercations with the police by throwing stones and setting a police motorcycle on fire.²⁴⁴ Since the 1950s, “hooliganism” had been constructed in the media as the primary social problem among youth. The flexible category of petty hooliganism introduced under Khrushchev made it easier for Soviet authorities to prosecute and intimidate Soviet citizens.²⁴⁵ From 1960 on, the criminal code defined hooliganism as “intentional actions that rudely violate public order and express clear disrespect for society.”²⁴⁶ Campaigns against hooliganism saturated Soviet society in the 1960s and the number of people prosecuted for hooliganism rose steeply. In part, this was a result of changes that allowed petty offenses to be punished administratively rather than through the judicial system. Nevertheless, those who were punished administratively still carried the taint of criminality even if they did not have a criminal record.

The campaign against hooliganism was part and parcel of the post-Stalinist transition from social control through violence to social control through discipline. By attempting to exercise control of everyday behaviors such as public socializing and interactions between fellow citizens, the

²⁴⁴ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972? and “Plan operativno-slyedstvyennih meropriiatii po rassledovaniuu gruppovikh deistvii o grubikh narusheniiax obshchestvennogo poriadka, imevshikh mesto v gor. Kaunase 18-19 maia 1972 g. i prichin samoubiystvye Kalanta R.A. [Action Plan Implemented after the Investigation of Group Actions That Flagrantly Disturbed the Social Order, Which Took Place in Kaunas on May 18-19, 1972, Caused by the Suicide of Kalanta. R.A.]”, June 12, 1972.

²⁴⁵ Brian Lapierre, “Making Hooligans on a Mass Scale,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1-2 (2006): 373.

²⁴⁶ Lapierre: 349 Footnote 1. “There were two types of criminal hooliganism differentiated according to seriousness and punishment: simple hooliganism (*prostoe khuliganstvo*), for which punishments ranged from fines to one year in prison, and malicious hooliganism (*zlostnoe khuliganstvo*), for which prison sentences ranged from three to five years.”

state further blurred the line between personal and private. Hooliganism was not just about individual misbehavior; throughout the Soviet Union, marginalized urban residents shaped local confrontations with authorities.²⁴⁷ The Soviet authorities' goal in prosecuting hooliganism was to create a society that reflected the ideals of "really-existing socialism," a society in which Soviet people acted in civilized ways that benefited the collective.

The rise of anti-social behavior was attributed by Communist officials in part to the influx of Western influence that had been kept at bay during the Stalin era. Bourgeois ideology, as one Soviet writer bemoaned, was "pouring " into the Soviet Union through radio, press, cinema, tourism, cultural exchange, and international correspondence, resulting in undesirable behavior on the part of young people in particular.²⁴⁸ Young people emulating Western cultural practices, especially those who manifested an explicitly "hippie" appearance, easily became targets of the campaign against hooliganism. The ambiguity of the decree on hooliganism allowed local police officers and judges to define what constituted hooliganism so that it enveloped an increasingly broad set of activities. Although Soviet authorities eschewed large-scale violence as a means of social control, physical violence still took place at the local level. The police regularly picked up young men whose hair was deemed too long and forcibly shaved their heads. Hippies' appearance on the streets of Kaunas and other Soviet cities represented an extreme manifestation of the dangerous appeal of Western cultural practices. Their resistance to Soviet norms for proper dress and behavior meant that hippies had already been designated as anti-social. It is not surprising, therefore, that the KGB blamed hippies and hooligans for the street demonstrations in Kaunas on May 18-19. It is also not surprising that

²⁴⁷ Kozlov, 136. As discussed earlier, Kozlov documents incidents in which "hooligan" disturbances flared up into larger protests.

²⁴⁸ M.M. Davtian, *Protiv antiobshchestvennogo otnosheniia k trudu* (Erevan: 1966), 44, 46, quoted in Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth, and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism," *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1-2 (2006): 392.

the Communist Party officials in Lithuania initially accepted this determination of the cause of the street demonstrations.

THE CPL: SEARCHING FOR AN IDEOLOGICALLY ACCEPTABLE NARRATIVE

Internal CPL reports and speeches produced during the four weeks after Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations provide evidence that Communist Party officials sought an ideologically satisfactory interpretation in order to explain the events internally within the Party and to determine how to respond to them. The CPL reports drew information and even direct quotes from the KGB memoranda describing the events; however, they demonstrate a deliberate process of defining the character of the unrest and the individuals who participated. In response to information from the KGB on the demographics of the young people who participated in the demonstrations, Communist party officials constructed a narrative that posited "politically immature young people" spurred to "anti-social actions" in the form of rioting by "anti-Soviet and nationalist elements," in particular the "so-called hippies." This characterization of young people as unthinkingly manipulated by outside forces rejected an interpretation of the events as a manifestation of real discontent.

A series of documents produced in the weeks after the street demonstrations – a May 20 report on the measures taken by the Party in response to the events, a May report to the CPL Central Committee summarizing the events, a May 30 Decree outlining measures to be taken in light of the events, speeches from a June 2 meeting of Party activists, and a June 14 speech by First Secretary Antanas Sniečkus to Party activists – demonstrate how the Communist Party's interpretation of the events changed over time.

Table 3: List of Selected CPL Documents

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
May 20 report	“Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972” ²⁴⁹	May 20, 1972
Summary report	Untitled summary of events ²⁵⁰	May 24?, 1972
May 30 Decree	“Decree Concerning the Need to Strengthen Political and Administrative Work in Connection with the Anti-Social Developments in the City of Kaunas” ²⁵¹	May 30, 1972
June 2 speeches	“Meeting of the City Party Activists” ²⁵²	June 2, 1972
Sniečkus speech	“Transcript of Meeting of Communist Party of Lithuania Activists” ²⁵³	June 14, 1972

²⁴⁹ “Informatsiia o priniatikh merakh i provedennikh meropriiatiakh Kaunasskim gorkom i gorraikomami KP Litvi v sviazi s proisshestviiami v gorode Kaunase 14-19 maia 1972 G. [Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972],” The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania. May 20, 1972. Fondas 3110, Ap. 61, By. 34. LKP Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [Communist Party of Lithuania Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed May 2009).

²⁵⁰ “[Untitled Summary Report],” The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania. May 1972. Fondas 1771, Ap. 247, By. 79. LKP Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [Communist Party of Lithuania Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed May 2009). The memorandum is dated May 1972 but is located in a file labeled “May 24, 1972” and other documents in the file are all labeled “May 24.”

²⁵¹ “Postanovlenie biuro tsentral’nogo komiteta KP Litvi ob usilenii politicheskoi i organizatorskoi raboti v sviazi s antiobshchestvennimi proiavlenniami v g. Kaunase [Decree Concerning the Need to Strengthen Political and Administrative Work in Connection with the Anti-Social Developments in the City of Kaunas],” May 30, 1972.

²⁵² “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists],” Communist Party of Lithuania. June 2, 1972. Fondas 3110, Ap. 61, By. 15. LKP Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [Communist Party of Lithuania Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed May 2009).

²⁵³ “Stenogramma sobraniia aktiva Kommunisticheskoi Partii Litvi [Transcripts of Meeting of Communist Party of Lithuania Activists],” Communist Party of Lithuania. June 14, 1972. Fondas 1771 Ap. 247 By. 26. LKP Skyrius,

A close analysis of these documents reveals that Party officials' interpretation of the nature of the street demonstrations, the character of the participants, and the cause of their participation transitioned from blaming hooligans to blaming hippies to attributing the unrest to politically immature young people. The documents refer to "nationalist," "anti-Soviet" and "foreign bourgeois elements" taking advantage of the events, yet they do not designate these as the primary causes of the events. While this narrative seems clear cut on the surface, it is fraught with ambiguity. Each interpretation in the documents – hooligans, hippies, and politically immature youth – had particular consequences for the political and social environment in Kaunas and for the Communist Party as the ideological vanguard. Initially, Communist officials had to explain what brought young people out into the streets in response to Kalanta's self-immolation. In doing so, they shied away from labeling the young people who participated in the street demonstrations as "nationalist" or "anti-Soviet." Once the narrative based on politically immature youth had been constructed, they had to explain the causes of political immaturity among young people in Kaunas. The CPL narrative of the events of May 18-19 downplayed explanations that might imply a type of "agency" on the part of the young people who participated in the demonstrations. Instead the CPL's response emphasized its own failure to inculcate young people with the proper attitudes and values, a response grounded in the Soviet practice of "self-criticism." In particular, the CPL emphasized the need to fulfill Soviet policies and values as articulated at the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a year earlier.

Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [Communist Party of Lithuania Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Vilnius. (accessed May 2009).

Like the KGB documents, the Communist Party reports emphasized that “hostile, anti-Soviet and anti-social elements” provoked the crowd of young people into carrying out an anti-social manifestation. The summary report asserted that “independent hostile individuals attempted to use the disturbances that they provoked for anti-Soviet purposes.”²⁵⁴ The May 30 Decree asserted that “certain hostile elements” took advantage of the situation with the aim of giving “the events a political, anti-Soviet interpretation.” A report given on June 2 by Kaunas First Secretary Kazimieras Lengvinas noted that “various anti-Soviet and nationalistic chanted slogans and pamphlets tell us that it is not out of the question that some of the elements trying to take advantage of Kalanta’s self-immolation for anti-social and nationalistic reasons are factions in the city which are hostile to the entire Soviet structure.” Additionally, a speech by Gediminas Bagdonas, head of the Kaunas City Division of the KGB, on June 2 gave “evidence” that “nationalist and anti-Soviet elements” were taking advantage of events: “This is borne witness by the fact that immediately after a crowd of young people had spontaneously gathered, the various apolitical and hooliganish slogans they were chanting were followed by certain individuals shouting slogans of a nationalist and anti-Soviet character, such as “Freedom for Lithuania!”, “Freedom!” and so forth.”²⁵⁵ As will be demonstrated, the intentional actions of these “hostile elements” was overshadowed by the actions of “unthinking” youth in the CPL’s interpretation of the street demonstrations.

²⁵⁴ “Спровоцированные ими беспорядки пытались использовать отдельные враждебно настроенные лица в антисоветских целях.” “[Untitled Summary Report]”, May 1972.

²⁵⁵ “Протокол No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972. Bagdonas does not specify what the apolitical and hooliganish slogans are. However, eyewitness and participant statements in the KGB investigation files state that the crowd also shouted “Down with the police and their bananas!” and “Valio [Hurray]!”

BLAMING HOOLIGANS

By identifying the people on the streets as “hooligans” in the May 20 report, Party officials first attributed the unrest to marginal elements in society. The report characterized the street demonstrations as “disorders” (*besporyadki*) and emphasized that participants included hippies, “a certain proportion of young non-cadre workers, a number of people with prior convictions and people who are not engaged in any kind of socially useful work.”²⁵⁶ Given the saturation of the concept of “hooliganism” in the Soviet Union, it is not surprising that the street demonstrations in Kaunas were immediately labeled as “hooliganism.” After all, two thousand young people in the streets refused to disperse when ordered to do so and the crowd had to be broken up by police.

According to the report:

On that same day, as disturbances began breaking out, the Party municipal committees [*gorkom*] and district committees [*raikom*] called on workers cadres, Party-Agricultural and Komsomol activists, and the people’s auxiliary police (around three hundred people) to assist the police, and these people took active part in expository work and in dispersing the hooligan youth. By midnight, public order had for the most part been restored.²⁵⁷

Additionally, the May 20 report provided quotes to demonstrate that “cadre workers, university students, and the intelligentsia did not take part in the disturbances, and correctly evaluated the actions of the hooligan youth.” An assistant foreman and a brigadier of a Communist labor brigade at the Kaunas textile factory announced “I condemn the actions of the hooligans. These impudent hooligan attacks must be put down!” A plumbing factory mechanic declared, “We decisively condemn the hooligan actions of those who disturb our peace... To the hooligans, we give our

²⁵⁶ In Kozlov’s analysis of mass protest in the Soviet Union, the term “*besporyadki*” is translated “disorders” or “disturbances.” I have adopted the same translation. Kozlov.

²⁵⁷ “Informatsiia o priiatikh merakh i provedennikh meropriiatiakh Kaunasskim gorkom i gorraikomami KP Litvi v sviazi s proisshestviiami v gorode Kaunase 14-19 maia 1972 g. [Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972]”, May 20, 1972.

decisive workers' 'NO!'"²⁵⁸ The report concluded with condemnations of the events of the previous two days by workers, a teacher and the director of the Musical Theater, all of whom emphasized the role of hooligans in the disturbances of public order.

Confronted with statistics of those arrested for participating in the demonstrations, Communist officials could no longer write off the events as the actions of marginalized elements in society. The summary report of the demonstrations included statistical data about the young people who were detained on May 18 from the KGB reports. The composition of the people who were arrested certainly differed from the characteristics put forth in the May 20 report. Only 5% of those arrested were unemployed. Nearly half were workers and more than one-third were students. Even more compelling, nearly one-fourth were members of Communist Youth League (*Komsomol* in Russian; *Komjaunimas* in Lithuanian). Once the KGB investigation revealed the demographics of the participants in the street demonstrations, the language of hooliganism in CPL documents faded and nearly disappeared. In its description of the crowd that formed in the center on May 18 the summary report makes reference to “certain criminal elements in the crowd” that engaged in vandalism, but these “petty criminals” played a small role given the scale of the unrest. In the June report and speeches, the term “hooligans” was only used when describing public response to the events and not in descriptions of the young people on the street. For example, the June 2 report included the term “hooligan” once in a statement that “the absolute majority of the population... condemns the hooligans.” Similarly, speeches by the Communist Party leadership in June speeches

²⁵⁸ “Informatsiia o priniatikh merakh i provedennikh meropriiatiakh Kaunasskim gorkom i gorraikomami KP Litvi v sviazi s proisshestviiami v gorode Kaunase 14-19 maia 1972 g. [Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972]”, May 20, 1972.

commended the public for “correctly interpreting” the unrest as the work of “hooligans.”²⁵⁹ The arrest statistics contradicted initial statements that the crowd was composed of hooligans and forced Communist Party leaders to reconsider both who was involved in the street demonstrations and why they would participate. In doing so, the CPL focused on the second marginalized group identified by the KGB – hippies.

BLAMING HIPPIES

The summary report prepared by the CPL accused “so-called hippies” for instigating the events and for corrupting young people. The report repeated a KGB allegation that local hippies plotted to steal Kalanta’s body, giving this as the reason for changing the time of the funeral on May 18. According to the report,

The Kaunas city division used active measures to obtain information pointing to the intent of the so-called “hippies” to gather together a significant number of their adherents to carry the deceased’s casket to the graveyard, and thence to protest by marching across the city to the place of his self-immolation, lay flowers on the site, and hold a demonstration. Certain “hippies” had expressed their intent to seize the body of the suicide victim from his parents by force.²⁶⁰

The report noted that the funeral services “were carried out without incident.” However, it accused “certain active followers of the ‘hippie’ movement” (specifically Vytautas Kaladė and Antanas Kačinskas) of taking advantage of the crowd of young people who gathered at the Kalanta home at the originally scheduled time of the funeral and proposing a march to the city center.

The summary report provided a preliminary conclusion that quoted directly from the KGB’s determination about the causes of the street demonstrations: “the initial instigators and active

²⁵⁹ “[Untitled Summary Report]”, May 1972.

²⁶⁰ “[Untitled Summary Report]”, May 1972.

participants of the mass anti-social demonstrations were young individuals, who mimicked the “so-called ‘hippie’ movement.” Young people’s desire to follow hippies had become a problem because

until recently, not enough attention has been paid by Soviet, Komsomol, and administrative entities to monitoring the activities of anti-social elements and those who would emulate the ‘hippie’ movement, weak efforts have been made to conduct preventative propaganda efforts among them, and at the same time no warning was given about the harmful tendencies that have been developing among them.²⁶¹

The May 30 Decree condemned the “harmful influence of the so-called ‘hippie’ followers, famous for their provocative disheveled appearance, known by their worship of the West, desire for vagrancy and their anarchistic attitude.” While young people who manifested such a lifestyle were also marginal elements in Soviet society, Komsomol Secretary Poškus distinguished hippies from hooligans. He identified hippies as a problem due to their stance toward the Soviet system rather than their disruptive behavior. He asserted that the hippies “rarely engage in hooliganism and drunkenness, however, they are apolitical, and have a harmful effect on other young people.”²⁶²

Like the attempt to accuse hooligans for the disturbance of public order, the designation of hippies as the culprit was undermined by the demographics of the young people on the streets, most of whom were not actively involved in the small Kaunas hippie movement. By early June, CPL officials emphasized not the hippies themselves but young people who were unduly influenced by hippies in order to explain the massive number of young people on the streets. The June 2 speech by Lengvinas identified the participants in the demonstrations as “young people who did not understand the significance of their actions and who had fallen for the provocations of ‘hippies’ and

²⁶¹ “[Untitled Summary Report]”, May 1972. “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

²⁶² “Postanovlenie biuro tsentral’nogo komiteta KP Litvi ob usilenii politicheskoi i organizatorskoi raboti v sviazi s antiobshchestvennimi proiavleniiami v g. Kaunase [Decree Concerning the Need to Strengthen Political and Administrative Work in Connection with the Anti-Social Developments in the City of Kaunas]”, May 30, 1972.

similar elements.” This also marked a change from blaming active agents of unrest to blaming young people who were manipulated rather than expressing their own discontent.

BLAMING POLITICALLY IMMATURE YOUTH

The Communist leadership turned to the ideological upbringing of youth in order to understand why young people – especially those who were part of the Soviet system as workers, university and secondary school students, and Komsomol members – were susceptible to hippie influence. During the weeks after the May 18-19 demonstrations, the term “unthinking” (or “unaware”) was used with increasing frequency to describe the young people on the streets. This designation fits with a lack of “consciousness” in the Marxist-Leninist sense. Unlike “apolitical,” this designation emphasized the failure of Soviet organizations to properly inculcate young people with Communist values. Being “apolitical” could be prosecuted as an offense in the Soviet Union because it implied an intentional rejection of Communism. “Political immaturity,” on the other hand, implied a lack of agency on the part of young people and instead held others responsible for their actions.

The summary report emphasized that the crowd that gathered at the Kalanta home and carried out the “massive anti-social demonstration” was primarily comprised of young people and concluded by labeling the young people as “politically immature.” The report then asserted that “the majority of the working class of the city is giving the correct appraisal to the events, and is viewing them as the irresponsible actions of politically immature young people and petty criminals.” The May 30 Decree emphasized that the young people held a “politically incorrect outlook and attitude that is foreign to Soviet society.” Communist authorities also noted that the young people

themselves did not consider their actions to be anti-Soviet, which demonstrated that they were unaware of what constituted proper behavior.

By June 2, Communist Party officials had completely moved away from the language of “hooliganism” and instead attributed political immaturity as the defining characteristic of the young people on the street on May 18-19. While various anti-social elements were a part of the events – hooligans and hippies specifically – their success in disturbing the public order was due to the political immaturity of young people who then fell under their influence. In his speech to the Party activists on June 2, Kaunas Communist Party Secretary Lengvinas stated that the main participants in the “largely spontaneous” disturbances were “young people who did not understand the significance of their actions.” The events were therefore classified as “violations of public order and hooligan actions of a group of immature young people.” Lengvinas also spoke about the “anti-social demonstrations and the hooliganish actions of a group of politically immature people.” In this narrative of the events, the young people on the streets were not hooligans; rather their immaturity led them to hooligan-type actions.²⁶³ In his speech on June 2, Komsomol Secretary Poškus said “we have encountered cases where young students do not know and do not understand what political vigilance and commitment to principle mean. They connect, judging by what they themselves say on the issue, anti-Soviet activities with mere bad behavior.”²⁶⁴

In the view of the Communist Party officials, the street demonstrations following Kalanta’s self-immolation were not an isolated event but were representative of a broader “youth problem.”

²⁶³ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972. One of the undated KGB memoranda called the participants politically immature young people who were then used by hippies to create an anti-social manifestation. This language mirrors the language that was used by the LKP so it is probably a later document and is drawing from the “party line” being disseminated. “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

²⁶⁴ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

The May 30 Decree put the events of May 18-19 in the context of other incidents in which youth “behaved in a disorderly and undisciplined manner at music concerts, basketball games, boxing matches and other events.”²⁶⁵ In his June 2 speech, Poškus emphasized that “the majority of the city’s young people has been, is now, and will continue to be faithful to their class duties in their daily work and affairs, proving their allegiance to the work of the Communist Party.” He gave as an example the participation of young people from Soviet Lithuania in the march “Through the places of Revolutionary, Labor and Military Glory of the Communist Party and the Soviet People,” which was praised by General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev at the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s 24th Party Congress. However, he continued:

In reexamining the information we’ve collected in recent years in the city, it has become clear that the largest number of apolitical and hooliganish attacks are carried out by students of general education and professional technical schools, and in certain cases, by university students and working young people. It is unnecessary to cite concrete examples, in that they are all similar.²⁶⁶

For the Soviet authorities, the demonstrations that followed Kalanta’s self-immolation were simply the largest manifestation of an ongoing problem of youth misbehavior.

In its attempts to explain the nature of the street demonstrations, the Communist Party also defined what they were not. The authorities rejected nationalist, class and generational conflicts as causing two thousand young people to take to the streets in Kaunas. The reports and speeches expressed concern that an “anti-social” outburst had the capacity to become “anti-Soviet;” even so,

²⁶⁵ “Postanovlenie biuro tsentral’nogo komiteta KP Litvi ob usilenii politicheskoi i organizatorskoi raboti v sviazi s antiobshchestvennymi proiavleniiami v g. Kaunase [Decree Concerning the Need to Strengthen Political and Administrative Work in Connection with the Anti-Social Developments in the City of Kaunas]”, May 30, 1972. Although the speech does not identify specifics, incidents that fit this list have been reported in other sources. For example, disturbances followed a boxing match between Lithuanian and Uzbek teams in July 1960. Misiunas and Taagepera.

