CREATING ONE'S OWN REALITY AS RESISTANCE: THE SHAPE OF 'PARALLEL SOCIETY' IN SOVIET LITHUANIA

Ainė Ramonaitė

ABSTRACT *This article aims at demonstrating that an alternative to Soviet society – a socium with expanded parallel institutions of education, information and culture that were independent of the regime and impervious to its ideology existed in Soviet Lithuania which answers the idea of 'parallel polis' developed by Vaclav Benda, the famous Czech dissident and theoretician. To substantiate the above statement, first of all the concept of 'parallel society', which is not widely known in Lithuania, is disclosed relating it to the conception of opposition to a totalitarian system that has been discussed also by Lithuanian philosophers for some time past. Secondly, the article briefly dwells on the structure of the primary components of parallel society – ethno-cultural movement and Catholic underground – revealing their scope and forms of operation at the same time disclosing the way alternative institutions of education, information and culture functioned. Finally, with the help of tools of social network analysis the symbiosis of these two movements is displayed validating the statement that they can be considered elements of one-piece alternative society.*

Although more than twenty years have passed since the fall of the Soviet regime, issues of adaptation, collaboration and opposition to it in Lithuania are more an object of speculation and value-based discussion on the part of participants in that of history referring to their particular experiences than an object of professional historical research*. Mostly the history of Lithuanian resistance in the twentieth century naturally jumps from the post-war partisan struggle to national awakening

* The author expresses her acknowledgements to her counterpart J. Kavaliauskaitė and the participants in the symposium 'Being in the Soviet Network: Embracing, Interpreting or Escaping from the System' for valuable insights, remarks and advice, to the students of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University: S. Kančytė, R. Garškaitė, I. Balvočiūtė and others for their input collecting data and transcribing interviews and to the participants in the ethno-cultural movement and Catholic underground interviewed in the course of research for their exceptional benevolence and honesty.

confining itself to mentioning the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the rally organised by the Lithuanian Freedom League, which took place in 1987.¹ As E. Aleksandravičius remarks, the late Soviet period is still not the object of systematic research, thus ‘we know no more about the facts that happened three decades than about Vytautas’ battles or the bitter fate of post-war exiles’.²

In fact, the character and paradoxes of the system itself have received a share of attention from historians and anthropologists of the younger generation³, a number of theses have been devoted to the adaptation strategies of the intellectual elite.⁴ The activities of dissident organisations, such as the Lithuanian Freedom League, the Helsinki Committee, and the Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers’ Rights, were documented relatively thoroughly and coherently as well as the networks of samizdat publishing and distribution and the most significant outburst of anti-Soviet protest in 1972.⁵ However, the issue whether anything and what existed between the two poles – generally applied practices of adaptation and narrow circle of dissidents explicitly opposing the system – remains unanswered.

A few foreign authors claim that until 1988 in the Baltic States there was nothing similar to the ‘second’ or ‘parallel’ culture elaborated in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary).⁶ Others maintain that strong cultural opposition which manifested through a dense network of informal or semi-legal clubs operated in Estonia, whereas in Lithuania there was no such network and resistance was evident (merely) through the Catholic un-

¹ See e.g. A. Tyla, ‘Valstybinės laisvės tradicija ir Lietuvos sąjūdis: istorinis Sąjūdžio kontekstas’, *Kelias į nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991* (Kauņas, 2010).

² E. Aleksandravičius, S. Žukas (ed.). *Romo Kalantos auka* (Vilnius, 2002), p. 8.

³ Doctoral dissertations by V. Ivanauskas and S. Grybkasas analyse these issues.

⁴ V. Klumbys, ‘Lietuvos kultūrinio elito elgesio modeliai sovietmečiu’, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vilnius University, 2009; V. Ivanauskas, ‘Sovietinis režimas ir kultūrinės nomenklatūros kaita vėlyvuoju sovietmečiu Lietuvoje’, *Politologija*, 2010, No. 4 (60), pp. 53–84; also N. Putinaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga: prisitaikymas ir pasipriešinimas sovietų Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 2007).

⁵ I. Puzaitė, ‘Pogrindinis komitetas tikinčiųjų teisėms ginti’, *Lietuvos katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis*, 24, pp. 181–204, A. Ruzgas, *Rezistentų pagrindiniai periodiniai leidiniai* (Vilnius, 2010), Aleksandravičius, Žukas, *Romo Kalantos auka*.

⁶ A. Uhlin, *Post-Soviet Civil Society. Democratisation in Russia and the Baltic States* (London-New York, 2006), p. 38.

derground.⁷ Certain Lithuanian historians have also adopted this attitude. For instance, A. Streikus claims that on the eve of the national movement Sąjūdis, Lithuanian society was fragmented and passive and during the whole period of the Soviet rule, the Catholic movement⁸ practically being the only viable trend of opposition to the regime. Aleksandravičius contradicts this viewpoint and argues that the movement of non-conformist young people including both hippies from Laisvės Avenue and hikers as well as members of such ethno-cultural organisations as Ramuva were an alternative to the Catholic underground and dissidents.⁹ Streikus also refers to the ethno-cultural movement and western sub-cultures of young people (first and foremost having in mind the hippies) as one of the three trends opposing the enforced official system of values though adds that the Catholic movement alone managed to endure Soviet repression and 'grow into a fairly articulate civil movement'.¹⁰

This article proposes that the ethno-cultural movement and church underground together with networks of samizdat constituted a wide-scope rather solid parallel culture which manifested a number of features theoretically developed in V. Benda, the famous Czech dissident and theoretician's concept of 'parallel polis'. For the most part the article refers to interviews with participants in these movements recorded in the course of my research, 'The Phenomenon of Sąjūdis: the Network Analysis of Civic Movement'¹¹ as well as data accumulated by R. Labanauskas, L. Anglickienė, A. Ruzga and other sources.¹²

⁷ L. Bennish-Bjorkman, "Between Resistance and Opposition". *Latvia and Eastern Europe in the 1960s–1980s. Materials of an International Conference, 10 Oct. 2006, Riga*. (Riga, 2007), pp. 45–72.

⁸ A. Streikus, 'Lietuvos katalikų pilietinio aktyvumo pavyzdžiai ir ribos XX amžiuje', *Naujasis Židinys – Aidai*, 2011, No. 9–10, pp. 316–321.

⁹ Aleksandravičius, Žukas, *Romo Kalantos auka*, p. 8.

¹⁰ A. Streikus, handouts of the international conference 'Lessons of