²⁶⁶ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

this was seen as a result of manipulation by “anti-Soviet and nationalist elements” rather than as a sentiment expressed by the participants in the street demonstrations. Given that the KGB documents used “nationalist,” “anti-social” and “anti-Soviet” without clear distinction, there appears to be a conscious choice on the part of Communist officials not to label the demonstrations or demonstrators as nationalist or anti-Soviet. Cold War politics would have given Soviet authorities incentive to avoid such terms. The events in Kaunas were already being reported in the West as an anti-Soviet and nationalist action.²⁶⁷ In fact, the speeches by Communist officials on June 2 referred directly to “foreign elements” and émigrés who were maligning the Soviet Union by claiming that the events in Kaunas were anti-Soviet and nationalist protests. The visit of United States President Richard Nixon, which occurred immediately after the street demonstrations, presented another reason to downplay what might be perceived as evidence of disaffection with the Soviet system.²⁶⁸

In its attempt to deny that nationalist or class tensions were the cause of the unrest, the Communist Party acknowledged the diversity of young people involved in the demonstrations. In a speech on June 2, Antanas Guiga, First Secretary of the Kaunas district Party organization, denied that the demonstrations had a nationalist character, “inasmuch as the majority of participants were young men of Lithuanian nationality, but there were also Russians, Jews, and others.”²⁶⁹ Guiga also emphasized that the events of May 18-19 “in no way bear a class character....Among those who participated in the violation of public order there were young workers, students, the children of workers and service people, and even of kolkhoz workers, because most of the students from

²⁶⁷ Hedrick Smith, “Some Cracks in the Kremlin Wall,” *New York Times*, May 28, 1972. Klaus Fuchs, “The Death of Romas Kalanta in the Contemporary West German Press,” *Kauno Istorijos Metraštis [Kaunas History Yearbook]* 4, no. (2003).

²⁶⁸ Nixon’s visit, the first by a U.S. President to the Soviet Union, occurred May 22-29.

²⁶⁹ Of the individuals for whom interrogation statements are available in the files, only three have identifiably Russian names. The statistical summary provided by the KGB does not include ethnicity.

professional and technical schools come from rural areas.”²⁷⁰ Despite Guiga’s assurances that the crowd’s diversity was not indicative of cleavages in Soviet society, evidence that the participants came from such diverse ethnic and class backgrounds potentially indicates widespread discontent on the part of young people in Soviet Lithuania.

“Really existing socialism” was another ideological constraint within which the CPL had to work as it crafted a narrative of the events of May 18-19. Communist officials clearly distinguished youth problems in contemporary Soviet society from those in Western capitalist societies. Guiga stated that “Although some degree of disagreement is to be expected between children and their parents, and between younger people and older people, there exists no disagreement whatsoever about the fundamental issues of life and politics, and there is no such thing as a generation gap in our society.” Guiga admitted that “holdovers from the past” do exist and that “these holdovers are transmitted to young people by some parents and others around them, and from older people. Bourgeois propaganda also has some effect on the minds of young people.” While he blamed holdovers for the incidents of “nationalism, alcoholism, thievery, hooliganism, and anti-Soviet demonstrations” that did occur in Soviet Lithuania, Guiga did not explicitly blame the “holdovers” for the events in Kaunas. Yet after so clearly eliminating nationalist, class and generational conflicts as causes, the Communist Party still had to explain why two thousand young people would take to the streets chanting slogans such as “Freedom for Lithuania” and “Freedom for hippies.”

Communist officials had reason to be concerned that events in the LiSSR would be labeled “nationalist.” Economic and political reforms also created tension between center and periphery that tapped into Soviet concerns about nationalist tendencies in the Baltic Soviet Socialist Republics

²⁷⁰ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

and resulted in greater exercise of control by the Moscow leadership. Soviet leaders were concerned that “bourgeois nationalism” threatened Soviet identity in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Despite these apprehensions, the post-Stalin liberalization in the Soviet Union was inconsistent in its approach to ethnic minorities, especially those with titular republics, such as the Lithuanians. Khrushchev’s economic policies gave a certain level of autonomy to the republics, but this economic autonomy was not accompanied by cultural autonomy.

By 1959, the Soviet leadership in Moscow was alarmed that economic decentralization had resulted in “localism” and an increase in “nationalist” demands on the part of Baltic republican leaders. As a result, Communist Party and republican leaders in the Latvian SSR were removed from their positions in 1959.²⁷¹ Although the Lithuanian leadership maintained their positions, they were still subject to accusations that “nationalist elements” attempted to “preach localism,” “mislead individual officials into discrimination on the basis of nationality in the cadres policy,” and “supplant the criticism of the cult of the individual by criticism of Leninism.” Attacks on Lithuanian “bourgeois nationalism” appeared both in *Pravda* and *Voprosi Filosofii [Questions of Philosophy]*.²⁷² CPL First Secretary Antanas Šniečkus stated in an official Party journal in 1960 that “It is not a secret that in some cases bourgeois propaganda has definitive influence on individuals among intelligentsia” and that “all kinds of ideological deviations such as ‘national communism’ and ‘democratization of socialism’” were a threat within the republic.²⁷³ KGB records from the 1960s document a consistent level of activities labeled as nationalist by the authorities and indicate that at least some Soviet Lithuanian citizens still identified with the interwar independent state. According to the reports, in

²⁷¹ Misiunas and Taagepera, 140-146.

²⁷² Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, “The Dilemma of Nationalism in the Soviet Union,” in *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev and Kosygin: The Transition Years*, ed. John W. Strong, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1971), 122.

²⁷³ Rakowska-Harmstone, 129-130.

cities and towns across Lithuania, the tricolor flag of the Republic of Lithuania was hung from buildings during the night or slogans such as “Russians out of Lithuania” or “Freedom for Lithuania” were painted on walls.²⁷⁴

THE SOVIET PRACTICE OF SELF-CRITICISM

If the composition of the crowd meant that the authorities could not blame hooligans or hippies as they had initially done, the decision to identify “politically immature” youth as the cause of the demonstrations was rooted in the discursive possibilities available to Communist Party officials. The characterization of the participants as young people whom the educational and Party structures had failed to inculcate properly with Soviet norms and values was consistent with the Soviet practice of “self-criticism.” Rather than emphasizing an individual Party member’s failure, Soviet self-criticism involved “collective criticism by Party members of the weaknesses of the Party.” It involved an often perfunctory claim that the flaws resulted in part from “not having worked enough.” As the vanguard in the transformation of Soviet society, the Communist Party alone had the responsibility for identifying and eliminating its own flaws.²⁷⁵ This style of self-criticism is evident in the CPL’s response to the street demonstrations, beginning with the May 30 Decree which listed a series of actions to be taken as a result of the events.

The Kaunas Party organization was criticized for a number of failures in the political indoctrination of young people. The May 30 Decree began by stating that “significant

²⁷⁴ Fond K-1, Catalogue 3, Files 623, 624, 627, 630, 634, 635, 6, 637 and 651. KGB Division, Special Archives, Lithuanian National Archives, Vilnius, Lithuania (accessed May 2009). See chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of other responses to Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations.

²⁷⁵ Kharkhordin, 145-146.

transformations have taken place in the city of Kaunas during the years of Soviet power...Nevertheless, the recent unfavorable developments bear witness to the presence of considerable flaws in the work of the Kaunas City Party Organization.” The report condemned the city and district Party committees for failing to “pay sufficient attention to developing a deep ideological conviction and political tenacity within young people or the workforce.” The report specifically blamed “considerable flaws in the educational indoctrination work in schools and universities, but especially in public and vocational schools.” It also criticized the Kaunas Party, Komsomol and various other organizations for failing “to take the necessary measures to expose and interrupt... the harmful influence of the so-called ‘hippie’ followers.”²⁷⁶

CPL leaders engaged in the practice of “self-criticism” in their speeches at the June 2 Party activists’ meeting. Party secretary at the P. Zibertas silk factory, Yakovlev, remarked that the Party “cannot comfort ourselves with the thought that these disturbances arose spontaneously” and called on Party activists to examine carefully who took part in the unrest. In his June 2 speech, Guiga concluded that deficiencies in political and indoctrinational work were the primary reason that young people were susceptible to the influence of bourgeois propaganda and violated public order. At the same meeting, Bagdonas asserted that the lack of sufficient indoctrination was “one of the primary reasons why the participants in the street disturbances in Kaunas were primarily young people studying in general education schools or professional technical institutes.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ “Informatsiia o priniatikh merakh i provedennikh meropriiatiakh Kaunasskim gorkom i gorraikomami KP Litvi v sviazi s proisshestviiami v gorode Kaunase 14-19 maia 1972 g. [Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972]”, May 20, 1972.

²⁷⁷ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

The Communist Party leadership also framed its self-criticism as a renewed commitment to fulfill the mandates of the 24th CPSU Congress, held in March 1971. In his June 14 speech, Sniečkus reminded party activists that

at the fifth plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, problems connected to the further development of national education in the republic were holistically discussed in light of the 24th Congress of the CPSU. The resolutions that were passed call for concrete measures to be taken to further improve the education and indoctrination of the generation currently reaching adulthood. However, those decrees are not yet everywhere being into practice in the way that they should be.

By referring to Soviet concerns about the indoctrination of youth, Sniečkus clearly situated the events in Kaunas within a broader context of Soviet social and political practices rather than specifically a problem in Soviet Lithuania.

The Soviet practice of self-criticism was grounded in the collective, which served the wider interests of society.²⁷⁸ Kaunas Party Secretary Lengvinas emphasized the failure of the collective to respond strongly to evident youth problems. He rebuked the leadership of the Communist Party and Komsomol, as well as schools and universities, for being “indecisive in eliminating shortcomings in the education and indoctrination of students” and for frequently failing “to respond to apathy, passivity, poor academic performance, and violations of public order.” He called for a “serious re-examination of the condition of indoctrination in schools and universities.” Lengvinas demanded that those responsible for the political indoctrination of young people actively work “against political apathy, the idealization of the past, and a nihilistic view of the victories of Socialism.” He also connected political immaturity with tolerance for Western cultural practices. According to Lengvinas, “the esthetic and moral indoctrination of students must be fundamentally

²⁷⁸ For a thorough analysis of the role of the collective in Soviet ideology and society, see Kharkhordin.

improved. An unkempt appearance, admiration for the West, and support for ‘hippies’ cannot be tolerated in our schools and universities.”²⁷⁹

In the Communist Party leadership’s view, the young people’s actions on May 18-19 represented a failure of proper integration into the collective. In his June 2 speech, Lengvinas stated that “youth must realize that the rights that our social order gives them are inseparably coupled with an obligation to carry out their duties, and with responsibility to their collective and to their society.” Similarly, Poškus, the head of the LiSSR Komsomol, expressed his opinion that the failure to integrate young people into the collective was the reason for the increase in the number of hippies in Kaunas. He stated that, “it was only the insufficient attention paid to them by Komsomol organizations, as well as other social organizations, that led them to tearing themselves away from their collective, and made it possible for them to unite themselves into separate groups.”²⁸⁰

The Communist Youth Organization had particular cause for self-criticism given that one-quarter of the young people arrested were Komsomol members. In his speech on June 2, Poškus admitted that

The basic problem is the fact that Komsomol workers and Komsomol activists have a poor understanding of the popular mood of young people...We must openly admit that in certain cases we are doing ourselves more harm than good, fearing to speak openly about individual cases of apolitical attitudes or anti-Soviet hijinks and give them a principled Komsomol evaluation...Of course, in this case, blame falls on Komsomol workers and the Komsomol activists.

However, Poškus also attempted to spread responsibility more broadly. He noted that “blame must also fall on the leaders of academic groups and class [school grade] leaders,” who lacked the proper ideological knowledge to instruct young people.

²⁷⁹ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

²⁸⁰ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

Communist Party officials also held parents responsible for the problem of politically immature youth. In his speech on June 14, CPL First Secretary Sniečkus stated that even the “children of Communists and responsible workers behave in an improper manner, poorly conduct themselves, and dress in a slovenly manner, and yet the parents bear absolutely no Party responsibility.” He accused parents of “providing their children with a ruble or two of pocket money, without taking an interest in how the children are spending that money.” According to Sniečkus, parents did “not demand that their children return home from school at any particular time. Thus, it is possible to encounter a fairly large number of teenagers on the streets and in parks at 11:00 and even after 12:00 at night.”²⁸¹ In a similar vein, Yakovlev denounced young people whose “standard of living is too high, they are allowed too many rights and freedoms.”²⁸²

The journal *Nemunas*, theaters and social clubs in Kaunas, all of which had taken advantage of post-Stalin liberalizations, were also blamed for contributing to the improper behavior of young people. In his June 2 speech, Bagdonas rebuked the city for playing host to pop-culture ensembles that “do not always aid in the indoctrination of high esthetic, moral, and political values into young people.” He singled out the Kaunas State Drama Theater for not being “sufficiently conscientious in their choice of repertoire.” According to Bagdonas,

Several plays, such as “Hunting for Mammoths,” “A New One Has Come”, “Barbora Radvilaitė” and others, are ideologically weak, and sometimes, in effect, even ideologically harmful to some degree. Such performances have enabled the arousal and activation of politically unhealthy moods among certain members of the audience.²⁸³

²⁸¹ June 14, 1972.

²⁸² “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972.

²⁸³ “Protokol No. 3 sobraniia gorodskogo partiinogo aktiva [Meeting of the City Party Activists]”, June 2, 1972. Jonas Jurašas, the Kaunas State Drama Theater director who staged these plays, was forced to emigrate to the United States after the May 1972 events.

Bagdonas also criticized the pantomime troupe based at the Kaunas Musical Theater and its director Modris Teninsons. He accused the troupe for behaving amorally, supporting hippies, and giving “voice to unhealthy opinions in front of audiences.”²⁸⁴ Bogdanas similarly targeted the cultural journal *Nemunas*. Although he acknowledged that the journal contained useful material, he pointed out that certain articles did not “help to properly indoctrinate young people.” In fact, he asserted, “a tendency has been observed of these articles giving a one-sided exposition of problems in the life of young people in the West, without including a deep analysis and an evaluation of the problems based on Marxist positions.”²⁸⁵ Sniečkus also blamed local theaters and the journal *Nemunas* for fomenting inappropriate values and behaviors. In his June 14 speech, Sniečkus noted that that the journal had been criticized at previous meetings of Party activists but it “just keeps pumping out low-quality, trashy materials.”²⁸⁶

While the KGB investigators used the terms “anti-social” and “anti-Soviet” nearly interchangeably in their reports on the events of May 18-19, Communist Party officials sought to define explicitly the nature of the young people who participated in the street demonstrations. By characterizing the young people as “politically immature youth” who were manipulated by “anti-social” and “anti-Soviet elements,” the authorities refused to consider that the events were a manifestation of articulated discontent with aspects of the Soviet system by youth in Kaunas.

²⁸⁴ The pantomime troupe was disbanded after the May 1972 events and Modris Teninsons, a Latvian actor who founded and directed the Kaunas pantomime theater, returned to Riga.

²⁸⁵ The journal *Nemunas* was temporarily closed down after the May 1972 events.

²⁸⁶ June 14, 1972.

CHAPTER 4:
BREAK ON THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE:
ESTABLISHING A NATIONALIST NARRATIVE OF KALANTA'S SELF-IMMOLATION IN THE SOVIET
PERIOD²⁸⁷

Despite the lack of official information about Kalanta's self-immolation, news of his act spread through the LiSSR. Not surprisingly, the CPL and the KGB were particularly concerned with how the public was interpreting Kalanta's suicide and the ensuing street demonstrations. Internal reports both provided assurances that the local population had a "correct appraisal" of Kalanta's act and identified potentially problematic responses. Additionally, the KGB documented a series of incidents in other cities in the LiSSR that were directly or indirectly associated with the events in Kaunas. Although participating youth and Communist Party officials characterized the street demonstrations that followed Kalanta's self-immolation as a youth action, a poem that began to circulate immediately after his suicide portrayed the events as a manifestation of Lithuanian nationalism and Kalanta as a national hero. This interpretation stood in direct opposition to the official narrative that stressed a pathologized view of Kalanta's suicide. The poem explicitly rejected this evaluation and instead re-narrated Kalanta's self-immolation as an act of martyrdom and nationalist resistance to Soviet rule.

PUBLIC OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS OF KALANTA'S SELF-IMMOLATION
AND THE EVENTS OF MAY 18-19

Publicly, the Soviet authorities presented a clearly defined narrative about the events in mid-May that portrayed Kalanta as mentally ill and cast the ensuing street demonstrations as the work of hooligans. In the only direct reference in the Soviet Lithuanian press, the May 20 issue of the

²⁸⁷ The Doors, Album *The Doors*, released 1967.

Kaunas daily newspaper *Kauno Tiesa* gave a brief report on Kalanta's death and the "disturbance of public order" that followed his funeral. According to the newspaper, an official commission held an inquest to establish the circumstances of Kalanta's self-immolation. After analyzing writings and drawings written by Kalanta and interviewing his parents, teachers and friends, the commission determined that Kalanta "committed suicide while in a morbid state." The article further stated that the demonstrations that followed Kalanta's death were a disturbance of the public order caused by "a small group of parasitical youth [who were] incited by irresponsible individuals."²⁸⁸ The newspaper included a statement by Kalanta's parents that their son had experienced mental illness prior to committing suicide, along with an appeal not to disturb the family in its time of grief.²⁸⁹

Radio and television reports in Kaunas reiterated the official narrative of the events that occurred during the third week of May. The Chairman of the Kaunas City Soviet Executive Committee informed Kaunas residents by television that

Having carried out a forensic –psychiatric examination and studied the documents, letters and sketches of the deceased at its disposal, and also taking into account the evidence of parents, teachers and friends, the [investigative] commission came to the conclusion that Romas Kalanta was mentally ill and had committed suicide while in a morbid frame of mind. Certain irresponsible persons, a group of juveniles, not understanding, and incorrectly appraising, the above mentioned fact, and devoid of any sense of responsibility, tried to disturb law and order in the town...²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ "Kauno miesto prokuratūroje" ["From the Kaunas City Prosecutor"]. *Kauno Tiesa* [*Kaunas Truth*], May 20, 1972, 6. The psychiatric commission's report, as well as examples of Kalanta's "writings and drawings," are contained in files of the investigation of his self-immolation. "Baudžiamoji byla Nr. 20-2-036-72 dėl Romo Kalantos mirties fakto [Criminal Case Nr. 20-2-036-72 on the Fact of Romas Kalanta's Death]", May-June 1972.

²⁸⁹ In 1989, the family retracted the statement that Kalanta had suffered from mental illness prior to his suicide. Kalanta's mother told historian Alfred Erich Senn in an interview that the Soviet authorities had forced her and her husband to make the statement. Alfred Erich Senn, "Pokalbis Su Kalantos Šeima," *Akiračiai* 5 (1989).

²⁹⁰ "Events in Lithuania," in *Chronicle of Current Events July 5, 1972* (London: Amnesty International Publications, October 1972), 249. In interviews and informal conversations, people who were Kaunas residents at that time have told me that they remember hearing this account of the events on television and radio.

Despite the consistency of the message presented by Soviet officials about the nature of Kalanta's suicide and the ensuing street demonstrations, the authorities were not able to control its reception by the public.

PUBLIC REACTION TO THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT

A KGB memorandum dated May 23, 1972 reveals the complex public responses to the events of the previous weekend.²⁹¹ Not surprisingly, the KGB reports included examples of condemnation of the street demonstrations as the work of hooligans. In one example, a military veteran from the Vilnius region condemned students who did not understand that their parents and grandparents had not “dreamed of bread, much less sugar.” He denounced spoiled youth for engaging in activities “alien to our society,” such as listening to foreign radio programs, reading various magazines, and imitating hippies. Yet not all of the condemnations were unequivocal. “Representatives of the intelligentsia” expressed concern that the authorities would limit democratic freedoms in response to the “irresponsible actions of youth” who had been “contaminated” by the West. The intellectuals cited in the report appeared less concerned about the actual events than that “Moscow would get the wrong view about the Lithuanian SSR,” which would then have undesirable consequences for the republic. Similarly, the report pointed out that even “very nationalistically-inclined” people considered mass demonstrations as an inappropriate method of advancing the Lithuanian national cause. According to memorandum, a senior researcher at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Language called the street demonstrations “the stupidest thing that I could think of.” Instead, the researcher argued that what he termed “Lithuanianism” should be promoted

²⁹¹ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, May 23, 1972.

though cultural works.²⁹² Finally, the report noted that “some Jewish extremists” had expressed satisfaction that the events in Kaunas would force the Soviet authorities to pay attention to other people.

The KGB reports referred to rumors that circulated among the inhabitants of Kaunas in the days following Kalanta’s self-immolation. The memorandum emphasized that the overwhelming majority of working people in the city correctly appraised the events as the “irresponsible actions of politically immature young individuals and hooligan elements.” Yet the KGB also noted that some people “approved of the actions taken by the young people on the street and that they were attempting to spread this distorted view among the inhabitants of the LiSSR.” It determined, in particular, that secondary school pupils and other students believed that Kalanta was a hippie and that he committed suicide as a “sign of protest against the persecution of the hippie community in Kaunas.”²⁹³

A CPL memorandum dated May 20 quoted Kaunas residents, including a teacher and several workers, who expressed their shock at the “hooligan attacks” of the previous two days and their approval of the authorities’ response. The report cited A. D. Pavilionis, director of the Musical Theater, who said, “We fully support and consider proper the measures taken against the hooligans’ actions. It is a very good thing that information about the events was broadcast over television and the radio. That will doubtless help all of the city’s citizens correctly evaluate the situation.”²⁹⁴

²⁹² “Spravka [Memorandum]”, May 23, 1972. “Lithuanianism” is not defined in the statement. From the report, it appears that authorities viewed the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Language, an official Soviet institution, as a site of Lithuanian nationalist expression.

²⁹³ “Spravka [Memorandum]”, 1972?

²⁹⁴ “Informatsiia o priniatikh merakh i provedennikh meropriiatiakh Kaunasskim gorkom i gorraikomami KP Litvi v sviazi s proisshestviiami v gorode Kaunase 14-19 maia 1972 G. [Information About Measures Taken and Actions Taken

ESTABLISHING AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

Despite the official narrative that Kalanta was mentally ill and that the events in Kaunas were the acts of hooligans, KGB reports on and post-Soviet descriptions of responses to Kalanta's suicide indicate that many people interpreted it as an act of protest.²⁹⁵ Other than the criminal investigation files of participants in the street demonstrations, there is very little documentation of popular interpretations at the time of Kalanta's suicide. A week after Kalanta's self-immolation, Romualdas Ozolas, a student at Vilnius University at the time, made the following note in his diary "It is known that this act was a protest against the occupation. Perhaps in the end Lithuania has received a hero."²⁹⁶

Reports of Kalanta's death and the ensuing demonstrations by Soviet dissidents identified the events as protests against the Soviet regime. The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* briefly mentioned the events in Kaunas in the third issue, dated August 20, 1972. A single paragraph on the events reported that "the self-immolation of the youth R. Kalanta, on May 14, had apparently been mainly nationalistic in nature; however, during the demonstration, not only national but also religious slogans could be heard."²⁹⁷ *The Chronicle of Current Events*, published by Moscow dissidents,

by the Kaunas Municipal Committee and the City District Committees of the Communist Party of Lithuania in Connection with the Events in the City of Kaunas on 14-19 May 1972]", May 20, 1972.

²⁹⁵ In my own conversations and interviews held in 2009-2011, most Lithuanians said that they considered Kalanta's self-immolation an act of protest against the Soviet system when they learned about it.

²⁹⁶ Romualdas Ozolas, *Atgimimo ištakose: 1970-1980 metų Lietuvos kultūros gyvenimo štrichai* (Vilnius: Pradai, 1996). After Lithuania regained independence, Ozolas published this volume of private journal entries and essays that he wrote during the Soviet period along with an introductory essay that discusses his view of the effects of the Soviet occupation on Lithuanian society. Ozolas was one of the founders of the popular front in 1988.

²⁹⁷ *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania: Underground Journal of Human Rights Violations*, trans., Nijolė Gražulis, vol. 1 (Nr. 1-9 1972-1974) (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1981), 134. *Lietuvos Katalikų bažnyčios kronika [the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania]* vol. 1 (Nr. 1-7 1972-1973) (Chicago: L.K. Religinės Šalpos Rėmėjai, 1974), 159. Interestingly,

gave a more detailed report on the events in Kaunas in the July 5, 1972 issue, stating that Kalanta “died by self-immolation, under the banner ‘Freedom for Lithuania.’”²⁹⁸

While popular interpretations of Kalanta’s suicide are difficult to document, there are reasons why Soviet Lithuanians would have interpreted self-immolation as an act of protest. By the early 1970s, there were several examples of self-immolation as a form of political protest that were public knowledge in Soviet Lithuania. A number of Buddhist monks had immolated themselves as a protest against the regime in South Vietnam, the most famous of which was Thích Quang Duc who committed suicide in 1963. Two Americans immolated themselves as protests against the Vietnam War in 1965.²⁹⁹ Although not reported in the Soviet press, some Lithuanians also knew about the self-immolation of Jan Palach.³⁰⁰ In January 1969, Palach, a twenty-one year old Czech student, burned himself in Prague as an act of protest against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the repression of the “Prague Spring” reforms. Lithuanian soldiers serving the Soviet occupation force in Czechoslovakia brought home reports of Palach’s self-immolation. A few months later, a 20-year old Latvian student named Ilya Rips attempted suicide by burning himself in Riga, also in protest of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Although it is unclear how widespread knowledge of these acts was, information regarding self-immolations as a form of political protest

none of the participant or eyewitness reports taken at the time mention religious slogans. Vardys also points out that Catholic dissidents did not regard Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing demonstrations as connected with religious protest against the Soviet Union. Vardys, 176.

²⁹⁸ *Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 26 (July 5, 1972) cited in Remeikis, 118.

²⁹⁹ The two 1965 self-immolations in the United States were reported in *Pravda* and *Komsomolskaia Pravda* (“Platia Voini I Platia Gneva,” *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, November 11, 1965; “Protest Protiv Agressii,” *Pravda*, November 10, 1965; “SSha V ‘Maloi Voine’,” *Pravda*, November 9, 1965)

³⁰⁰ The report of Palach’s self-immolation appears to have come to Lithuania in part through Lithuanian soldiers serving in the Soviet occupation forces after the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. According to Antanas Kalanta, one of Romas’ older brother, another older brother Evaldas was part of the Soviet occupation forces and told the Kalanta family about Palach’s act.

did reach Soviet Lithuania.³⁰¹ The dramatic nature of Kalanta's suicide – by setting himself on fire in a public square – would certainly have drawn attention to his death. As knowledge of his death spread across Lithuania, the method and its correlation with other political protests contributed to the establishment of an alternative narrative of Kalanta's self-immolation as nationalist resistance to the Soviet regime.

A WIDENING CIRCLE: RELATED INCIDENTS IN THE LISSR

In a memorandum entitled “Anti-Social and Nationalist Manifestations that took place in the Republic after May 14, 1972, the KGB briefly documented a number of incidents – distributing fliers with “nationalist” content, graffiti and other acts of vandalism – that it associated with the events in Kaunas. Two other KGB documents also referred to incidents in other cities that were a direct response to the events in Kaunas. Although the KGB reports do not indicate a specific link to the events in Kaunas for every incident, four acts of graffiti or posting fliers specifically refer to Kalanta or Kaunas. Additionally, a number of events occurred immediately after Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street protests. The majority of acts were committed by youth in their late teens. The geographic distribution of these acts indicates that news of the events in Kaunas

³⁰¹ Remeikis and Vardys assumed knowledge in Soviet Lithuania of the self-immolations by the South Vietnamese Buddhist monks and Jan Palach. Rips' self-immolation was inspired by Jan Palach's in Prague, which indicates that young people in the Baltic republics were aware of Palach's act and its political motivations. Bagušauskas documents that young people from Lithuania and Latvia, as well as other republics, held joint gatherings in the late 1960s and early 1970s so this information was likely transmitted throughout the Soviet Union. Juozapas Romualdas Bagušauskas, *Lietuvos jaunimo pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui ir jo slopinimas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Gyventojų Genocido ir Rezistencijos Tyrimo Centras, 1999).

spread quickly throughout Soviet Lithuania in the immediate aftermath. It also indicates youth discontent with the Soviet system was spread throughout the LiSSR.³⁰²

Table 4: KGB-documented incidents in the immediate aftermath of Kalanta’s self-immolation³⁰³

<u>City</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>By Whom</u>
Karmelava	5/21/1972	anti-Soviet graffiti written in chalk on a wall	18 year old and 21 year old males, unemployed
Kybartai	5/21/1972	distributed 8 anti-Soviet and nationalist fliers (calling for fight for Lithuania’s freedom); black ribbon fastened to LiSSR flag displayed on a factory chimney (Kibartai and Virbalys listed as one incident in report)	two 17 year old and one 16 year old students
Panevežys	5/21/1972	distribution of anti-Soviet and nationalist fliers (collection of 7 jokes)	unidentified
Virbalys	5/21/1972	distributed 8 anti-Soviet and nationalist fliers (calling for fight for Lithuania’s freedom); black ribbon fastened to LiSSR flag displayed on a factory chimney (Kibartai and Virbalys	two 17 year old and one 16 year old students

³⁰² In an electronic article, historian Arvydas Anušauskas lists additional incidents in Panevežys, including students burning their Pioneer ties on May 21 and another group of students wearing black ribbons on May 23. The article does not include citations. Anušauskas, who has done extensive research in the KGB archives, also states that anti-Soviet and nationalist acts in Lithuania were three to four times greater in 1972-1974 than in the immediately preceding years. His research indicates that the number of acts then dropped off after 1974. Arvydas Anušauskas, “KGB Reakcija I 1972 M. [vykius,” (Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras [Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Center], (accessed October 2012).

³⁰³ “Spravka ob antiobshchestvennikh i natsionalisticheskikh proiavlenniakh v respublike imevshikh mesto posle 14 maia 1972 goda [Memorandum on Anti-Social and Nationalist Manifestations That Took Place in the Republic after May 14, 1972]”, June? 1972. All incidents listed in the table below come from this memorandum unless individually footnoted.

		listed as one incident in report)	
Kalvarija	5/23/1972	17 anti-Soviet and nationalist fliers distributed	17 year old technical student and two 18 year old factory workers
Kapsukas	5/23/1972	17 anti-Soviet and nationalist fliers distributed	unidentified
Raseinai	5/23/1972	nationalist graffiti	29 year old kolhoz worker and 24 year old male
Anykščiai	5/24/1972	distribution of politically harmful fliers	husband and wife ages 30 and 24 respectively
Radviliškis	5/24/1972	3 fliers with anti-Russian content written on pages from class exercise book	unidentified
Kuršėnai ³⁰⁴	5/25/1972	graffiti “Freedom for Lithuania” and “Hands off Kaunas” on a public building	seventeen year old young man
Kuršėnai	5/26/1972	graffiti “Freedom for Lithuania”	unidentified
Akmėne	5/29/1972	graffiti on secondary school; writers said influenced by Kaunas events and foreign radio	two 15 year old students in 6th class

³⁰⁴ “[Reports on Anti-Soviet Mood of Youth],” Šiauliai City Section Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR. 1974. Fondas K-18, Ap. 1, By. 514. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], (accessed March 2009).

Vilnius ³⁰⁵	November 1972	fliers referring to Kalanta's suicide posted in various locations	unidentified
Druskinkiai	Undated	flier calling on youth to follow example of Kaunas youth posted at secondary school	unidentified
Kėdainai	Undated	3 instances of fliers with nationalist content	unidentified
Klaipėda	Undated	distribution of "nationalist fliers"	4 secondary school students in 8th grade
Šiauliai	Undated	nationalist fliers distributed	12 secondary school students in 7th grade
Šilutė	Undated	graffiti "Lithuanians, rise up, fight the Russians"	unidentified
Ukmergė	Undated	war memorial defaced	18 year old male, unemployed, and 17 year old technical student

The documentation of graffiti and fliers referencing Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations reveal that not all Lithuanians accepted the official interpretation that Kalanta was mentally ill and the street demonstrations were the work of hooligans. Instead, they form a pattern that indicates that an interpretation of the events as protest against the Soviet system had spread across the LiSSR within days of their occurrence.

³⁰⁵ "Apžiūros protokolas [Inspection Protocol]," Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Soviete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR. May 28, 1974. Fondas K-1, Ap. 43, By. 193-194. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania]. (accessed March 2009). The 1972 Vilnius incident is reported in a KGB document from 1974 report. The report is contained in the single file in the archives from the Vilnius city section. The Special Archives of Lithuania does not have records from 1960-1979 for the Vilnius city section of the KGB. According to archivists, the files were either destroyed by the KGB or transferred to Moscow prior to the KGB withdrawal from Lithuania.

THE POEM³⁰⁶

A poem describing Romas Kalanta as a hero who died for freedom, defined in national terms as the liberation of Lithuania from Russian control, began circulating in Kaunas immediately following his self-immolation. Over the course of the summer of 1972, copies of the poem spread east to Vilnius, south to Vilkaviškis, north to Pasvalys, and west to Klaipėda.³⁰⁷ The poem is the foremost example of the development of a nationalist narrative of Kalanta's suicide in direct conflict with the official designation of Kalanta as mentally ill. It also provides evidence of the speed with which the news of Kalanta's act spread across the LiSSR. An analysis of young people's responses to the poem demonstrates their relationship to the Soviet state in post-Stalinist society. The poem's distribution provides a case study of the role of social networks in disseminating information among young people in the Soviet Union. Documents from the KGB investigation of the poem's distribution in 1972 and 1973, including interview statements and "confessions" from people who were questioned about possessing the poem, reveal political practices of interaction between young people and Soviet authorities, as well as differing expectations of the boundaries of acceptable behavior for Soviet youth.

³⁰⁶ The version of the poem given below can be found on pages 37/1-37/3. The files also contain copies of confiscated poems, some written on sheets of paper and others written in small notebooks. The following version of the poem contains most elements of the various versions in the KGB files. This particular copy of the poem was reportedly written at the beginning of June 1972. Spelling errors in the handwritten poem have been corrected but punctuation has not been added. I am indebted to Laima Vince and Guntis Smidchens for their assistance in translating the poem. "Baudžiamoji byla dėl antitarybinio turynio eilėraščių, parašytų ir platintų ryšium su R. Kalantos susideginimo faktu [Criminal Investigation of Anti-Soviet Poems, Written and Distributed in Connection to Romas Kalanta's Self-Immolation]," July 1972 - October 1974. Fondas K-1, Ap. 43, By. 187-189. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania], Kaunas. (accessed January 2009).

³⁰⁷ Based on the dates of KGB interrogations of individuals questioned for possessing a copy of the poem and the location of the individuals' residency listed in the interrogation statements.

1. Čia laisvei, santvarka bloga

Here the system is bad for freedom

Taip sakė Romas Kalanta

So said Romas Kalanta

O kur tikroji mus Tėvynė

And where is our real Fatherland

Tai rusai pėdomis numynė

This the Russians trampled underfoot

2. Nebėra Lietuvos laisvos

There is no free Lithuania

O kas už ją dabar kovos

And who will now fight for it

Didvyris žuvo. Liks kiti.

A hero died. Others will appear

Laisvajai vėliavai ištikimi

Who are faithful to the flag of freedom

3. Tu už mus vienas pražuvi

You alone perished for us

Tačiau ateis kiti laikai

However other times will come

Iškelsim vėliavą ant kapo

We will raise the flag on the grave

Ant tavo Romai, tavo kapo

On your grave, Romas

4. Minėsim dieną, kai žuvai

We will remember the day when you died

Ir liksime ištikimi mes tau tikrai

And we will remain faithful to you

Ir tęsim tik pradėtą kovą

We will continue a battle only just begun

Prieš priešą – rusišką valdovą

Against the enemy, the Russian ruler

5. Kiek skausmo suteikei visiems

How much pain you gave to everyone

Dekingi esami mes tiems

We are grateful for those

Kurie palaikė tavo drąsą

who supported your courage

Ir dabar žygi šitą tęsia

And who now continue this step

6. Sudegti, Romai – tai baisu

To burn, Romas – this was horrible

Ir atsiskirti nuo visų

And to separate yourself from everyone

Tačiau širdyje skamba tonas

However in the heart the sound rings out

Nemiręs jis. Dar gyvas Romas.

He is not dead. Romas still lives.

7. Valdžia pas mus tiesiog siaubinga

The government over us is truly terrifying

Tačiau drąsos ir mums nestinga

However we do not lack courage

Lietuvių laisvė mums branga

The freedom of Lithuanians is valuable to us³⁰⁸

Visos jos žmonės artimi

All of its people are close

8. Pirmyn Laisvoji Lietuva

Forward Free Lithuania³⁰⁹

Numesk grandines rusų

Throw off the chains of the Russians

Težėri saule dangyje

Let the sun sparkle in the sky

Ir laisvė būna mūsų

And freedom be ours

9. Kovok piliėti Lietuvos

Fight, citizen of Lithuania

Ir nenutrauk savos kovos

And do not cease your battle

Kol pergalė ateis pas mus

Until the victory will come to us

Kol mes išvysime rusus

Until we chase out the Russians

³⁰⁸ Some version have “laimė” [happiness]

³⁰⁹ Some versions have “klestėk laisvoji Lietuva” [Flourish free Lithuania]

10. Kol veiki Lietuvos tauta
Nepasijusi visai laisva
Kol vėliava tokia neplevėjuos
Tu nenutrauk savos kovos
- For as long as the Lithuanian nation acts
You shall not feel completely free
For as long as this flag does not fly
You, do not cease your battle*
11. O Romas, Romas Kalanta
Minės jį Lietuvos tauta
Jis jau suprato mus visus
Juk jam ir mums gyvenimas čiasiau tvankus
- O Romas, Romas Kalanta
the Lithuanian nation will remember him
He already understood us all
For him and for us life is stifling here*
12. Tu sudegai meisto sodely
Pamatė jie didvyrių galią
Nebijom mes – jaunimas jų
Ir visa tai išraškiem protestu
- You burned in the city garden
They saw the power of heroes
We, the youth, do not fear them
And all this we expressed by protest*
13. Gegužės 14-ta diena
Mums tiktai ji brangi viena
Tai žuvo jis „nenormalus“
Kaip sako rusiškas žmogus
- The day May 14
It alone is dear to us
When he who was „not normal“ died
So the Russian person says*
14. Tai netiesa, tai beprotybė
Tai viena rusiška silpnybė
- This is not true, this is madness
This is purely Russian weakness*

Jei kas nors tik prieš valdžią bus	<i>If only someone is against the system</i>
Jie sako „psichiškai nenormalus”	<i>They say „psychologically abnormal”</i>
15. Mes esame lietuviai, mes – jaunimas	<i>We are Lithuanians, we are youth</i>
O mūsų herojus – Kalanta Romas	<i>And our hero is Kalanta Romas³¹⁰</i>
Mes garbinsim jį iš tiesų	<i>We will truly honor him</i>
Jis mums brangiausias iš visų	<i>He is dearest of all to us</i>

A NARRATIVE OF NATIONAL HEROISM

The language used by young people to describe the poem has some similarities with the language used to describe Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing demonstrations in the KGB interrogation statements taken after the May 1972 events in Kaunas. However, those who were questioned about the poem ascribe a more specifically nationalist and political meaning to Kalanta’s suicide. It is important to note that the vast majority of the young people who were questioned about the poem had neither participated in nor witnessed the demonstrations in Kaunas that followed Kalanta’s burning. Those who read and copied the poem were influenced by the meaning assigned to Kalanta’s act in the poem itself. As a result, their own interpretations of his suicide were shaped by the poem’s writer(s). A careful analysis of the interview statements reveals three key themes in the readers’ explanations of the poem’s meaning: Kalanta as hero, concepts of freedom, and resistance to the Soviet system³¹¹. Unlike the young people interrogated for their participation

³¹⁰ This version used “genijus” [genius], but all other versions use “herojus” [hero] in this line.

³¹¹ All of the interrogation statements are in the following criminal investigation files. “Baudžiamoji byla dėl antitarybinio turynio cilėraščius, parašytų ir platintų ryšium su R. Kalantos susideginimo faktu [Criminal Investigation of

in the demonstrations on 18-19 May, young people who distributed the poem emphasized Kalanta's self-immolation as an individual act rather than the collective action of young people in the street demonstrations.

Youth, a defining characteristic of the demonstrations in narratives presented by participants in the May 18-19 events, no longer held a prominent place in the narrative received by the poem's readers. As was the case in the demonstrations that followed Kalanta's funeral in Kaunas on 18-19 May, 1972, the majority of the participants in the distribution of the poem were youth. Of the one hundred seventy-six people for whom interrogation statements exist, one hundred sixteen were under 18 and fifty-eight were age 18-21. Only thirteen were age 30-50.³¹² Fifty-one, nearly one-third, were members of the Communist Youth Organization. Despite the age of the individuals receiving and passing on the poem, the theme of youth rarely appears in young people's descriptions of the poem or their participation in distributing it. The poem itself only obliquely referenced the demonstrations that followed Kalanta's funeral. Although it called on youth to "continue the fight," the poem emphasized a nationalist rather than youth-oriented interpretation of the events in Kaunas. Similarly, only a few of those questioned referred to the role of youth in the poem. One young woman noted that the "poem's ending addressed Lithuania's youth and call them to fight against the Soviet system."³¹³ Another young woman explained that the poem stated that youth

Anti-Soviet Poems, Written and Distributed in Connection to Romas Kalanta's Self-Immolation], July 1972 - October 1974.

³¹² In most cases, there is one statement per person, although there are multiple statements from a few individuals. Follow-up interviews usually focused on clarifying the date which the person received the poem or from whom the poem was received. Twenty-two statements did not include the birth year of the person questioned.

³¹³ Vita J. interrogation statement.

“will observe Romas’ courage, will go in his footsteps and will fight for the liberty of their country.”³¹⁴

Firstly, those who had seen the poem emphasized that it honored Kalanta as a hero for his act of self-immolation.³¹⁵ According to one young man, “The poem said that through burning himself, Romas Kalanta was a hero.”³¹⁶ A young woman stated that the poem said “that [Kalanta] would be remembered by his friends for a long time and that he would live among his friends.”³¹⁷ Another young woman explained that she “understood that the poem was about Romas Kalanta, that he will remain in memory.”³¹⁸ In the words of one person, the poem “consecrated Romas Kalanta’s self-immolation.”³¹⁹ According to the poem, Kalanta’s act made him a hero who would be remembered – but for what did he die? The most common reason given for Kalanta’s death based on the poem was that he was “against the system [*santvarkė*].” One young woman explained that “the poem called Romas Kalanta a ‘hero’ and [said] that he was against Soviet power.”³²⁰ Another young woman said that “from this poem I understood that Kalanta’s suicide was a protest against the Soviet system.”³²¹ In many cases, Kalanta’s death, and even the poem itself, were described as

³¹⁴ Eugenija Č. interrogation statement.

³¹⁵ The statements are not transcripts and do not include the questions asked. However, the structure of the statements allow for some questions to be inferred.

³¹⁶ Ričardas I. interrogation statement.

³¹⁷ Stasė D. interrogation statement.

³¹⁸ Aldona K. interrogation statement.

³¹⁹ Veronika L. interrogation statement.

³²⁰ Birutė D. interrogation statement.

³²¹ Zita G. interrogation statement.

part of a battle against the Soviet system.³²² One young woman referred to “overthrowing Soviet power,”³²³ while others explained that the poem called the current system “bad [*bloga*].”³²⁴

While “freedom” [*laisvė*] appeared to include a social meaning for the demonstration participants, e.g., the freedom to be hippies, the term as used in the poem was more frequently assigned political or nationalist meaning by the readers. In order to understand what was “bad” about the existing Soviet system, one must look at the second theme: “freedom.” The system, therefore, was “bad” because it had deprived Lithuania of its freedom. Like the participants in the May 18 demonstrations, those questioned about the poem frequently used the term “freedom.” One young man noted that “the text said that Kalanta died for freedom.”³²⁵ A young woman quoted the beginning of the poem as “Romas burned, that is freedom.”³²⁶ Another young woman explained that the poem was “about Romas who fought for freedom.”³²⁷ Those who were questioned often referred specifically to freedom for Lithuania.³²⁸ One young woman stated that the poem said “Lithuania will be free” and that the title of the poem was “Liberty for Lithuania.”³²⁹ Another said that “the poem was written ‘to remember Kalanta’ who would give liberty to

³²² Ričardas B., Danutė B., and Eugenija Č. Interrogation statements.

³²³ Marija C. interrogation statement.

³²⁴ Julija J. and Vytautas V. interrogation statements.

³²⁵ Vilius B. interrogation statement.

³²⁶ Vita J. interrogation statement.

³²⁷ Stasė D. interrogation statement.

³²⁸ Raimonda C. and Anelė G. interrogation statements.

³²⁹ Judita K. interrogation statement.

Lithuania.”³³⁰ In the same way, another young woman said that “the poem more or less honored Kalanta, that he died for Lithuania, so that Lithuania would be free.”³³¹

In addition to the lack of freedom, the young people’s descriptions of the poem explicitly identify Russians as a part of what is “bad” about the current system. The poem’s readers equated the fight against the Soviet system with a fight against Russians. Those who were questioned repeatedly referred to the “fight against Russians” as part of the reason for Kalanta’s suicide.³³² As one young woman explained, the poem encouraged “discord between Russians and Lithuanians.”³³³ Another said that she remembered that the poem was directed “against the Russian nation.”³³⁴

Unlike the descriptions of the May 18 demonstrations, several of those who were questioned about the poem used the term “nationalist” to describe it.³³⁵ Even more commonly, the young people questioned about the poem used the term “anti-Soviet,” a term that rarely appeared in the statements from the participants in the May 18 demonstrations. The frequency with which the word is used in the poem investigation statements may indicate that the term was being used by the interviewers themselves and the people questioned adopted the term from them.³³⁶

³³⁰ Milda R. interrogation statement.

³³¹ Janina B. interrogation statement.

³³² Vilius B., Algirdas J., Virginija M., Mindaugas P., and Raimondas U. interrogation statements.

³³³ Vera Z. interrogation statement.

³³⁴ Dalia R. interrogation statement.

³³⁵ Marija C, Anelė G., and Elena L. interrogation statements.

³³⁶ For example, Javyga A, Nijolė B., Silva J., Marytė K., Veronika L., Robertas N., Kastytis N., Nijolė P.; Teofilija R., Danguolė V., Irena V., and Danutė Z. interrogation statements.

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO THE POEM

In the interview statements, the young people who were questioned also commented on their personal response to the poem. Those who passed the poem to others often explained why they chose to do so. While the young people questioned in the KGB investigation had an incentive to downplay any political connotations of their actions, their insistence that they had not engaged in anti-Soviet acts reveals a changing relationship between young citizens and the authorities in post-Stalinist Soviet Union. The young people expressed little fear of reprisal in reading, copying and passing on the poem, in contrast to older generations who had experienced Stalinist repression. The young people repeatedly justified their actions by stating that they found the poem “interesting.” This term, like the excuse of “curiosity” by young people who participated in the street demonstrations downplays personal agency by not necessarily agreeing with the poem’s content. The use of “interest” by young people when questioned by the authorities indicates a politically acceptable discourse in much the same way the term “curiosity” does. The use of “interest” also serves to downplay personal responsibility and distances the person who had the poem from the poem’s claims.

Quite a few of those questioned by the KGB emphasized that they did not believe that they were doing anything “bad” [*blogas*] by copying the poem and passing it on.³³⁷ Others acknowledged that they recognized that the poem was “anti-Soviet,” but still stated that they did not believe it was wrong to pass it on.³³⁸ One young woman explained that she copied the poem without “thinking that I was doing anything with anti-Soviet aims.”³³⁹ Another said that she realized the poem was

³³⁷ Algirdas J.; Marytė K., Juozas P., and Eugenija V. interrogation statements.

³³⁸ Danutė Z. interrogation statement.

³³⁹ Virginija S. interrogation statement.

“anti-Soviet but I didn’t think it was criminal so I showed it to my work group.”³⁴⁰ A young man noted that “although I understood later that the poem was anti-Soviet, at that time I smiled and did not give it such an interpretation.”³⁴¹

While curiosity appeared to be within the acceptable bounds for participation in the street demonstrations, the “interesting” nature of the poem appeared to be a sufficient explanation for copying the poem or passing it on. Most commonly, the young people simply said that they liked the poem and that it was interesting. These responses likely represent attempts by the young people to moderate their interest in the poem given the authorities’ clear disapproval of their interest – as manifested by the fact they were being questioned by the KGB. Only one young man described an explicitly nationalist response to the poem. In addition to copying the poem into his notebook, he explained that he colored red, green and yellow around it – the colors of the banned Lithuanian national flag.³⁴² A more typical response came from a young man who explained that he “liked the poem because it was fairly-well composed.”³⁴³ A young woman said that since she liked the poem, she was “able to remember it like a song.”³⁴⁴ Others stated that they found the poem “interesting to read.”³⁴⁵ Only a few claimed that they did not pay attention to the content or that they did not understand the content when they read the poem.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁰ Danguolė V. interrogation statement.

³⁴¹ Alfonsas S. interrogation statement.

³⁴² Dainius P. interrogation statement.

³⁴³ Ričardas B. interrogation statement.

³⁴⁴ Janina Juš. interrogation statement.

³⁴⁵ Irena N., Aldona P., and Raimondas U. interrogation statement.

³⁴⁶ Aldona P. and Audronė S. interrogation statement.

Significantly, the young people demonstrated a lack of fear in copying the poem and passing it on – even when they understood that the authorities would consider the poem “anti-Soviet.” This was not universal, however. Some admitted that, while they were not initially concerned about the poem, they later believed that it was wrong to keep the poem and tore it up or burned it.³⁴⁷ In the investigation documents, the young people describe a different response by older Lithuanians to the poem. Those who stated in the interview statement or “confession” that they were not interested in the poem when they saw it or who refused to take the poem because they recognized that it was anti-Soviet were almost all over age 30.³⁴⁸ There is also a pattern among those young people who said that they showed the poem to their parents. In every case, the parents destroyed the poem and told the young person that it was wrong to have such a poem.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POEM

The distribution of the poem honoring Kalanta provides an important example of the way in which information was disseminated through young people’s informal networks, whether at school, at work or even at summer camp. The only official account of Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing popular unrest appeared in *Kauno Tiesa* on May 20.³⁴⁹ As a result, informal communications were the primary means by which people outside of Kaunas learned about the events. While studies of both literary and dissident *samizdat* literature have demonstrated the role of social networks in distributing underground or unofficial publications, these have focused on networks among

³⁴⁷ Jadvyga D., Jonas J., and Vaclavas M. interrogation statement.

³⁴⁸ Stanislovas B., Juzėta K., Nijolė K., Zita K., Aldona K., Stasė M., Teofilija R., Kazys S., and Egidijus Z. interrogation statement.

³⁴⁹ “Kauno miesto prokuratūroje [from the Kaunas City Prosecutor],” *Kauno Tiesa*, May 20, 1972.

intellectuals or a small group of like-minded individuals (whether political, national or religious) within Soviet society.³⁵⁰ It is generally accepted that “friendship networks” within post-Stalinist Soviet society provided lines of communication outside of official channels.³⁵¹ However, the process by which information was spread through informal networks is difficult to trace because social interactions are often ephemeral and undocumented.

The poem’s distribution reveals that news of Kalanta’s self-immolation spread quickly throughout the Lithuanian SSR and demonstrates the role of social networks in disseminating information in the Soviet Union. According to the investigation files, the poem appeared within days of Kalanta’s act and continued to be distributed into 1973.³⁵² One young woman stated that she received the poem at the demonstration on the day of Kalanta’s funeral. Twenty-four people received the poem in May, often just days after Kalanta’s self-immolation. The majority of those questioned (sixty-three) received the poem in June.³⁵³ Thirty-eight of those questioned received the poem in July or August. While the numbers of individuals questioned dropped off after the summer of 1972, the poem continued to be distributed. Nineteen individuals were questioned for having the poem from September to December 1972 and another seventeen from January to April 1973. In

³⁵⁰ See, for example, Gordon Johnston, “What Is the History of Samizdat?” *Social History*, 24, no. 2 (1999): 115-133.

³⁵¹ See, for example, Oleg Kharkhodian, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study in Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 313-322. See also Ronald Gregor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 455-460.

³⁵² The KGB interrogators apparently asked specifically and repeatedly when the individual being questioned first saw or received a copy of the poem. In most cases, the individual identified the month and some were able to identify the week or even the date. For the statements in which the person does not specify the date when he or she received the poem, the statement date was used to determine the likely time period when the poem was received. In most cases individuals appear to have been questioned close to the point when they received the poem. In some cases, another individual who gave a statement was identified as a friend, co-worker or classmate. This information was also used to determine the likely time period that someone received the poem.

³⁵³ Fifty stated that they received the poem in June and another thirteen were questioned in June.

May 1973, at the one-year anniversary of Kalanta's suicide, only three people were questioned. An additional seven were questioned through the summer and until the end of 1973. It is not clear from the files whether distribution of the poem declined after the summer of 1973, whether the KGB pursued the distribution of the poem less vigorously, or whether additional investigation files were lost or destroyed.

The poem's distribution provides a measurable case study of the role of social networks in disseminating information in the Soviet period. The majority of the people questioned by the KGB had received the poem from a friend, co-worker or classmate. Nearly half proceeded to pass the poem onto someone else within their social circles. Seventy-three stated that they were shown the poem by a friend or a neighbor. Thirty-three saw it at work and twenty-four at school. Thirteen received the poem from a family member. Nine of the young people were shown the poem at summer camp. Seventy-eight of those who were questioned then showed the poem to someone else, typically a family member, roommate, classmate or co-worker.

Informal communication networks were not necessarily face-to-face. Three people reported that they received the poem anonymously by mail. Another nine say they found the poem sitting on a table at work or on a desk at school. At the same time, individuals who were questioned may have had an incentive not to identify who gave them the poem. The investigation files document several cases in which the person originally lied about who had given the poem to him or her. For example, one young man initially claimed that he received the poem from a friend who was studying in Kaunas but, when questioned a second time, he admitted that he received the poem from a man

at his church.³⁵⁴ One young woman initially claimed that she found the poem on her desk at school. When questioned a second time, she said that a classmate gave her the poem.³⁵⁵

In addition to the process of distribution through social networks, the investigation files hint at the existence of an organized attempt to disseminate the poem. Nine individuals said that they were approached by a stranger, usually a young person, who asked if they had heard what happened in Kaunas and then showed them the poem. Eight people saw the poem posted in public places, such as the bus station or the stairwell in an apartment building. Only one person identified a specific group, “Revolutionary Kaunas Committee [*Revoliucinis Kauno Komitetas*]” behind the distribution of the poem.³⁵⁶ The extant investigation files do not contain documentation that the originators of the poem or any kind of formal distribution network were discovered by the KGB.

SUMMER CAMPS AND FOREIGN VOICES

While it is difficult to document to what extent Lithuanians continued to see Kalanta as a voice of protest against the Soviet system in the two decades between his self-immolation and the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence, there are indications that knowledge of his act and an interpretation of it as a nationalist act of resistance to Soviet rule was widespread in Soviet Lithuania. In information conversations and interviews, several respondents said that they remember hearing

³⁵⁴ Vaclavas M. interrogation statement. The follow-up statements indicate that the KGB investigated the first person from whom he claimed to have received the poem and found no evidence that the young man had a copy of the poem.

³⁵⁵ Raimonda C. interrogation statement. It is also possible that the young woman simply identified someone under pressure from the KGB interrogator.

³⁵⁶ Jadyga R. interrogation statement,

songs about Kalanta at student summer camps in the late 1970s and the 1980s.³⁵⁷ The Lithuanian diaspora adopted this interpretation, which then filtered into Soviet Lithuania through sources such as Radio Free Europe broadcasts. In my oral interviews and informal conversations, a number of people mentioned learning songs about Kalanta at summer camp in the 1970s and 1980s.

Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing popular unrest continued to be a catalyst for other acts over the next two years. In Šiauliai, several incidences of graffiti and a public demonstration in 1973 referred to Kalanta. On May 7, "Freedom for Lithuania 1972.V.14" was written on a school stadium. That same night graffiti "Kalanta's ideas have not died" was written the city park.³⁵⁸ Two seventeen year olds and two sixteen year olds were arrested for writing "There is no freedom here – R. Kalanta" on the wall of the House of Culture.³⁵⁹ On May 14, 1974 – the second anniversary of Kalanta's self-immolation – sixteen signs referring to Kalanta were put up around Vilnius. The small, typed-written pieces of paper declared that Romas Kalanta had died heroically because he loved his country and felt its tragedy. The fliers called on youth to rise up against the Russians and reclaim Lithuania's freedom. Two young men aged eighteen were arrested for distributing fliers with "anti-Soviet content."³⁶⁰ On June 19, 1974, the local KGB in Šiauliai investigated reports of a group

³⁵⁷ Joana Čižauskaitė (Vilnius; March 10, 2011). Interview with author; Asta Pranaitienė (Kaunas; February 8, 2011). Interview with author.

³⁵⁸ "[Reports on Anti-Soviet Acts]," Šiauliai City Section Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti pri Sovete Ministrov Litovskoi SSR. 1973. Fondas K-18, Ap. 1, By. 513. KGB Skyrius, Lietuvos Ypatingas Archyvas [KGB Division, Special Archives of Lithuania]. (accessed March 2009); "[Reports on Anti-Soviet Mood of Youth]", 1974. During the 1974 investigation, it was determined that the same young men had posted the pages referring to Kalanta's suicide in November 1972. The report does not specify on what the slogan was written.

³⁵⁹ "[Reports on Anti-Soviet Acts]", 1973. This is the only instance in the extant archival documents in which one of the persons committing an act defined as "anti-Soviet" in the aftermath of Kalanta's self-immolation was also mentioned in KGB investigative files as part of a group of friends who read the poem portraying Kalanta as a national hero discussed later in the chapter.

³⁶⁰ "Apžiūros protokolas [Inspection Protocol]", May 28, 1974.

of people carrying signs in front of the post office. According to witnesses, the signs said “Russians out of Lithuania,” “Freedom for Lithuania,” “Freedom for Youth,” “Glory to Free Lithuania,” “Glory to Romas Kalanta,” and “Glory to the son of Lithuania Romas Kalanta.”³⁶¹

The sites of the incidents are as important as the content of the fliers or slogans. While some incidents were truly anonymous, other actors are revealed by the sites. Slogans written on a school wall or in class exercise book mostly likely were carried out by secondary students, which supports other evidence that primarily young people acted in response to Kalanta’s suicide. Attaching a black ribbon to the Soviet Lithuania flag or defacing a World War II memorial were clear acts of protest against Soviet control of Lithuania. As centers for ideologically-grounded “cultural enlightenment” through leisure activities, Soviet Houses of Culture were also symbolic of Soviet power.³⁶² As sites of cultural activities for youth, these cultural clubs also played a crucial role in the Soviet state’s attempts to control the attitudes and behaviors of youth; thus serving the dual ideological purpose of combatting potential nationalist and Western influences on Soviet Lithuanian youth.

By framing Kalanta’s self-immolation in explicitly nationalist terms, the poem distributed immediately after his death articulated a narrative in conflict with the Soviet authorities’ official explanation that Kalanta was mentally ill. The poem’s narrative also contrasted with the interpretations of Kalanta’s act and the ensuing demonstrations presented in the interrogation statements taken from participants in the street demonstration, who emphasized youth culture

³⁶¹ “[Reports on Anti-Soviet Acts]”, 1973.

³⁶² For a more detailed discussion of the role of Houses of Culture in the USSR and Eastern Europe, see Ali İğmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012) and White.

rather than nationalist tensions. The poem's quick and extensive distribution also demonstrates the importance of informal networks in disseminating information within the Soviet Union.

Table: Poem Investigation Interrogation Statements

<u>Name</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Birth Year</u>	<u>Communist Youth Organization</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Date received poem</u>
Adomas S.	1972-07-14	1955	Y	Siauliai	June 1972
Albina M.	1972-09-07	1952	Y	Kaunas	Late May 1972
Albinas P.	1973-05-23	1955		Vilkaviškis	Early June 1972
Aldona G.	1974-03-26		Y	Skrebotiškis	June 1972
Aldona K.	1972-06-20				1972 June 20
Aldona Merč.	1972-06-20				1972 June 16
Aldona Mešk.	1973-04-28	1955		Rokškis	April 1973
Aldona N.	1973-02-08	1950	Y	Kaunas	June 1972
Aldona Pau.	1973-11-06			Klaipeda	August 1973
Aldona Pet.	1972-10-10	1956	Y	Vilnius	May 1972
Aldona V.	1974-08-13				End of 1972
Aleksas S.	1972-08-18	1956		Kuršėnai	June 1972
Alfonsas S.	1973-02-16	1954		Elektriniai	February 1973
Algirdas J.	1972-12-21	1956		Kaunas	Summer 1972
Algirdas K.	1972-07-17	1954		Siauliai	About June 9, 1972
Algirdas P.	1972-06-13	1933	CPSU	Kaunas	Early June
Algis M.	1972-08-15			Šakiai rajonas	Late June 1972
Aloyzas M.	1972-06-21	1958		Siauliai	on a Pioneer holiday
Andrius R.	1972-06-22	1955	Y	Siauliai	
Anelė G.	1972-10-17			Akmėnė	September 1972
Anelė J.	1973-04-25			Rokškis	approximately April 15, 1973
Angelė L.	1973-04-29	1954		Rokškis	1973 April 26
Angelė P.	1973-11-06			Klaipeda	August 1973
Angelė R.	1972-07-13			Mairioniškiai	
Audronė S.	1973-10-04	1954		Vilnius	
Aurelija Š.	1972-07-26	1953	Y	Alytus	Early June 1972
Birutė B.	1972-07-14	1952	Y	Kaunas	1972 June 12
Birutė D.	1972-07-13	1952	Y	Kaunas	Late May/early June 1972
Birutė P.	1972-07-11	1950	Y	Kaunas	Late May 1972
Birutė T.	1973-04-30	1955		Rokškis	

Bronė R.	1973-02-16			Elektriniai	June or July 1972
Dainius P.	1972-12-19	1955		Kaunas	July or August 1972
Dalia R.	1972-07-26	1954	Y	Alytus	Mid-June 1972
Danas V.	1973-04-27	1955		Rokškis	February 1973
Danguolė S.	1972-09-26	1955		Radviliškis	July 1972
Danguolė V.	1972-07-12	1949	Y	Siauliai	1972 June 17
Danutė A.	1972-10-04	1955	Y	Kaunas	Late May/early June 1972
Danutė B.	1972-07-20	1952	Y	Kaunas	End of June 1972
Danutė Z.	1973-02-19	1956		Elektriniai	Early June 1972
Donata Ž.	1973-02-08	1952	Y	Kaunas	Early June 1972
Edvardas R.	1972-07-27	1922	CPSU	Kaunas	1972 June 24
Edvardas T.	1972-07-13	1955	Y	Siauliai	Early June 1972
Egidijus Z.		1955	Y	Siauliai	
Elena K.	1972-07-01	1943		Kaunas	End of May 1972
Elena L.	1973-03-13	1956		Elektriniai	Early July 1972
Elena V.	1972-06-22	1952	Y	Siauliai	Early June 1972
Elyvra Č.	1972-07-26	1954	Y	Alytus	End of June 1972
Eugenija Č.	1972-07-11	1950	Y	Kaunas	End of June 1972
Eugenija V.	1972-05-16				
Evaldas J.	1972-09-11	1955		Kaunas	
Evaldas Z.	1973-01-22	1955		Šilutė	1972
Fabijonas J.	1973-02-09	1934		Kaunas	End of July 1972
G. U.	1972-06-22	1954	Y	Siauliai	1972 June 3
Gedmininas S.	1972-09-15	1956		Siauliai	
Gintaras P.	1973-07-10	1956		Kopsukas	
Gintaras S.	1973-01-18	1954		Šilutė	
Grazina K.	1972-10-04	1955		Kaunas	Late May/early June 1972
Grazina Z.	1972-07-27	1953		Kaunas	1972 June 11
Ieva G.	1973-04-27	1954		Rokškis	
Ignas Š.	1973-05-04	1955		Vilkaviškis	June or July 1972
Irena G.	1972-06-15				1972 June 14
Irena N.	1973-11-07			Klaipėda	a few days after events in Kaunas
Irena R.	1972-06-22	1954	Y	Siauliai	Second half of May
Irena T.	1973-12-27	1954	Y	Siauliai	Summer 1972
Irena V.	1972-07-11	1952	Y	Kaunas	June 3-4, 1972
Jadvyga A.	1972-08-17	1944	CPSU	Kuršėnai	Early June 1972
Jadvyga D.	1972-10-19			Akmenė	Sept. 28 or 29, 1972
Janina B.	1972-07-14	1948		Kaunas	1972 June
Janina E.	1972-08-11	1950		Kaunas	End of June 1972
Janina G.	1973-02-22	1934		Kaunas	Summer 1972
Janina Jok.	1973-02-08	1956	Y	Kaunas	End of May 1972
Janina Juš.	1973-11-06			Klaipėda	August 1973

Janina P.	1973-02-03	1949	Y	Kaunas	Summer 1972
Jolanta K.	1972-07-31				Mid-July 1972
Jonas B.	1973-03-09	1954		Biržai	Summer 1973
Jonas G.	1973-02-19			Elektriniai	1973 Feb 6
Jonas J.	1972-07-18	1956			
Jonas K.	1973-05-16	1955		Kaunas	
Jonė J.	1972-07-26	1950		Kaunas	1972 June 6
Judita K.	1973-04-28	1957		Siauliai	Early July 1972
Julija J.	1972-07-06	1954		Alytus	Mid-June 1972
Juodita Š.	1972-09-05	1950	Y	Kaunas	Early June 1972
Juozas K.	1972-08-15			Šakiai rajonas	Mid-June 1972
Juozas P.	1973-02-14	1956		Šilutė	August or September 1972
Jurgina B.	1972-09-07	1952	Y	Kaunas	May or June 1972
Juzėta K.	1972-10-17			Akmenė	Late September 1972
Kastytis N.	1972-08-28				Late June/early July 1972
Kazimiras M.	1972-06-13	1941			
Kazys N.	1973-01-23	1950		Šilutė	November 1972
Kazys Š.	1972-07-13	1956		Kaunas	Early June
Kestutis T.	1972-06-21	1954		Siauliai	Early June 1972
Kostas K.	1972-07-13	1953		Siauliai	June 1972
Ksavera V.	1973-05-10	1956		Pasvalys	October or November 1972
Leonas S.	1973-03-22			Pasvalys	1973 February 24
Linas Č.	1972-07-27	1942		Kaunas	
Lionginas B.	1972-09-15	1954		Siauliai	1972 August 1
Lionginas K.	1973-02-06	1927		Kaunas	July 1972
Liucija J.	1972-07-25	1948		Kaunas	Late May 1972
Marija A.	1972-06-21	1950	Y	Kaunas	Early June 1972
Marija C.	1972-07-14	1945		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Marytė K.	1972-08-10	1953	Y	Kaunas	Early June 1972
Meilutė B.	1972-09-05	1949	Y	Kaunas	
Milda R.	1973-04-29	1954		Rokškis	October 1972
Mindaugas P.	1973-04-28	1954		Rokškis	October 1972
Modestas P.	1972-08-17	1946	Y	Kuršėnai	1972 June 19-20
Mykolas K.	1972-07-25	1933	CPSU	Kaunas	1972 May 31
Nijolė B.	1972-07-26	1952	Y	Kaunas	Late May/early June 1972
Nijolė K.	1972-07-12	1944	Y	Siauliai	June 1972
Nijolė P.	1972-08-10	1953	Y	Kaunas	June 1972
Olė D.	1972-10-18				1972 October 16
Ona S.	1972-07-28	1949	Y	Kaunas	June 1972
Petras B.	1972-09-06	1946		Kaunas	May 1972
Petras L.	1972-06-22	1955		Siauliai	1972 May 31

Petras S.	1972-07-17	1950		Kaunas	
Pijus V.	1973-02-16	1953		Elektriniai	End of January 1973
Pranas P.	1973-07-10	1956		Padretis	
Pranas V.				Elektriniai	End of February 1973
Raimonda C.	1972-07-19	1953	Y	Kaunas	June 3-4, 1972
Raimondas U.	1972-12-20	1955		Kaunas	June 1972
Raminta P.	1972-10-09	1956	Y	Kaunas	May 1972
Regina S.	1972-06-27	1954		Siauliai	
Regina V.	1973-12-27	1949	Y	Siauliai	
Ričardas B.	1972-07-11	1950		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Ričardas D.	1972-07-21	1932		Kaunas	1972 June 24
Ričardas I.	1972-07-11	1955		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Ričardas Z.	1972-06-12	1940		Kaunas	1972 June 4
Rima Šal.	1973-04-28	1956		Rokškis	April 1973
Rima Šir.	1972-07-27	1953	Y	Vilnius	June 1972
Rimantas D.	1972-12-21	1955		Kaunas	Late July/early August 1972
Rimantas M.	1972-07-24	1955		Siauliai	
Rimantas S.	1973-05-14	1955		Vilnius	November 1972
Rita S.	1973-02-07	1957		Kaunas	Late May 1972
Robertas Č.	1972-12-14	1957		Kaunas	Mid-June 1972
Robertas N.	1972-12-21	1955		Kaunas	June or July 1972
Romanas J.	1973-05-03	1956		Radviliškis	1973 April 22
Romas J.	1972-12-21	1956		Kaunas	Early December 1972
Romualdas Bar.	1973-02-16	1955		Elektriniai	End of January 1973
Romualdas Ber.	1972-07-11	1955		Siauliai	July 1972
Romualdas V.	1972-07-12	1945		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Rosalija G.	1972-10-18			Akmenė	October 1972
Sigitas B.	1973-01-23	1955		Šilutė	October 1972
Silva G.	1972-10-17			Akmenė	1972 September 29
Silva J.	1972-07-14	1950	Y	Siauliai	June 1972
Stanislovas B.	1973-09-19	1938		Vilnius	July or August 1972
Stasė D.	1972-07-13	1948		Kaunas	June 1972
Stasė M.	1972-10-17			Akmenė	1972 September 29
Stasys Ž.		1955		Siauliai	
Steponas Z.	1972-06-22	1955		Siauliai	
Teofilija R.	1972-08-17	1929	CPSU	Kuršėnai	June 1972
Vaclavas M.	1973-05-13	1953		Vilnius	
Vaclovas G.	1972-06-13	1954		Vaišvydava	
Vera Z.	1972-07-12	1943		Kaunas	1972 June 4
Veronika L.	1972-07-14	1952		Kaunas	June 1972
Vida D.	1973-02-06	1950	Y	Kaunas	May 1972
Vida I.	1972-07-25	1952		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Vida J.	1973-02-21	1959		Šilutė	End of August
Vidmantas V.	1973-03-28	1955		Pasvalys	

Vilgelmas G.	1973-02-16	1955		Elektriniai	
Vilius B.	1972-12-20	1955		Kaunas	End of July 1972
Vincas V.	1972-07-20	1931	CPSU	Kaunas	1972 June 14
Violeta L.	1973-05-15	1955		Rokškis	
Violeta T.	1973-04-28	1958			End of June 1972
Virginija K.	1973-02-14			Elektriniai	1972 June
Virginija Mar.	1972-06-21	1952		Siauliai	1972 June 20
Virginija Mat.	1972-08-21	1953		Siauliai	1972 July 7
Virginija Mel.	1972-07-28	1951	Y	Kaunas	1972 June
Virginija S.	1972-08-17	1954		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Vita J.	1972-09-07	1951	Y	Kaunas	Late May/early June 1972
Vita K.	1973-11-06			Klaipeda	August 1973
Vytas K.	1972-07-08	1952		Kaunas	End of June 1972
Vytautas V.	1972-06-21	1954	Y	Siauliai	1972 June 14
Vytautas Z.	1972-09-07	1954		Kaunas	Early June 1972
Zigmas J.	1973-01-20	1955		Šilutė	
Zita G.	1972-07-11	1952		Kaunas	End of June 1972
Zita K.	1972-07-28	1951	Y	Karmelava	End of May 1972
Zita P.	1973-02-06	1932		Kaunas	May 1972
Zita Ž.	1972-09-05	1951	Y	Kaunas	End of May/early June 1972
Zofija K.	1972-12-14	1953	Y	Kaunas	Summer 1972

CHAPTER 5: *YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION*
COMPLEXITIES OF COMMEMORATION IN POST-SOVIET LITHUANIA³⁶³

The 2002 declaration of May 14 as a national memorial day by the Seimas, Lithuania's parliament, demonstrates the contested nature of Kalanta's act in post-Soviet Lithuania. While Kalanta's self-immolation continued to be framed in nationalist terms, the attempt to reify the Lithuanian nation by establishing an institutional memory of his act and the ensuing street demonstrations through a national memorial day were unsuccessful. Brubaker argues that nationalizing post-Soviet states would continue to define their identity as national rather than civic except where imposed externally³⁶⁴. However, as the Lithuanian case demonstrates, this framework does not take into sufficient account the capacity for multiple identities to be at play in "nation as practice." In its consideration of a bill to establish May 14 as a national memorial day, the Lithuanian parliament changed the designation from "Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day" to "Civil Resistance Day." By renaming the May 14 national memorial day, the Seimas institutionalized perceived universal values of citizenship rather than national identity as a result of internal debates that could not be resolved through a nationalist version of the events. While not explicit in the parliamentary debates, Lithuania's active process of accession to the European Union in 2002 likely had a strong influence on the desire to present a civic rather than solely nationalist interpretation of the events that occurred thirty years earlier. However, the externally imposed "democratic conditionality"³⁶⁵ of the EU accession process is not a sufficient explanation for the choice to

³⁶³ The Beatles, "You Say You Want a Revolution," released 1968.

³⁶⁴ Brubaker.

³⁶⁵ Geoffrey Pridham, "The European Union, Democratic Conditionality and Transnational Party Linkages: The Case of Eastern Europe," in *Democracy without Borders: Transnationalisation and Conditionality in New Democracies*, ed. Jean Grugel, (London: Routledge, 1999). Pridham defines the EU's institutionalized and deliberate actions to promote democratization in Eastern Europe, especially as part of the accession process, as "democratic conditionality."

institutionalize a civic rather than national holiday on May 14. The parliamentary debates provide evidence that other identities, such as religious identity, as well as contemporary social concerns over suicide, vied with national identity as the most important aspect to promote through a national memorial day. Additionally, competing nationalist narratives, such as the importance of individual versus collective sacrifice on behalf of the nation, made it difficult to establish a shared national narrative of the events of May 1972.

FROM UNDERGROUND HERO TO PUBLIC HERO

Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*, introduced in 1985, allowed previously suppressed subject matter to be brought into public discussions. In the LiSSR, there was a groundswell of discussion about Lithuania's experience in the Soviet Union, including the legality of Lithuania's annexation, the existence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact secret protocols, and the deportations that occurred in 1941 and again in the immediate post-war years. The interpretation of Kalanta as a national hero was immediately visible once Soviet control of historical narratives in Lithuania began to loosen. Commemorations occurred as early as 1989 at the former Kalanta home, at the cemetery where Kalanta was buried and at the square where he committed suicide. At the same time, the emerging independence movement incorporated commemorations of Kalanta's self-immolation into its activities. In these early commemorations, three themes are evident – the dilemma of suicide, the role of individual versus collective sacrifice, and a narrative of national resistance to Soviet rule. In 2002, on the 30th anniversary of Kalanta's self-immolation, attempts were made to institutionalize Kalanta's act within official public memory.

While it is not clear exactly how early Lithuanians began to commemorate Kalanta's self-immolation publicly under *glasnost*, by 1989 his act was being publicly commemorated in front of the former Kalanta family home, at his gravesite, and at the site of Kalanta's suicide on Laisvės Alėja.³⁶⁶ These early "vernacular" commemorations appear to have had two purposes. The first goal of the early commemorative activities was the rehabilitation of Kalanta as an individual. The 1989 documentary film *Fontano Vaikai [Children of the Fountain]* by Raimundas Banionis, which was shown on Soviet Lithuanian television the following year, began with film footage of people collecting signatures on Laisvės Alėja for a petition asking the local prosecutor to reconsider the diagnosis of "schizophrenic" given to Kalanta and instead to recognize his self-immolation as an act of protest against the Soviet regime.³⁶⁷ The second purpose of early commemorative activities was personal remembrance by those who participated in the popular unrest in 1972. In my interviews, several individuals spoke about going to gravesite to honor Kalanta on the day of his self-immolation. According to these respondents, people who had participated in the street demonstrations began gathering openly at the cemetery in the late 1980s.³⁶⁸ Kaunas was not the only location of commemorative events honoring Kalanta at that time. About 100 people attended a

³⁶⁶ The 1990 commemorations at the Kalanta family home are described in Leonas Peleckis, "Tariu karštyje tirpstanti sakini," *Atgimimas*, May 12, 1990, 3; and the 1992 event is listed under "Events of the Week" in "Lietuva per savaitę ivykiai," *Atgimimas* May 17, 1992, 2. There is no coverage of the earliest commemorations in the Kaunas daily newspaper.

³⁶⁷ *Fontano vaikai [Children of the Fountain]*, directed by Raimundas Banionis, produced 1989. The term "children of the fountain" refers to young people, particularly hippies, who hung out by a fountain in front of the Kaunas Musical Theater in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The film includes interviews with people who knew Kalanta, the Kalanta family, and actors and directors who were working at the musical theater at the time of Kalanta's self-immolation.

³⁶⁸ Janušaitis (Kaunas; February 2, 2011). Interview with author; Varnas (Kaunas; February 7, 2011). Interview with author.

commemoration in Alytus, Kalanta's birthplace, on May 14, 1989.³⁶⁹ That same day, an unidentified youth organization organized a rally, called "Young People's Living Sacrifice."³⁷⁰

Kalanta's self-immolation was also incorporated from the start into an emerging public narrative of resistance to Soviet rule in Lithuania. On May 13-14, 1989, representatives from the Lithuanian popular front Sajūdis and the popular fronts of Estonia and Latvia met in Tallinn for the first Baltic Assembly. The assembly passed a resolution calling for the future independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the meantime, they insisted on the democratization of the Soviet Union and the recognition of Stalinist crimes against the people of the Baltic republics. The second day of this significant gathering, Sunday, May 14, began with a moment of silence to honor Romas Kalanta on the seventeenth anniversary of his death.³⁷¹ By doing so, the Lithuanian popular front identified his suicide as part of the struggle for national liberation. Commemorations of Kalanta's act themselves became a symbol of resistance to the Soviet regime. The 1989 Vilnius rally was later listed as a key event in the independence movement in an English language publication produced by Sajūdis in 1990.³⁷²

In early commemorations of Kalanta's act, Lithuanians did not shy away from reference to the form of Kalanta's suicide. Kalanta was frequently referred to as the "torch of freedom" and the use of "fire" language was common in newspaper articles describing the events of May 1989. A photo of the 1989 youth rally featured young people holding a sign that says "The fiery torch of

³⁶⁹ Romualdas Launikonis, "Tylos minutė, kurioje tilpo visos Romo Kalantos gyvenimas," *Alytaus Naujienos*, 2000 May 16. The article includes a photo of the 1989 commemoration.

³⁷⁰ Loreta Podenaitė, "Jaunuomenės gyvoji auka," *Atgimimas*, May 23, 1989, 8.

³⁷¹ Virgilijus Čepaitis, *Su Sajūdžiu už Lietuvą: Nuo 1988 06 03 Iki 1990 03 11* (Vilnius: Tverme, 2007), 24.

³⁷² *Lithuanian Way I*, (Vilnius: Lithuanian Reform Movement Sajūdis, 1990), 36.

Romas Kalanta lit the way to liberty.”³⁷³ A commemorative concert held in the Kaunas Sports Hall in 1992 was called “The Torch of Freedom.” Kalanta’s death was recognized as a subversive act against the Soviet regime and the form of subversion – suicide by burning – was not presented as problematic. At the same time, commemorations such as the youth rally appear to have emphasized Kalanta’s role in inspiring others to engage in a living sacrifice for the cause of freedom. In doing so, they acknowledged the political defiance of Kalanta’s self-immolation, while not limiting subversive action to suicide.

A tension between Kalanta’s self-immolation as an act of individual sacrifice and his role in a larger act of protest against Soviet rule was evident from the beginning. At the rally “Young People’s Living Sacrifice” in 1989, leaders of various youth organizations, historians and others spoke about the “causes of the 1972 tragedy” and demanded an end to obligatory military service. A resolution naming May 14 “Lithuanian Youth Day” was adopted by the group.³⁷⁴ While the event commemorated Kalanta’s individual act, the name of the event, the resolution to declare May 14 “Lithuanian Youth Day” and the emphasis on ending military conscription demonstrate that Kalanta’s self-immolation was interpreted as an example of youth activism and part of a collective struggle. Local commemorations emphasizing a youth cultural identity rather than a national identity for the events occurred immediately after Lithuania became independent. In May 1992, a concert called “The Torch of Freedom” was held at the Kaunas Sports Hall. The 20th anniversary concert, sponsored by the newspaper *Lietuvos Rytas* [Lithuanian Morning] and local businesses, featured jazz musicians, rock bands and the beloved Lithuanian folk-rock singer Vytautas

³⁷³ Podenaitė, 8.

³⁷⁴ Podenaitė, 8.

Kernagis.³⁷⁵ A number of youth rock bands from the late 1960s and early 1970s reformed in 2002 for a rock concert commemorating the 30th anniversary at the club “Combo.”³⁷⁶

A number of official events that reflected the diversity of interpretive elements attached to Kalanta’s act, including narratives of both Lithuanian nationalism and “Sixties” youth culture, were held in Kaunas in 2002.³⁷⁷ President Valdas Adamkus spoke at a gathering in front of the Liberty statue and then led a procession along Laisvės Alėja, now a pedestrian street, to the Kaunas Musical Theater. Music by The Beatles was played during the ceremony. The event ended with a performance entitled “Liberty’s Sacrifice” by a Kaunas dance theater group. Exhibits of photographs and documents related to Romas Kalanta and the youth demonstrations were on display at the Kaunas Regional Archives, the Vincas Kudirka library, the Ninth Fort Museum, a local restaurant and other locations in the city.³⁷⁸ Additionally, Vytautas Magnus University held a conference, *Kaunas 1972: Alternative Culture, Political Protest and Cultural Resistance*, on May 14-15, 2002.³⁷⁹ A key thirtieth anniversary commemoration – legislation that declared May 14 “Civil Resistance Day” – will serve as a case study of attempts to assign official meaning to Kalanta’s act and how these attempts to create public memory of the events of 1972 were contested. The three themes seen in earlier commemorations (the dilemma of suicide, the role of individual versus collective sacrifice, and a narrative of national resistance to Soviet rule), however, served to

³⁷⁵ An ad for the event was in the May 13, 1992 issue of *Lietuvos Rytas*

³⁷⁶ The newspaper *Kauno Diena* [*Kaunas Day*] had a two-page spread of photographs from the event in the May 23, 2002 issue.

³⁷⁷ The narratives of youth culture will be addressed in the next chapter.

³⁷⁸ “Kaune pagerbtas R. Kalantos atminimas,” *Baltic News Service*, May 15, 2002; Rokas M. Tracevskis, “Anti-Soviet Rebellion Remembered,” *The Baltic Times*, May 23, 2001.

³⁷⁹ *Kaunas 1972: alternatyvoji kultūra, politinis protestas ir kultūrinė rezistencija*. The conference papers were published in a special issue of the journal *Kauno istorijos mestrastis*. vol. 4 (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas, 2003).

complicate attempts to formalize Kalanta's place in the national narrative of a renewed independent Lithuania.

ESTABLISHING MAY 14 AS A NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY

Nationalizing elites in post-Soviet Lithuania have sought to recognize historical events that had not been recognized during the Soviet period or were perceived as being distorted by the Soviets. Often these also serve to provide evidence of the existence of a Lithuanian national consciousness within the Soviet Union and its resistance to Soviet rule. The Seimas' designation in the 1990s of national memorial days related to events during the Soviet period served to create an institutional memory for independent Lithuania. The May 14 national holiday also demonstrated how "nation" was practiced in post-Soviet Lithuania.³⁸⁰ June 14, the date of mass deportations of Lithuanian citizens by the Soviets in 1941, was designated as Occupation and Genocide Day [*Okupacijos ir genocido diena*]. January 13, the date on which Soviet troops attempted to seize the television tower in Vilnius in 1991, was designated as Defenders of Freedom Day [*Laisvės gynėjų diena*]. These acts of institutional memory served to reify the nation by identifying moments in which the idea of the Lithuanian nation "becomes momentarily yet powerfully realized in practice."³⁸¹ The events of May 1972, however, proved to be less conducive to a distinct realization of Lithuanian national identity, as was apparent in parliamentary debates over the May 14 national memorial day.

³⁸⁰ Brubaker. Religious holidays, such as Christmas Day, Easter and All Saints Day, also received recognition as legal state holidays.

³⁸¹ Brubaker, 16.

Debates in the Lithuanian parliament regarding a 2002 bill to honor Romas Kalanta with a national memorial day revealed the unstable meaning and contested nature of his personal act in contemporary Lithuanian society. Initially introduced into the Seimas as Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day [*Romo Kalantos aukos diena*], the memorial day was adopted as Civil Resistance Day [*Pilietinio pasipriešinimo diena*]. The renaming of the national holiday through the process of parliamentary consideration demonstrated the challenges of establishing official narratives of the Soviet experience in post-Soviet Lithuania. It also underscored social issues faced by Lithuanian society at the turn of the century.

In their consideration of May 14 as a national memorial day, parliamentarians sought to determine what meaning Kalanta's death should have a decade after renewed independence. Some believed that Kalanta should be viewed as a national hero and part of a narrative of a Lithuanian struggle for national liberation from the Soviet regime. Some wanted his act and the ensuing popular unrest to represent a human rights struggle carried out according to the ideal of civil resistance. And others were concerned that Kalanta's suicide was a negative example for contemporary Lithuanian youth. The question of whether Kalanta's death could hold multiple meanings and still remain a significant symbol was implicit within these debates. At stake were the ways in which Lithuanians chose to view themselves, both during the Soviet period and in the post-Soviet world.

Over a three week period from April 18 to May 7, 2002, the Seimas and two of its committees discussed the establishment of a national holiday to honor Romas Kalanta. On April 18, 2002, the Commission on Resistance to the Occupation Regime introduced a bill in the Seimas

to establish Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day.³⁸² After initial debate, the bill was approved for further consideration and sent to the Education, Science and Culture Committee for review, which in turn conferred with the Human Rights Committee.³⁸³ The Committee on Human Rights received no testimonies regarding the bill and generated no dissenting opinions. According to its report, the vote was five in favor to recommend adoption of the bill as originally presented ("Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day"), with three abstentions.³⁸⁴ The Education, Science and Culture Committee also heard from two "expert witnesses," the president of the Lithuanian Conference of Bishops and the director of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center.³⁸⁵ Per the committee's recommendation, the bill was renamed "Civil Resistance Day" and reintroduced to the Seimas on May 2, 2002. After further debate on May 2, the amended bill designating May 14 as a national memorial day called "Civil Resistance Day" was adopted on May 7, 2002.³⁸⁶

The transformation from honoring an individual's act to recognizing an abstract principle represented a significant shift in the kind of shared values and past officially promoted by the national holiday. The issues raised in the parliamentary debates on designating May 14 as a national memorial day — the dilemma of suicide, the role of individual and collective sacrifice, and narratives of national resistance to Soviet rule — also appeared in broader discussions in the media in the early

³⁸² "Verbatim Report, Session 24 (220), Statute Nr. XP-1503," April 18, 2002. Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008).

³⁸³ "Verbatim Report, Session 24 (220), Statute Nr. XP-1503," April 18, 2002. The vote was 41 for, 3 against and 12 abstentions to send the bill to committee for further consideration.

³⁸⁴ "Conclusion of Committee, Statute Nr. XP-1503," April 22, 2002. Committee on Human Rights, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008).

³⁸⁵ "Conclusion of Committee, Statute Nr. XP-1503," April 25, 2002. Committee on Education, Science and Culture, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008).

³⁸⁶ "Verbatim Report, Session 30 (226), Statute Nr. XP-1503," May 7, 2002. Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008). The law as adopted was titled *Lietuvos atmintinių dienų įstatymo 1 straipsnio papildymo įstatymas Nr. IX-874*, May 7, 2002.

2000s. The ways in which these themes were variously interpreted and valued contributed to the complexity of commemorating Kalanta's act in institutional memory. Debates centered around whether or not suicide was acceptable, choosing whom to honor for resisting Soviet rule, and what significance the Soviet past should have in contemporary Lithuania.

SACRIFICING FOR THE CAUSE: THE DILEMMA OF SUICIDE

As evidenced by parliamentary debates over a May 14 national memorial day, Kalanta's decision to commit suicide presented religious and social dilemmas and destabilized attempts to interpret his death as a personal sacrifice in Lithuania's struggle for national liberation. The dilemma of suicide was evident from the very moment that the bill was presented for parliamentary discussion. Artūras Vazbys, a member of the Christian Democratic Party, expressed reservations when he introduced the bill on behalf of the Commission on Resistance to the Occupation Regime. He first noted his own contradictory thoughts and feelings about the bill, but stated that he believed it was important for the Seimas to consider how to recognize the events of May 1972 on their thirtieth anniversary. "On one hand, indeed, it is possible to say that by his sacrifice Romas Kalanta began a real stage of resistance to the occupation... On the other hand, the form of his sacrifice raises a real controversy. It is suicide," Vazbys said.³⁸⁷ If the bill were accepted for consideration, he stated, the committee to which it was assigned would need to consider carefully the implications of making the date of Kalanta's self-immolation a national memorial day.

In the ensuing debate, some legislators opposed officially commemorating an act of self-immolation, fearing that it would sanctify suicide in a Catholic country that already had the highest

³⁸⁷ "Verbatim Report, Session 24 (220), Statute Nr. XP-1503", April 18, 2002.

suicide rate in Europe. After the bill was introduced, Stanislovas Buškevičius, a leader of the Young Lithuania party, expressed disapproval of a memorial day honoring Kalanta's act on both social and religious grounds. He pointed out that he himself had participated in the protests as a thirteen-year-old. He expressed support for honoring resistance to the Soviet regime but felt that, even under occupation, suicide was not the best form of resistance.³⁸⁸ Buškevičius questioned whether recognizing a suicide with a national memorial day would send the wrong message to those who were emotionally unstable, a concern that was indicative of suicide as a social problem in Lithuania at that time. In the 1990s, Lithuania had the highest suicide rate in Europe.³⁸⁹ The high rate of suicide continued into the first decade of the 21st century. In 2000, the suicide rate was 75.6 for males and 16.1 for females per 100,000.³⁹⁰ Along with an overall high rate of suicide, immolation continued to be a form of suicide in Lithuania. A 2006 newspaper article on suicide as a form of political protest documented eight self-immolations from 1996 to 2003.³⁹¹

The place of Catholicism in Lithuanian culture and the Catholic Church's proscription against suicide also provided a challenge to honoring Kalanta with a national holiday. According to Catholic doctrine, suicide represents the willful rejection of moral, not just political, authority. Suicide as a form of political protest does not change the Church's view. In strong terms, the Catholic Church states that "If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example,

³⁸⁸ "Verbatim Report, Session 30 (226), Statute Nr. XP-1503", May 7, 2002.

³⁸⁹ Abdonas Tamosiunas, Regina Reklaitiene, Dalia Virviciute and Diana Sopagiene, "Trends in Suicide in a Lithuanian Urban Population over the Period of 1984-2003," *BMC Public Health* 6, no. (2006): 184.

³⁹⁰ "Suicide Rates 2000", World Health Organization www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suiciderates/en/ (accessed April 24, 2008).

³⁹¹ Dainoras Lukas, "Susideginimas kaip politinio protesto forma," *Kauno Diena*, May 15, 2004.

especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal.”³⁹² As Lisa Lieberman has noted “the problem for Christian apologists...was how to distinguish the willful martyrdom of the saint from the cowardly exit of ordinary souls.”³⁹³ This same problem confronted Lithuanian parliamentarians in their consideration of a national memorial day honoring Kalanta as a martyr for the nation. In his comments when the bill was introduced, Buškevičius also questioned whether Vazbys, whom he noted was a Christian, had discussed the bill with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Education, Science and Culture Committee did call the Archbishop of Kaunas Sigitas Tamkevičius to testify on the Catholic Church’s position regarding the memorial day. The Archbishop emphasized that the Catholic Church does not approve of self-immolation as a form of protest, because it views suicide as contrary to Christian teaching. He stated that the Church “supports the idea of sacrificing for ideals and encourages today’s young people, who often encounter great temptations these days, never to choose suicide as a protest, but to have the courage to make sacrifices by fighting against evil.”³⁹⁴ Tamkevičius, however, noted that amending the statute on national memorial days was not within the Lithuanian Catholic Bishops’ purview and would have to be decided by the Seimas. While the Archbishop expressed no direct opinion about commemorating Kalanta’s act, the Catholic Church’s condemnation of suicide was clear in his remarks. A decision by parliament to honor Kalanta would be in contradiction to tenets of the professed faith of a significant portion of the Lithuanian population.

³⁹² “Catechism of the Catholic Church (Second Edition English Translation)”, The Vatican <http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a5.htm> (accessed May 1, 2008).

³⁹³ Lisa Lieberman, *Leaving You: The Cultural Meaning of Suicide* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 25.

³⁹⁴ “Pagrindinio komiteto išvada dėl Lietuvos Respublikos atmintinių dienų įstatymo 1 straipsnio papildymo įstatymo Projekto Nr. XP-1503,” April 24, 2002. Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008). According to the Kaunas Diocesan archives, the Catholic Church in Lithuania has made no official pronouncements on Kalanta’s self-immolation.

The Catholic understanding of suicide as subversive act of the will paradoxically supports interpretations of Kalanta's death as a political act. The choice to kill one's self can be interpreted as a heroic act against oppression rather than as an act of rebellion against an accepted norm. In contrast to the Catholic view of suicide, Lieberman asserted that "an appreciation of the disruptive potential of self-destruction, the power of individuals to use death as a weapon in order to undermine the authority of states or to bring into question the cherished values of societies and institutions, pervades Western tradition."³⁹⁵ Yet, this tradition of the power of self-accomplished death to undermine authority – evident in the portrayal of Kalanta as a national hero – framed suicide more broadly as an act of protest.

Unlike concepts of suicide as subversive acts of the will, modern views of suicide as medical pathology diminish the role of individual agency. While acknowledging that many suicides may be related to mental illness and only a few are explicitly political acts, Susan Morrissey argued that modern Western societies have pathologized suicide, removing from it the element of ethical choice.³⁹⁶ A leading Lithuanian historian, Arvydas Anušauskas, analyzed KGB investigation files and interviewed the families and acquaintances of the men who immolated themselves in the wake of Kalanta's suicide. His work represents a desire to distinguish between those deaths that were pathological and those that were political, thereby rejecting the ambiguity of suicide.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Lieberman, 7.

³⁹⁶ Susan K. Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

³⁹⁷ Lukas. Also Arvydas Anušauskas (Vilnius; January 13, 2009). Interview with author. Although the article said that twelve self-immolations followed Kalanta's suicide, Anušauskas stated that there were thirteen – the same number used by Dalia Kuodytė in her testimony before the Seimas committee. The KGB investigation files designated each of the men as either alcoholics or mentally ill. Anušauskas concluded that none of these cases represented a political protest against the Soviet regime.

This dichotomy between political protest and medical pathology complicated commemorations of Kalanta's self-immolation by raising questions about the motivation for his act. In 1972, a psychiatric commission declared that Kalanta was suffering from schizophrenia. A second psychiatric commission, formed in 1989 by the Kaunas Prosecutor's Office to reconsider the evidence from the initial investigation of his suicide, determined that Kalanta was not suffering from schizophrenia. Dainius Pūras, director of the Child Psychiatry and Social Pediatrics Center at Vilnius University, headed the 1989 commission. In an interview in 2007, Pūras did not reject the possibility that Kalanta may have suffered from depression. Instead he argued that mental illness did not preclude intentionality, allowing illness and agency to exist simultaneously. Pūras explained that he did not condemn the conclusions of the 1972 commission. He noted that Kalanta's family and friends insisted at the time that he was not involved in political activities, which strengthened the psychiatrists' opinion that his act was not a political protest. He also acknowledged that, despite the 1989 commission's conclusion, some people have chosen to believe that Kalanta was mentally unstable when he immolated himself.

Along with acknowledging ambiguity in Kalanta's act of suicide, Pūras attempted to transform Kalanta's act from an example of taking one's life to an example of how to live one's life by focusing on the purpose rather than the form of his act. Pūras expressed his opinion that it was wrong to focus on whether Kalanta was "crazy or a hero." He used Joan of Arc as an example, pointing out that the French have not established a psychiatric commission to evaluate her mental state. Instead, he noted that the psychological state and the ideals that might cause someone to commit suicide need not be mutually exclusive. Pūras stated his position that "Romas Kalanta's sacrifice was an example so that the next generation of Lithuanians would have the opportunity to build a Lithuania that wasn't self-destroying but self-creating. Romas Kalanta grasped that the

totalitarian regime was exhausted and he made up his mind to sacrifice himself as a contribution to the liberation of Lithuania.” Pūras asserted that this should not encourage others to commit suicide, but rather to “live out Kalanta’s dream.” He argued that simply establishing an independent state was not sufficient and that Lithuanians must continue to leave behind the effects of a totalitarian regime on society and to continue towards the true freedom that Kalanta died for. This, Pūras believed, gave Kalanta’s death meaning.³⁹⁸

By focusing on suicide as religiously subversive or as a social ill, parliamentarians who expressed concerns about honoring Romas Kalanta with a national memorial day contested the interpretation of national sacrifice assigned by others to his self-immolation. Additionally, modern medical views of mental illness as the cause of suicide cast doubt on Kalanta’s motives and created instability in the interpretation of his death as a political act. The dichotomy of pathological versus political, however, was reframed by the psychiatrist Dainus Pūras. His assertion that Kalanta’s possible mental state did not detract from the political meaning and consequences of his act both challenged Catholic views on suicide and allowed for Kalanta’s death to hold multiple meanings. Other members of the Seimas believed that the Soviet context outweighed concerns over the method of resistance. Viktoras Rinkevičius of the Peasant Party, spoke in favor of the bill. He stated that “Perhaps the form of sacrifice is debatable; however, at that time, the conditions were such that it was not always possible to choose forms of protest. It is possible to say that this deed really brought a lot of good to the Lithuanian nation.”³⁹⁹ The dilemma of suicide, however, was not the only complication in commemorating Kalanta’s self-immolation as act worthy of national commemoration.

³⁹⁸ Mindaugas Jackevičius, “D. Pūras: R. Kalantos žygis dar tik prasidėjęs,” *DELFI*, May 13, 2007.

³⁹⁹ “Verbatim Report, Session 30 (226), Statute Nr. XP-1503”, May 7, 2002.

HONORING THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE NATION

Several parliamentarians the uniqueness of Kalanta's act, pointing out that many Lithuanians lost their lives under the Soviet regime and many were killed resisting Soviet rule. In fact, all of the other national memorial days established after independence recognized either categories of people (such as deportees) or groups (such as the eleven people killed by Soviet troops on January 13, 1991). In the initial debates, Povilas Jakučionis, a member of the Lithuanian Conservative Party, supported honoring Kalanta despite the issue of suicide, but also proposed expanding the meaning of the national holiday. "Would you not agree," he appealed, "that the meaning of this sacrifice, for all its controversy, can be extracted so that the day would recognize not only R. Kalanta and this means of protest, but all the sacrifices for the homeland, including, of course, Romas Kalanta?"⁴⁰⁰ When the bill was re-introduced, Jakučionis again argued that the events of May 1972, while instigated by Kalanta, represented collective rather than solely individual resistance to Soviet rule.

...the day of Romas Kalanta's sacrifice was a significant impulse for the new development of unarmed resistance to the Soviet occupation, especially among youth, high school students, school children and university students. A strong wave of resistance actions rose up. This is evident from the fact that in the spring 1972, the KGB arrested and interrogated more than 400 persons....⁴⁰¹

Jakučionis advocated a national memorial day that would honor not just Kalanta, but all those who had sacrificed themselves to resist Soviet rule by focusing on the participants of the street demonstrations rather than on the individual act.

⁴⁰⁰ "Verbatim Report, Session 24 (220), Statute Nr. XP-1503", April 18, 2002.

⁴⁰¹ "Verbatim Report, Seimas Session 28 (224), Statute Nr. XP-1503," May 2, 2002. Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius. (accessed Spring 2008).

Kalanta's death, then, becomes meaningful not as a personal sacrifice but as an instigator of popular action. Many post-1990 accounts of May 1972 have portrayed Kalanta's self-immolation as a catalyst for collective youth protest. An article published on May 10, 2006 declared "At the epicenter of these events, without a doubt, was Romas Kalanta's self-immolation.... However, the real hero of history was that year's most rebellious Lithuanian youth."⁴⁰² Historian Juozapas Baguškauskas called Kalanta's self-immolation "the most vivid example of self-sacrifice for Lithuania's liberty." He continued, "in the battle for Lithuania's liberty, there was no lack of examples of courage or tenacity. Each university or secondary school student who became a member of an underground organization or a supporter of the partisans risked not only his own liberty but also his life." Still, he believed that Kalanta's death served as a unique inspiration for activism by young people. Despite the suppression of youth organizations after the events of May 1972, Baguškauskas asserted that "a wave of passive resistance rippled across Lithuania. Young people organized annual memorials of Romas Kalanta's death and circulated poems and proclamations...mass youth demonstrations showed growing youth opposition to the regime."⁴⁰³

The contested nature of suicide and of honoring an individual act only became an issue as parliamentarians attempted to institutionalize the meaning of Kalanta's act through a national memorial day. The Lithuanian state has recognized a number of individuals for their acts of resistance to Soviet rule, primarily by awarding the Order of the Cross of Vytis. This presidential medal is "conferred on persons for acts of bravery performed in defending the freedom and independence of the Republic of Lithuania."⁴⁰⁴ In 2002, President Valdas Adamkus posthumously

⁴⁰² "Kaune bus minimas 1972-ųjų pavasaris," *DELFI*, May 10, 2006.

⁴⁰³ Baguškauskas, 297-298.

⁴⁰⁴ "Order of the Cross of Vytis (the Knight)", President of the Republic of Lithuania Web Site http://adamkus.president.lt/ordinai/vkordinas_e.phtml (accessed April 21, 2008).

awarded the Order of the Cross of Vytis (1st Degree) to Kalanta. In his remarks at the 30th commemoration event in Kaunas, the president emphasized Kalanta's role as a national hero engaged in the struggle for Lithuania's freedom. He declared that "in 1972 in Kaunas, the living torch awakened a longing for the nation's liberty." Kalanta, he stated, "resisted the heavy Soviet force with the courage and desire for justice of youth."⁴⁰⁵

NARRATIVES OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE

Despite concerns about honoring one individual with a national memorial day, Kalanta's self-immolation has been consistently incorporated into a narrative of Lithuanian national resistance to Soviet rule. In his comments during both of the parliamentary debates on the bill, Jakučionis emphasized that Kalanta's act was connected with other acts of resistance. On the first day, he called Kalanta's self-immolation "the beginning of a new stage, a new upsurge of resistance to the occupiers."⁴⁰⁶ He later asserted that Kalanta's act was being honored even before the end of Soviet rule: "From 1973 to 1988 until the waves of the new movement for liberation, May 14 was referred to as connected to the underground activities and the sacrifice of Romas Kalanta was honored."⁴⁰⁷ According to Jakučionis, therefore, the establishment of a national memorial day named for Kalanta would institutionalize a form of commemoration that had been occurring in the vernacular even during the Soviet period.

⁴⁰⁵ "Kaune pagerbtas R. Kalantos atminimas."

⁴⁰⁶ "Verbatim Report, Session 24 (220), Statute Nr. XP-1503", April 18, 2002.

⁴⁰⁷ "Verbatim Report, Seimas Session 28 (224), Statute Nr. XP-1503", May 2, 2002.

Indeed in most articulations of public memory in post-Soviet Lithuania, it is the connection between Kalanta's individual act and the collective struggle for national liberation that gives his death meaning. In this narrative, presented through museums, textbooks and public events, Kalanta's act has been directly linked to the street demonstrations that followed it and to the broader context of Lithuanian resistance to Soviet rule. The Museum of Genocide Victims includes photos of Romas Kalanta and of youth demonstrating in the streets in Kaunas in 1972 in the final section of its permanent exhibit "Popular Anti-Soviet Resistance in 1954-1991."⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, the Lithuanian history textbook for the 11th and 12th grades in use in 2000 included Kalanta and the ensuing popular unrest in a section entitled "Resistance to the Soviet Regime: Manifestations of Mass Resistance."⁴⁰⁹ Commemorative events have also placed Kalanta's act into a narrative of national resistance. On February 16, 2008, an event marking the 90th anniversary of Lithuania's 1918 declaration of independence from the Russian empire was held at the Vilnius Cathedral. Called "Lithuania. Nine Steps," it celebrated nine actions that led to the Lithuania's current status as an independent country. The nine steps identified by the organizers were "the 1918 declaration establishing the state, the Lithuanian partisan war against Soviet occupation, Romas Kalanta's sacrifice, Sąjūdis in Lithuania, the Baltic Way, March 11, January 13, and acceptance into the European Union."⁴¹⁰ The ninth step was that year's commemorative event.

⁴⁰⁸ *The Museum of Genocide Victims: A Guide to the Exhibitions*, (Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2006), 69.

⁴⁰⁹ Rustis Kamuntavičius, *Lietuvos istorija 11-12 Klasems* (Vilnius: Vaca, 2000).

⁴¹⁰ "Vasario 16-ąją LKN žiūrovai devyniais žingsniais keliaus per istoriją," *DELFI*, February 8, 2008. Sąjūdis was formed as a popular front to support reform under Gorbachev and eventually became an independence movement. The Baltic Way was a human chain stretching from Estonia through Latvia to Lithuania on August 23, 1989 to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic declared independence from the Soviet Union on March 11, 1990. On January 13, 1991, Soviet troops attempted to take control of the Lithuanian parliament building and the television tower in Vilnius. Fourteen people were killed by Soviet troops.

Leaders of Sąjūdis, the Lithuanian independence movement, also presented Kalanta's death as part of a broad lineage of opposition. In his memoir, Virgilijus Čepaitis described Kalanta's "sacrifice" as one of the key ways in which opposition to the Soviet regime was manifested, along with *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church*, "underground activities...and the creation of influential groups of Moscow dissidents."⁴¹¹ Čepaitis then included Lithuanian acts of opposition to Soviet rule in a broader lineage of East European opposition to Communist rule that included the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring in 1968 and Solidarity in Poland in 1980-1981. Romualdas Ozolas, another Sąjūdis leader, credited Romas Kalanta's self-immolation and the establishment of an organized Catholic dissident movement with beginning an era of civil resistance that culminated in the first public demonstration in Lithuania marking the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on August 23, 1987. He compared Lithuanian youth who demonstrated in Kaunas in 1972 with Czech young people who took to the streets four years earlier.⁴¹² In the second volume of his journals, he once again cited Romas Kalanta's death as one of the key acts that defined a new type of opposition to Soviet rule—dissident activity and popular demonstrations.⁴¹³ Historians have similarly used Kalanta's act as a defining moment of resistance. In his book on youth activism in Lithuania during the Soviet period, Juozopas Bagušauskas stated that

A new stage of resistance started at the beginning of the decade of the 1970s...This time period, which began with the appearance of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* on March 19, 1972 and the sacrifice of Romas Kalanta on May 14, 1972, was crowned by the

⁴¹¹ Čepaitis, 13. The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* began publication in March 1972. Founded by a group of Catholic dissidents, the purpose of the underground publication was to inform the Vatican and the West in general of the repression of the Catholic Church in Lithuania by the Soviet regime.

⁴¹² Ozolas, *Atgimimo istorijos*, 17,

⁴¹³ Romualdas Ozolas, *Išsivadavimas: 1971-1984 metų asmeninio dvasinio gyvenimo štrichai* (Vilnius: Pradai, 1998), 12.

events of 1988-1990, which ended with the re-establishment of an independent state of Lithuania.⁴¹⁴

Although some parliamentarians were concerned about honoring an individual person, some public narratives of Kalanta's act have clearly positioned him as representative of collective resistance in Soviet Lithuania.

Kalanta's death has been presented as the initiator of a new phase of opposition within Lithuania. In these conceptualizations of resistance in Lithuania, the first phase was the post-war armed opposition to the Soviet occupation, which was suppressed by 1953. The "Thaw" that followed Stalin's death sparked hopes of changing the system from within; however, that optimism was crushed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.⁴¹⁵ This "new" phase, which supposedly began in 1972, was launched by Kalanta's self-immolation, the ensuing street demonstrations, and the first publication of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. Yet despite constant referrals to a "new stage" of opposition, it is not fully evident that the period of 1972 to the mid-1980s was characterized by wide-spread resistance to Soviet rule. A 1992 newspaper article described the events of 1972 as different from the preceding forms of protest because of the mass participation (as opposed to individual acts of protest that occurred in the 1960s).⁴¹⁶ While the number of active dissidents increased during this time period, their activities were primarily conducted by individuals or small groups. Catholic dissidents did instigate several large-scale acts of protest through the use of mass petitions to Soviet leaders and international organizations in 1971, 1973 and 1979 on behalf of the rights of Catholics within Lithuania.⁴¹⁷ However, other than popular unrest that followed two

⁴¹⁴ Bagušauskas, 24.

⁴¹⁵ See Chapter 1 for an analysis of de-Stalinization in Soviet Lithuania.

⁴¹⁶ Vytautas Tininis, "1972 metai gegužė: sudrebinusi Lietuva [May 1972, Lithuania Shook]" *Lietuvos Rytas* May 13, 1992.

⁴¹⁷ Misiunas and Taagepera, 225. Also Vardys, 144-147.

sporting events in Vilnius in 1977, there were no other significant incidents of mass protest on the streets in Lithuania prior to 1987.⁴¹⁸ The idea that 1972 was a turning point in Lithuanian resistance of Soviet rule occurs frequently despite the lack of direct links between Kalanta's act and other forms of protest against Soviet rule that also began in 1972.

FROM ANTI-SOVIET TO CIVIL RESISTANCE

In its consideration of the May 14 national memorial day, the Seimas transformed the meaning of Kalanta's self-immolation from an individual act of protest against the Soviet regime to an example of the ideal of civil resistance. Members of the Education, Science and Culture Committee proposed changing the title of the May 14 national memorial day to Civil Resistance Day. In her testimony before the committee, Director of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center Dalia Kuodytė expressed the opinion that historical data would support calling May 14 "Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day," "Civil Protest Day" or "Nonviolent Civil Resistance Day." She asserted that "Romas Kalanta's act on May 14, 1972, had an enormous influence on Lithuania's youth" and initiated a "wave of nonviolent civil resistance" that was directly connected to his death.⁴¹⁹ When the bill was reintroduced to the Seimas, Rolandas Pavilionis, chair of the Education, Science and Culture Committee, compared the street demonstrations that followed Kalanta's self-immolation to examples of civil resistance on behalf of national liberty and human rights in other countries. He stated that, by renaming the memorial day, the committee wished to recognize civil resistance in general rather than one particular act. Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, member of the

⁴¹⁸ The KGB division of the Special Archives of Lithuania does not have files for 1959-1980 from the Vilnius City Section of the KGB. According to archivists, these files were may have been destroyed or sent to Moscow.

⁴¹⁹ *Pagrindinio komiteto išvada del Lietuvos Respublikos atmintiniu dienu istatymo 1 straipsnio papildymo istatymo projekto Nr. XP-1503*, April 24, 2002.

Seimas and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, spoke out on behalf of the committee's recommendation. Andriukaitis first stated that he himself had participated in the protests in Kaunas and believed in their importance as popular resistance to the Soviet regime. He asserted, however, that the memorial day should honor the ethos of acts of civil resistance because it represented a political maturity on the part of the citizenry.

After the bill was re-introduced, Jakučionis proposed an alternative title, "Unarmed Resistance to Soviet Occupation Day," which grounded the ideal of civic resistance in the Lithuanian historical experience, allowing for both national and civic values. He opposed the more generic title and asserted that it was exactly the specificity of May 14 that made the day important. Jakučionis argued that the committee's recommendation of "Civil Resistance Day" was so general that neither the subject, nor the participants, nor the aims of resistance was understandable. His attempt to integrate national and civic narratives was not adopted by his fellow parliamentarians. After review by two parliamentary committees and two opportunities for debate, the Seimas approved the designation of May 14 as called Civil Resistance Day.

CHALLENGING THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE OF RESISTANCE

Public debates on the impact of the Soviet system on Lithuanian society have questioned the dominant discourse of a culture of resistance to Soviet rule in Lithuania. The designation of May 14 as a Lithuanian national memorial day is one example of debates by East European elites about the Communist past that have played out in a number of political, judicial and cultural spaces. In many cases, these discussions have decried the "unfinished revolution" and sought ways to overcome the

remnants of the Communist past in contemporary society.⁴²⁰ While some focused their attention on purging former Communists from positions of political power, others emphasized the need to purge society itself of a totalitarian mentality.

The events surrounding Kalanta's self-immolation have figured into considerations of the everyday lived experience of Lithuanians during the Soviet period, most of whom were not involved in active opposition to the regime. In the introduction to each volume of Soviet-era journals published in the 1990s, Ozolas reflected on what he called an "occupation mentality" and the ways in which Lithuanians were able to resist or chose to accommodate Soviet rule.⁴²¹ Historian Egidijus Aleksandravičius has asserted that historians in newly independent Lithuania have neglected studying the Soviet period after the suppression of the armed opposition by 1953 because they do not want to have to face issues of accommodation. In the book *Romo Kalantos Auka* [Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice], Aleksandravičius called on scholars to address how resistance to Soviet rule is defined and analyzed.⁴²² Philosopher Nerija Putinaitė used the May 1972 events as an example of the complexity of resistance and accommodation.

⁴²⁰ In the first post-Soviet elections to parliament in 1992, the independence movement *Sąjūdis* was defeated by the Democratic Labor Party, headed by Algirdas Brazauskas. Brazauskas had been the first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, which renamed itself in the wake of Lithuania's regained independence. Four years later, the Homeland Union—Lithuanian Conservatives, led by Vytautas Landsbergis (the first *Sąjūdis* prime minister) won control of the Seimas, only to be followed in 2000 by Social-Democratic Coalition again led by Brazauskas. The political swings were not unique to post-Soviet Lithuania; indeed they were a trend across post-Communist Eastern Europe. As James Mark describes, "as the 1990s wore on, the idea that the revolution had not been completed grew stronger and provoked many to consider the Communist era as a problematic period that needed to be revisited in order to be fully overcome...anti-Communist nationalist and liberal parties, confronted by the return of ex-Communists to power and the growing realization of the continued strength of former apparatchiks within the economic sphere and state bureaucracy, increasingly invoked the idea of the 'unfinished revolution.'" James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), xiv.

⁴²¹ Ozolas, *Issivadavimas*, 12-13.

⁴²² Egidijus Aleksandravičius, "Laisvės šaukmas: 1972-ieji [Cry of Freedom: 1972]," in *Romo Kalantos auka: 1972 metų Kauno pavasaris*, ed. Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Salius Žukas, (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 2002).

One of the false understandings would be to say that only such heroes as Romas Kalanta were opposed [to Soviet rule]. I think that Romas Kalanta's sacrifice would not have taken on such a striking meaning if young people hadn't been in solidarity with him. This means that people inevitably adjusted to Soviet rule in tangible ways, however, they were in solidarity with heroic acts and they publicly supported them; they went to the demonstrations, which crossed boundaries of Soviet permissibility.

At the same time, Putinaite said that Lithuanians must individually and as a society face the ways in which they accommodated the regime every day and must change habits that were formed under the Soviet system. She noted, "It seems to me that too much attention has been paid only to visible former Soviet functionaries and very little attention has been paid to everyday practices of accommodation..."⁴²³

The meaning of Kalanta's self-immolation has proven to be less stable than the on-going commemorations of his death would seem to indicate. In the attempt to commemorate his act through a national memorial day, religious, social and medical interpretations of suicide contested the validity of his act as a political protest. The relative importance of an individual's self-sacrifice in the context of a collective struggle shifted value away from Kalanta himself. Finally, the emphasis on the ideal of civil resistance glossed over the specificity of Kalanta's self-immolation. Parliamentary debates about the meaning of his act mirrored broader public discussions about the place of Kalanta's suicide in the Lithuanian national narrative. The transformation of Kalanta's act as representative of a spirit of civil resistance in Lithuania has been challenged by public discussions on the role of accommodation in everyday life under the Soviet regime.

⁴²³ Tomas Vaiseta, "Filosofė N.Putinaite: 'sovietiniai įpročiai – tarsi slaptas gyvenimas,'" *Lietuvos Rytas*, January 15, 2008.

The Lithuanian parliament's transformation of the May 14 national memorial day from Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice Day to Civil Resistance Day was a response to religious values and social concerns that complicated a nationalist narrative of the events of May 1972. While the "democratic conditionality" of the EU accession process may have influenced the parliamentarians' decision to honor the ideal of civil resistance, the emphasis on a civic identity also elided competing nationalist interpretations of resistance to Soviet rule. These alternate interpretations were revealed through debates over the role of Catholic culture in Lithuanian society today, as well as how to honor individual and collective resistance during the Soviet period. The attempt to institutionalize public memory of Kalanta's self-immolation complicates Brubaker's argument that post-Communist "nationalizing states" in Eastern Europe will only choose a civic identity under external pressure. It reveals that civic identity can be used to override competing internal narratives of identity, thereby expanding the options that post-Soviet elites have to create a unified national rather than nationalist narrative.

CHAPTER 6:
*MY GENERATION: EUROPEANIZATION AND LITHUANIAN IDENTITY IN COMMEMORATIONS OF
KAUNAS, MAY 1972*⁴²⁴

A post-independence alternative narrative of the May 1972 events as an explosion of youth “counterculture”⁴²⁵ – similar to youth protest activities across Western Europe and in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s – arose in part as a response to Lithuanian elites’ engagement with their counterparts in Western Europe beginning in the 1990s. While this alternative narrative reveals the ways in which external forces are shaping the formation of Lithuanian identity, it also demonstrates that Brubaker’s thesis that *nationalizing states* will chose either a national or a civic identity is too narrow. The alternative youth counterculture narrative has allowed a specific generation of Lithuanians to hold national, European and generational identities simultaneously.⁴²⁶

The two days of street demonstrations in May 1972 have been portrayed by the generation who reached their late teens and early twenties in the late 1960s and early 1970s as evidence of a shared culture and values at that time between Lithuanian youth and their compatriots in the West. By positioning the May 1972 events in Soviet Lithuania within the context of the “Sixties,” interpretations of these events have moved beyond narrower nationalist definition of anti-Soviet protests, citing the demonstrations instead as an example of Lithuania’s Western, and therefore, European identity. An analysis of popular portrayals of the May 1972 events in the film *Children of*

⁴²⁴ “My Generation,” The Who (Released 1965)

⁴²⁵ The term “counterculture” is used in this chapter to designation the identification of “Sixties” youth cultural practices as being opposed to the Soviet system in post-Soviet narratives of the events in May 1972.

⁴²⁶ While sometimes framed as nostalgia for one’s youth, this narrative alternative narrative of the May 1972 events is not representative of nostalgia for the Communist past. For works on Soviet nostalgia in Lithuania, see Neringa Klumbytė, “Memory, Identity, and Citizenship in Lithuania,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41, no. 3 (2010); Neringa Klumbytė, “The Soviet Sausage Renaissance,” *American Anthropologist* 112, no. 1 (March 2010). For works on Communist nostalgia in Eastern Europe, see Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003) and Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, eds., *Post-Communist Nostalgia* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010).

Hotel America, a series of articles entitled “Hair – The Lithuanian Version,” the thirtieth anniversary commemorations in 2002, and a YouTube video produced in 2009 provide evidence of the ways in which Lithuanian cultural elites have reframed these events to demonstrate that they, too, were hippies. While narratives of 1972 as part of a broader experience of youth counterculture and protest have often been directed at internal audiences within Lithuania, they coincide with milestones of Lithuania’s integration into European political and economic institutions, as well as with commemorations of 1968 in Europe and concerted efforts to conceptualize 1968 as a trans-European experience and to create a common space for European intellectuals.⁴²⁷ Most importantly, they coincide with increased engagement by Lithuanian cultural elites with European cultural and political elites, particularly from Germany and France, of the 1968 generation who are now in leadership positions in national and pan-European institutions.

THE ROLE OF “EUROPEANIZATION” IN IDENTITY FORMATION

After regaining its independence with the demise of the Soviet Union, Lithuania sought to enter the military, political and economic structures of Western Europe as quickly as possible. The process of European integration through membership in the Council of Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and, ultimately, the European Union (EU), was portrayed by Lithuanian political elites as a “return to Europe.” Lithuania joined the NATO Partnership for Peace program in 1991. It became a member state of the Council of Europe in 1993. The Lithuanian government submitted its membership application to the European Union in 1995.

⁴²⁷ This can be seen, for example, in the creation of online journals such as *Eurozine*, *Cafébabel*, and *Eurotopics*. In 2008, *Eurozine* published a series of articles on “1968: Beyond soixante-huit.” Publications that have sought to reconceptualize a trans-European 1968 include Carole Fink, Phillip Gassert, and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Horn; Klimke; Klimke and Scharloth, eds; Marwick.

Accession negotiations took place from 1998 to 2002 and Lithuania became a member of the EU in 2004. Lithuania was invited to become a NATO member country in 2002 and formally joined in 2004. Political elites in Lithuania sought to establish their country's identity as European on the basis of its interwar statehood and a contemporary acceptance of liberal democratic norms and values despite the intervening years as a Soviet republic.

The "Europeanization" of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and early 2000s has been analyzed by social scientists primarily in terms of the level of shared liberal democratic values or shared contemporary popular culture between Eastern and Western Europe.⁴²⁸ Yet claims by governments of the formerly-Communist central and east European countries to EU membership have been based not only on an assertion that they belong to Europe now, but that they have always belonged. In doing so, they point to concepts of European identity and integration and of liberal democracy articulated in Western Europe since the founding of the European Economic Community in 1958. Schimmelfennig aptly explains that the EU aspirants "took [the European Union's] ritualized pan-European liberal commitment at face value." Elites from these countries, including Lithuania, argued not that they were joining Europe, but that they were "returning" to Europe – a space to which they belonged not only geographically but as part of the international European community.⁴²⁹ Not everyone has accepted the claims of central and east European countries that they possess a shared culture with their West European neighbors. Proponents of

⁴²⁸ Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Introduction: Conceptualizing the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe," in *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 5. According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, the study of "Europeanization" is "primarily concerned with the impact of policy outcomes and institutions [of the European Union] on domestic polities, politics and policies."

⁴²⁹ Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement: Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 159.

slower integration of the formerly Communist countries into European institutions argued that the people and governments of these countries did not share fundamental economic, political and cultural values that were necessary for integration. David Laitin has asserted that, despite fears of a post-Communist culture that would dilute or be incompatible with European culture, “there exists a pan-European cosmopolitan culture that is rapidly infusing the [EU] applicant countries of the East.”⁴³⁰ In the end, eight formerly communist countries (including one former Yugoslav republic and three Soviet republics) – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – were admitted into the European Union in 2004.

The Lithuanian claim has not been justified solely as a “return to Europe” after a period of isolation within the Soviet Union. Rather, Lithuanian cultural elites such as filmmakers, journalists and historians, among others, have sought to claim shared cultural experiences *during* the Soviet period, most prominently a shared “Sixties” youth counterculture. Anthropologists John Borneman and Nick Fowler argue that “Europeanization” is based on political and economic values – on “future oriented narratives of individualism and markets” – rather than on centuries of historical narrative upon which nation-states typically have based their identities. As a result, they assert that “unlike belonging to the nation, which has a specific cultural content, identification is an empty sign.”⁴³¹ While cultural elites in Lithuania have adopted models of Europeanization that identify with the norms and values of liberal democracy and the market economy, they do not see “Europe” as devoid of specific cultural content. Rather these elites believe that being European has a specific cultural content – including set of youth cultural practices identified with the “Sixties” –

⁴³⁰ David D. Laitin, “Culture and National Identity: “The East” and European Integration,” in *The Enlarged European Union: Diversity and Adaptation*, ed. Peter Mair and Jan Zielkonka, (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 56.

⁴³¹ John Borneman and Nick Fowler, “Europeanization,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26, no. (1997): 492.

and are asserting that their identity as Europeans comes in part from a shared cultural experience and historical narrative of that time period. By claiming that “we were hippies too,” these cultural elites have sought to position themselves as part of a broader Western, and therefore European, cultural experience despite the fact that Lithuania was behind the “iron curtain.”

CHILDREN FROM HOTEL “AMERICA”

The 1990 feature film *Children from Hotel “America”* was an example of narratives of Lithuanian youth counterculture in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴³² The film told the story of a young man nicknamed “Džageris” – presumably after Mick Jagger – and his group of friends in Kaunas in the spring of 1972. Although laden with nationalist symbolism, the film portrayed the group of teenagers as typical young people of the era – listening to rock music, rebelling against the authority of adults, and hanging out at the beach with other young people. The film integrated Kalanta’s suicide and the ensuing street demonstrations into its narrative, emphasizing the role of young people in these events. In doing so, it established the demonstrations within the context of Western youth cultural practices and protest.

The young people in the film emulated Western clothing styles and many of the young men have longish hair. They were knowledgeable about rock music, discussing their favorite bands such as the Rolling Stones and The Animals. The difference, of course, was that Džageris and his friends live in the Soviet Union. They secretly listened to rock music on Radio Luxembourg, constantly

⁴³² Raimundas Banionis, “Vaikai Iš „Amerikos” Viešbučio [Children from Hotel “America”],” (Lithuania: Lietuvos kino studija, 1990). The film was made in 1990. Filmmaker Raimundas Banionis (b. 1957), the son of a well-known Lithuanian actor who performed in Soviet era plays and films, directed the film. The screenplay was written by Polish filmmaker Maciejus Drygas (b. 1956). Journalist Alvydas Dargis, who wrote “Hair – The Lithuanian Version” collaborated on the film. Vytatūas Kernagis (b. 1951), the beloved Lithuanian folk-rock musician, served as music consultant.

fiddling with the receiver to get better reception of the jammed station, in an abandoned hotel from the interwar period – the Hotel “America” of the film’s title. When a concert at the beach town of Palanga is shut down by the authorities, the young people gathered in the woods by the Baltic Sea to have their own “Woodstock.” The next morning, the police descended upon the camp and beat the young people before transporting them to the local police station, where the young men’s heads are shaved.

As Džageris and his friends arrived back into Kaunas, they heard snatches of conversation on the street about a young man who has immolated himself. That afternoon, Džageris watched young people march through the streets from the window of his apartment, where his parents had locked him in so that he could not get into further trouble. Despite the fact that he did not participate in the street demonstration, the KGB interrogated Džageris, asking whether he knew Romas Kalanta and if he could identify any of the participants from photographs. The film utilized actual photographs used by the KGB in their interrogations as they attempted to identify participants for prosecution.

The film, shown on television in Lithuania in 1991 when mass media was fully in local control rather than directed by Moscow, reframed the historical narrative of 1972 in the context of a perceived Western youth “counterculture.” The young people’s cultural practices, particularly in regards to rock music, were framed in opposition to the Soviet regime. This narrative not only opposed the Soviet version of the events as the work of hooligans, it also expanded on a narrative of the events as a nationalist act. The film used Lithuanian nationalist symbols and portrayed the Soviet system as repressive and morally bankrupt; however, it equally emphasized that the main characters are teenagers who have a shared culture with the West. Džageris and his friends might have been oppressed by the Soviet regime, but they were still young people of the hippie generation.

The film also served to re-position Lithuania as part of Europe in the first years of independence from the Soviet Union. *Children from Hotel “America”* was presented to external audiences at the Berlin International Film Festival (Germany) in 1991 and the Uppsala Film Festival (Sweden) in 1992⁴³³.

“HAIR – THE LITHUANIAN VERSION”

Also in 1990, the journal *Nemunas* published a three-part series by journalist Alvydas Dargis entitled “Hair – the Lithuanian Version.”⁴³⁴ The articles gave a detailed account of the events of May 14-19 based on interviews with Kalanta’s family and friends, eyewitnesses, and Communist Party officials, as well as on recently opened KGB and Prosecutor’s office files. As with other accounts, Dargis did not dismiss nationalist motivations for the unrest. However, he too emphasized the role of young people and youth counter culture in these events, as the title itself demonstrates. The articles, published after Lithuania’s March 1990 declaration of independence, are representative of the assertion of local control of the media from Soviet strictures. Speaking to an internal audience, the articles weave together narratives of national revival and youth counterculture in Lithuania in 1972. Like the film *Children from Hotel “America,”* the articles seek to establish the events in Kaunas as evidence that the 1972 generation shared a culture and values of freedom with young people in the West.

⁴³³ Lietuvių Filmo Centras [Lithuanian Film Center] website, www.lfc.lt, accessed April 25, 2011.

⁴³⁴ Alvydas Dargis, “Hair -- lietuviškas variantas. pirmoji dalis. [Hair -- Lithuanian Version. Part I],” *Nemunas* 3, no. (1990); Alvydas Dargis, “Hair -- lietuviškas variantas. antroji dalis. [Hair -- Lithuanian Version. Part II],” *Nemunas* 4, no. (1990); and Alvydas Dargis, “Hair -- lietuviškas variantas. trečioji dalis. [Hair -- Lithuanian Version. Part III],” *Nemunas* 5, no. (1990). “Hair” was an American rock musical that debuted in New York City in 1967. Productions were staged in Germany in 1968 and in France in 1969.

In 1995, a new English-language magazine *Lithuania in the World* published an article by Dargis about the May 1972 events in Kaunas. The article asserted that the post-funeral demonstration “was the largest anti-Soviet demonstration throughout almost fifty years of occupation.” Dargis emphasized that young people marched through the street shouting “Freedom for Lithuania” and “Russians go home!”⁴³⁵ Yet two paragraphs later, under the heading, “May 1972, The Revival Began,” Dargis directly connected these events to youth counterculture in Kaunas. He stated that

In 1972, young people with long hair and torn jeans and some in short fur coats even on warm days would gather at the fountain, which resembled a stone lily from afar. They used to listen to Radio Luxembourg on small portable radios, to secretly smoke cannabis brought from Central Asia or simply lay motionless on the grass till late at night.”⁴³⁶

After establishing the existence of hippie culture in Kaunas, Dargis acknowledged that Kalanta himself was not one of the “fountain children” as these hippies came to be known. Even though Kalanta was not an active member of a hippie group, Dargis pointed out that he “wore his hair long and more than once was detained by the police for his ‘looks not suitable for a Soviet youth.’”⁴³⁷ In this way, Dargis cast Kalanta as representative of youth “counterculture” even if he was not part of the hippie movement in Kaunas.

Dargis acknowledges that Kalanta himself did not belong to a hippie group, yet he still credited the Kaunas hippies with initiating the response to Kalanta’s suicide. According to Dargis, the hippies were the ones who recognized the significance of Kalanta’s suicide.:

⁴³⁵ Alvydas Dargis, “The Children of the Fountain: Romas Kalanta – a Living Torch of Protest,” *Lithuania in the World*, 1995, 8.

⁴³⁶ Dargis, 8.

⁴³⁷ Dargis, 8.

Although neither radio, television or newspapers announced the incident, residents of Kaunas started gathering at the fire-blackened trunk of the old lime tree. *The first to come were the hippies* [emphasis added], who regularly gathered at the fountain. They lit candles and stood there as if in a guard of honor at this tree of pain, having encircled it with a black ribbon. The police, who arrived immediately after, dispersed the small group of hippies, but people with bunches of red tulips were already flowing from different parts of Kaunas.⁴³⁸

Additionally, he described Vytautas Kalade, the young man who jumped on the hood of a car in front of the Kalanta home and called for the crowd to go to the square where Kalanta committed suicide, as “one of Kaunas’ hippies – every day he used to go to Laisvės Alėja with his long blond hair flying in the wind, with glasses à la Lennon, and a small portable radio.”⁴³⁹

In Dargis’ narrative of the May 1972 events, youth “counterculture” – one shared with the West – played a crucial role. The appearance of an English-language article directed towards an external audience in 1995 is significant. Lithuania submitted its initial application for European Union membership in December 1995. As European political and cultural elites began to direct their focus on integration with Western Europe, shared history and cultural values became more important. By positioning the 1972 events in Kaunas as part of a broader Western, and therefore European, experience, Dargis contributed to a historical narrative that served to justify Lithuania’s membership in Europe.

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS IN 2002

In 2002, a group of academics and artists, many affiliated with Vytautas Magnus University, held a number of events to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of Kalanta’s self-immolation and

⁴³⁸ Dargis, 9.

⁴³⁹ Dargis, 10.

the ensuing demonstrations. The events included an art exhibit at a café on Laisvės Alėja, a concert of Western rock music performed by the string quartet Collegium, and an academic conference called *Kaunas Spring 1972*. That same year, two historians published *Romas Kalanta's Sacrifice: Kaunas Spring 1972*.⁴⁴⁰ The book was both a preliminary analysis and a call for further study of the events of May 1972. In addition to copies of documents related to Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing demonstrations from the KGB archives, it included essays by Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Kastytis Antanaitis, both professors of history at Vytautas Magnus University. While their analysis did not strip these events of nationalist meaning, the essays placed Kaunas in May 1972 squarely in the framework of youth cultural practices and youth protest in the West.

Antanaitis' essay presented a narrative of the events that took place in May 1972 based on KGB and Communist Party archives. Before describing the events in Lithuania, however, Antanaitis provided an overview of youth protest primarily in France, but also Latin America, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Antanaitis included Czechoslovakia in 1968 as part of this wave of protest spreading across Europe to Lithuania. He did, however, distinguish between youth protest in the West and that in the East. According to Antanaitis, youth unrest in Western Europe and the Soviet bloc shared a fundamental demand "for human rights and freedoms, to have more political self-power." However, he stated, "There was also a difference in the tenets of the youth ideologies – in Eastern Europe, the place of Marxist ideology was removed from the hippie youth tenets taken from the West and replaced by nationalism."⁴⁴¹ While Antanaitis' analysis maintains a

⁴⁴⁰ Aleksandravičius.

⁴⁴¹ Kastytis Antanaitis, "Kalantinės ir jų aidai [Kalantines and Their Echoes]," in *Romo Kalantos auka: 1972 metų Kauno pavasaris*, ed. Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Salius Žukas, (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 2002), 21.

role for nationalism in the street demonstrations, he regarded it as one component of young people's values rather than the sole driving force for the street demonstrations

Antanaitis also presents Kalanta as representative of Western style youth cultural practices, describing Kalanta as someone who was “interested in music and the hippie movement, which according to him fought against lies and injustice, really liked Beatles music, and played the guitar. He seemed to be a typical contemporary hippie in Lithuania – he grew his hair long and copied foreign hippie appearance.”⁴⁴² He also emphasized that local Communist Party officials linked the street demonstrations to youth cultural practices at the time. He stated that, after the events of May 18-19, young men with long hair would be picked up by the police, beaten and have their hair cut off “because longer hair was understood as a protest against social authority.”⁴⁴³ He described the repression that occurred after the May 18-19 events as combining the “war on hippies” with the “war on nationalists and intellectuals.”⁴⁴⁴ By placing the Kaunas events in a larger narrative framework of youth unrest and by drawing on contemporary accounts that attribute them to youth counterculture, Antanaitis provided historical legitimacy to interpretations of these events as evidence of a broader European identity at the time.

Rather than an analysis of the events of May 1972, Aleksandravičius' essay is a reflection on the importance of these events for Lithuania and the need for further historical scholarship about them. He too pointed to youth “counterculture” as the inspiration for the demonstrations, stating “The Parisian students' revolts and Prague Spring valorized hippies with worn jeans, like a character from the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* or *Hair*, who demonstrates disrespect for Leninist

⁴⁴² Antanaitis, 29.

⁴⁴³ Antanaitis, 52.

⁴⁴⁴ Antanaitis, 62.

collectivism and who demands personal freedom.”⁴⁴⁵ Aleksandravičius then proceeded to make the case that these events “have no small resemblance to the rippling wave of youth protest across the whole world.” He noted that earlier acts of protest in Soviet Lithuania did not “send young people into the streets to skirmish with the army and the police.”⁴⁴⁶ He attributed the difference to discontented youth of the late 1960s and early 1970s, who were a “ticking bomb under the uniformly hostile Soviet order towards individuality and spontaneity.”⁴⁴⁷ According to Aleksandravičius, like youth in the West, Lithuanian young people were driven by anti-authoritarianism and a desire for personal and social freedom, not just political change. His call for historical scholarship of 1972 was an explicit attempt to understand the identity of the “1972 generation.” Early in the essay, he asked “Where were we, what did we do and what did we think in 1972? How did we look then, how did we wear our hair, what kind of jeans did we wear? In which unit did we do our Soviet military service? These are the questions that need to be raised for today’s 40-year-olds and 50-year-olds.” Aleksandravičius himself falls into this age category and was one of the driving forces behind the 2002 commemorations.

Aleksandravičius pointed to the universality of youth protest in the late 1960s and argued that insights into youth protest in other parts of Europe and the world applied equally to the “subsequent youth demonstrations in Kaunas.” He stated, “I hazard to say that Kaunas in 1972, despite the Iron Curtain and Soviet information filters, became the last outpost of the counterculture

⁴⁴⁵ Aleksandravičius, 9-10. The musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* was staged by students at Vilnius Conservatory in 1973. It was one of the first underground productions of the play in the Soviet Union. Sabrina Ramet, “The Soviet Rock Scene,” in *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* (edited by Sabrina Ramet, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 184.

⁴⁴⁶ Aleksandravičius, 16.

⁴⁴⁷ Aleksandravičius, 15.

movement in the West and, even more, the only one in the Soviet Union at that time.”⁴⁴⁸ By identifying the uniqueness of the event within the Soviet Union, Aleksandravičius distinguished Lithuania from other parts of the Soviet Union, such as Ukraine and Russia. He also clearly articulated a genealogy of youth protest that proceeded from Western Europe and the United States to Soviet Lithuania.

Additionally, Aleksandravičius asserted that rock music was crucial to Lithuanian young people’s experience and expression of “counterculture.” He argued that

... these sentiments ripened to the sound of rock music. Vinyl records, coiled tape-recorder spools in Lithuanian-built tape-players, crackling chords on a faraway radio station – all these were more than background music. They were the energy to act even then, when it was rationally impossible to do so.⁴⁴⁹

As for Banionis in *Children from Hotel “America,”* rock music served for Aleksandravičius as evidence that the late 1960s-early 1970s generation of Soviet youth participated in a shared cultural experience with their cohort in the West.

Although the book’s publication was directly related to the thirtieth anniversary, the increased importance of commemorating the 1972 events in Kaunas can also be linked to external forces. As negotiations for Lithuania’s entrance into the European Union moved into the final stages, a shared historical experience between Lithuania and Western Europe would have taken on greater significance. By 2002, Lithuanian elites were engaged in a variety of cultural and political interactions with their counterparts in Western Europe. These events helped Lithuanian elites to position themselves in relation to their generational cohort in the rest of Europe.

⁴⁴⁸ Aleksandravičius, 16.

⁴⁴⁹ Aleksandravičius, 19.

WE WERE HIPPIES TOO: BOOKS, BLOGS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Post-Soviet Lithuanian elites are also using informal forms of media, including YouTube videos and personal blogs, to present a Western identity based on the events of May 1972. In a video originally posted on YouTube on May 8, 2009, a Lithuanian architect in Kaunas explicitly situated these events within the context of youth counterculture. The video's creator witnessed the May 1972 demonstrations as a thirteen-year old and today views himself as a Lithuanian nationalist and as a member of the "Sixties" generation. His memory of the events in May 1972 is strongly connected with young people in the streets and acts of civil resistance by hippies.⁴⁵⁰ He described the video as a "tribute to Romas Kalanta and to the Woodstock of the East, which took place in the very center of Europe in occupied Lithuania on 18th, 19th and 20th of May 1972. This was our 3 days of Love, Peace & Music and also Courage, Freedom & Hope under the darkest shadow of [the] Iron Curtain." The video itself began with the text "Woodstock 1969. Paris 1968. Prague 1968-1969. Kaunas 1972."⁴⁵¹ The video's narrative was explicitly nationalistic with a portrayal of Soviet occupation and subjugation of Lithuania and the partisan resistance in the immediate post-war period. However, continued resistance to Soviet oppression in the 1960s and early 1970s was presented as part of a youth "counterculture" and protest movement. Images of Soviet-era parades and Young Pioneer presentations were followed by images of hippies in Kaunas in the early 1970s with the text "not all were brainwashed." The video proceeded to chronicle Kalanta's suicide and the ensuing demonstrations. Its narrative was accompanied by music by Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, The Doors, and Black Sabbath.

⁴⁵⁰ Robertas Čerškus (Kaunas; October 2010 to July 2011). Interviews with author.

⁴⁵¹ Robertas Čerškus, 2009. "Tribute to Romas Kalanta and to the Woodstock of the East," YouTube, (accessed May 8, 2009).

The video, with English sub-titles and posted on an internationally utilized website, clearly targets an external as well as internal audience. The timing of the video corresponded with commemorations of 1968 in Europe and of Woodstock (1969) in the United States. The video demonstrated that interpretations of the Kaunas events as representative of a youth “counterculture” shared with the West have not been driven solely by cultural elites with access to formal media sources. It is also manifested in personal acts of identification, such as YouTube videos. The identification with youth counterculture of the late 1960s and 1970s by Lithuanian cultural elites is not limited to interpretations of the May 1972 events in Kaunas. The same architect posted videos with music from the Kaunas rock band *Gintarėliai*, which was popular in Soviet Lithuania from 1965-1973 and even toured in East Germany, England, Hungary, Poland, and Finland. The band covered songs by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones in addition to performing original songs. The video contained a slide show of early 1970s photographs of Lithuanian hippies set to the band’s song “Stebis tėtis ir mama [Papa and Mama noticed].”⁴⁵²

The *Glūdoikai* blog includes frequent posts and videos about hippies in Soviet Lithuania, such as two videos entitled “Flower Children vol. 1 and vol. 2” posted November 2, 2008 with photos and film footage of Lithuanian young people in 1971 set to Lithuanian rock songs (including a song by *Ginterėliai*) and a cover of The Beatles’ “Nowhere Man.”⁴⁵³ The blog is written by a group of friends who spent their summers together on the shores of Lake Glūkas in the 1980s. Today they are “teachers and psychologists, entrepreneurs and temporarily unemployed, doctors and painters,

⁴⁵² “Gintarėliai - “Stebis tėtis ir mama [Papa and Mama noticed]” (Kaunas, 1972),” YouTube, Žaliakalnas (Robertas Čerškus), June 30, 2009.

⁴⁵³ *Glūdoikai*, <http://glukoidai.wordpress.com/> (accessed January 2011 to January 2013)

engineers and freelance journalists,” among other professions. Members of the group live in Lithuania and Western Europe.

Rimas Burokas, a hippie poet from the 1970s who died in the KGB prison in Vilnius in 1980, has also received attention. A book published in 2009 included Burokas’ poems, photos of him and his friends from the 1970s and essays by friends about Burokas and that time period.⁴⁵⁴ A video using photographs and images from the book and set to the live version of Pink Floyd’s “Time” from *Dark Side of the Moon* was posted on YouTube in May 2009.⁴⁵⁵ The book, video and a panel discussion at the 2009 Vilnius Book Fair presented Burokas and his circle as immersed in the youth counterculture of that time.

The 2005 musical comedy film *Paskutiniai Brėmeno Muzikantai* [*The Last Musicians of Bremen*] tells the story of four musicians in Soviet Lithuania, who form a band with hopes of becoming famous.⁴⁵⁶ Their long hair and hippie clothing immediately set them apart from other Soviet Lithuanians. While not particularly bright and often imbibing in alcoholic beverages, the young men have a sense of freedom that is contrasted with film footage of Soviet Lithuanian youth singing Pioneer songs and laying wreaths at a statue of Lenin. The musical numbers in the film use Western rock music from the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, The Doors’ song “People are Strange” (1967) and Deep Purple’s “Smoke on the Water” (1972). Others are somewhat anachronistic, such as when they sing “We don’t need no education. We don’t need no thought control” from Pink Floyd’s 1979 “Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2” or “we were born in Lithuania” to the music of

⁴⁵⁴ Gita Burokaitė, Silvija Kurienė, and Saulė Pinkevičienė, ed. *Rimas Burokas: (Ne) gyvenimo fragmentai: eilėraščiai, šviesraščiai, sugrižimai* [*Fragments of (Un)Existence: Poems, Ghosts, Home-Comings*] (Kaunas: Kitos Knygos, 2008).

⁴⁵⁵ “Rimas Burokas,” YouTube (accessed May 2009).

⁴⁵⁶ Vaidas Lekavičius, “Paskutiniai Brėmeno muzikantai [The Last Musicians of Bremen],” (Lithuania: Keistuolių teatras, 2005)

Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" (1984). Traveling back from a concert in Poland, the musicians meet a young hitchhiker named Inga, whose hippie-style clothes reference Lithuanian traditional folk costumes. She becomes their muse, inspiring them to sing the Maironis poem "Trakų Pilis" set to the tune of The Animals' "House of the Rising Sun" when they are invited to perform a patriotic song on Soviet Lithuanian television. Informed during a concert that Inga has died, the band members go to her gravesite and discover that she is still alive, but in a sanatorium. Their muse is still alive and can one day return. They – her "flower children" as one of the band members refers to the young men – will keep singing. Although the film invited the audience to laugh at the bumbling hippie musicians, it also presented them as true children of Lithuania who love her as much as they love rock music. The young men are both integrated into Sixties youth culture and inspired by Lithuanian nationalism.

At the same time, the reframing of the May 1972 events as manifestations of youth counterculture in the spirit of 1968 is often superficial. In most cases, the events in Kaunas in May 1972 are set within a chronology of "the Sixties" and the shared cultural experience is presented as self-evident through the dress, music and the young people's presumed desire for personal freedom. Additionally, Lithuanian elites are constructing this identity based on their interpretation of Western hippie culture of the 1960s. For example, the term "hippie" and beatnik" are often conflated. Aleksandravičius, for example, described the role of rock music festivals in drawing nonconformists of all types "as smoothly as Kerouac's *On the Road* carried more than one late-arriving *beatnik* from Lithuania to the flat space of the East."⁴⁵⁷ Additionally narratives of youth "counterculture" and

⁴⁵⁷ Aleksandravičius, 19.. Another example is a book commemorating the poet Rimas Burokas, who died in KGB custody in 1980. In the introduction, Burokas is identified as a hippie and a beatnik. Burokaitė, ed. In personal conversation with the author, a number of Lithuanians who were teenagers or in their 20s in 1972 have referred to themselves as the *On the Road* generation. This is perhaps not surprising since Kerouac's novel was first published in Lithuanian translation in the Soviet Union in 1972.

youth protest in Soviet Lithuania do not appear to take into account disagreements over the legacy of 1968 in Western Europe.⁴⁵⁸

What might the benefits be if claims by Lithuanian elites to a 1968 legacy of youth “counterculture” and resistance to authority resonate with a broader European audience?⁴⁵⁹

Whether these efforts are done consciously or not, the “pay-off” would be greater recognition as equals by the “generation of 1968,” especially from France and Germany, now prominently positioned throughout European bureaucracies and intellectual institutions. As Adam Michnik, a prominent Polish dissident who was imprisoned for his participation in public protest in Poland in 1968, said to Vladimir Tismaneanu, ““The issue is not whether one is left or right of center, but whether one is West of center.”⁴⁶⁰ The West, in this way, serves as a symbolic geography representing a set of shared values.

An important first step in Lithuania’s “return to Europe,” membership in the Council of Europe, occurred coincidentally, yet perhaps emblematically, on May 14, 1993. While post-Soviet elites in Lithuania have promoted their participation in a “Sixties” youth “counterculture” more broadly, commemorations and narratives of Romas Kalanta’s self-immolation in May 1972 and the

⁴⁵⁸ See, for example, Ross.

⁴⁵⁹ There has also been a movement to re-conceptualize an “integrated” European history that brings together East and West experiences during World War II, in particular see the work of Timothy Snyder such as Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). Also see Maria Mälksoo, “The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 4 (2009). While Lithuanian historians and Lithuanian members of the European Union Parliament have been active in efforts to gain political recognition for the crimes of Stalin, this issue will not be address in this paper.

⁴⁶⁰ Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Discomforts of Victory: Democracy, Liberal Values and Nationalism in Post-Communist Europe,” *West European Politics* 25, no. 2 (2002): 91. Quoted from a personal interview in May 2000.

ensuing street demonstrations by young people have sought to establish them as indicative of a generation's shared cultural heritage. In doing so, Lithuanian cultural elites have not completely denied nationalist interpretations, but they have rejected the narrow definition of these events solely as manifestations of Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance.

Despite the superficial correlation between the events in Soviet Lithuania and the youth counterculture and protest movements in the West, it is important that Lithuanian cultural elites feel compelled to connect these events, that they believe it necessary to establish their credentials as Europeans not just now but then. In his work on shared contemporary culture, Laitin asserts that "to an important degree...it is the Eastern Europeans who have a stronger interest in a utopian vision of 'Europe' as well-defined (and easily mimicked) culture than culturally secure Europeans who are citizens of the West European states."⁴⁶¹ As a result, he argues, upwardly mobile members of peripheral societies, such as Lithuania's cultural elites, are often more assertive in declaring themselves as European. As interpretations of the May 1972 street demonstrations shows, Lithuanian cultural elites are not only actively constructing a current identity as Europeans, they are also attempting to establish their identity as Europeans during their youth, as members of the countercultural generation of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

⁴⁶¹ Laitin, 58.

CONCLUSION

On May 14, 2002, a monument called “The Field of Sacrifice” was unveiled at the site of Romas Kalanta’s self-immolation in front of the Kaunas Musical Theater on Laisvės Alėja. Rather than a sculpture of Kalanta himself, the monument is composed of a series of cracked cast-iron squares that represent the “fire-damaged pages of history” along the edge of a grassy square. Nineteen boulders symbolizing Kalanta’s age when he committed suicide are scattered among the trees where he killed himself.⁴⁶² Initially, the monument was completely unmarked. In 2008, a brass plate with “R. Kalanta 1953-1972” was placed on the paved walk in front of the monument. In 2012, for the fortieth anniversary commemorations, a marker explaining the monument in Lithuanian and English was finally installed at the site. The monument is a most fitting physical manifestation of the transformation of Kalanta’s suicide into competing narratives of political immaturity, national martyrdom, Western youth culture and civil resistance. Its abstract form allows the beholder to assign his or her own meaning to the site and the events that occurred there.

This dissertation has unpacked these multiple – and often intertwined – interpretations by looking at how various versions were shaped by political and social processes in Lithuania and beyond during late Soviet socialism, the transnational “Sixties,” and the first two decades of independence from the Soviet Union. It began with several key questions about the events of May 1972 and their interpretation in late Soviet and post-1990 Lithuania. Firstly, why did two thousand young people take to the streets on the day of Romas Kalanta’s funeral? By this, I mean – why young people? And why the streets – why did the protest take the form that it took? Secondly, how did participating youth, the KGB, Communist Party officials and ordinary citizens in Soviet Lithuania interpret in 1972 what happened on the streets of Kaunas on May 18? Thirdly, why has it seemed difficult to establish a consistent narrative of Kalanta’s act and the ensuing street

⁴⁶² Tracevskis

demonstrations in post-1990 Lithuania? What political, social, and cultural import has the contested history of the narrative(s) had? And why have hippies played such a large role in post-Soviet narratives of the events of May 1972?

The analysis of internal Communist Party documents in the weeks immediately following the street demonstrations reveals the extent to which Lithuanian Communist Party officials framed the street demonstrations as part of a broader “youth problem” in the Soviet Union. The interpretation that the young people who took to the streets were “politically immature” served a number of purposes. By defining the demonstrations as a childish outburst, Communist officials denied that the participants might have had legitimate grievances with the Soviet system and denied their capacity to choose to express such grievances. Additionally, “political immaturity” on the part of the participants did not cede cultural power to the West. In this narrative, young people were influenced by Western cultural practices not because the West provided a viable, or even better, alternative to communism, but because the young people were not “politically mature” enough to withstand its corrupting influence. But neither did this interpretation acknowledge real shortcomings on the part of the Soviet Union. The participants’ “political immaturity” was caused by a practical failure to inculcate them properly with Communist values, not the failure of the system itself. In the view of Party officials, these young people did not fully appreciate nor take responsibility for the benefits of Communist society. As was typical in “Soviet political culture,” increased Party organization and more Party efforts in providing the proper Communist political education were said to be the remedies. This dissertation also makes visible the process by which CPL officials struggled to articulate an ideologically acceptable narrative about the causes of the demonstrations. Rather than simply repeating Party tropes for public consumption, Lithuanian Communist leaders in 1972 were actively applying and, more importantly, discarding potential

interpretations of the street demonstrations as they attempted to articulate an ideologically satisfactory explanation for the events.

At the same time, the analysis of KGB interrogation statements reveals how young people negotiated boundaries by appealing to youthful “curiosity” to explain why they joined the crowds in the street after Kalanta’s funeral. Like “political immaturity,” “curiosity” defused the political implications of the young people’s participation in the street demonstrations and instead defined it in more childlike terms. In claiming to have acted out of curiosity, the young people denied intentionality in their participation in the street demonstrations. Indeed, by explaining their acts in such a way, young people consciously or unconsciously articulated the same ideological narrative of the street demonstrations as the Communist Party officials. Despite the young people’s and Communist Party’s insistence that the street demonstrations were not a manifestation of discontent, the analysis of youth cultural practices in Soviet Kaunas demonstrates the extent to which young people were indeed pushing the boundaries of acceptable youth activities. In cities across the Soviet Union, greater exposure to the West in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union led to the adoption and adaptation of Western youth cultural practices centered on rock music. Kaunas – with its rock bands, dances and hippies – was not unique among Soviet provincial cities. Lviv and Dnepropetrovsk in Soviet Ukraine had similar manifestations of “Sixties” youth culture. It is, however, the site of the largest instance of popular protest specifically by young people in the Soviet Union at that time. Accordingly, this case study not only gives us a glimpse of Soviet Lithuania in 1972, but further reveals the dynamism of Soviet youth cultural practices in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The narrative of Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations was not contained by official interpretations promulgated in 1972. As the poem that circulated immediately after his death demonstrates, portrayals of Kalanta as a Lithuanian national martyr quickly

developed. Yet attempts to institutionalize this view proved surprisingly difficult once Lithuania re-established its independence from the Soviet Union. Indeed, the analysis of various interpretations of Romas Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations since 1990 reveal the extent to which Lithuanian elites have utilized non-nationalist narratives of the May 1972 events in order to define Lithuanian and European identities. As the examples of the parliamentary debates to designate May 14 as a national memorial day and the hippie narratives of the "1972 generation" reveal, Lithuanians have used perceived values of civil resistance and Sixties-style youth protest to negotiate internal debates over what it means to be Lithuanian at the end of the twentieth century. As a result, this dissertation challenges assumptions that post-Communist European states will move towards nationalist identities and policies unless Western values are externally imposed through processes such as European integration. Nonetheless, it is nearly impossible to separate the interpretations of May 1972 over the past twenty years from the transformations of Lithuanian political and social structures as a result of European integration.

On May 14, 2012, I attended a number of commemorations of Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations in Kaunas. The "Sixties" youth culture narrative certainly held sway at the fortieth anniversary. All three of the events that I attended – a student program at a secondary school, a semi-private event at a restaurant, and the official evening commemoration in front of the Kaunas Musical Theater – featured rock concerts. On that warm spring evening, I sat on the patio of a restaurant next to the Kalanta monument with several men in their late fifties and early sixties who had been hippies back in 1972. The Moon Band, a group of Lithuanians in their twenties currently making a name for themselves in Great Britain, finished their set and a Rolling Stones song began to play over the loudspeakers. My companions immediately started singing along. "This was the music of 1972," they said, "this was the music of our youth." Kristūpas Petkunas leaned over to me and said, "In 1972, when I was on the street shouting 'freedom for

Lithuania, I never imagined that we would be free. Now I am listening to the Rolling Stones with an American on Laisvės Alėja." Freedom, youth, rock and roll, and the West – indeed. As another contemporary Kaunas band started to play, I went to join my twenty-something friends in front of the stage and wondered, what will the narrative of Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing street demonstrations be on the fiftieth anniversary?

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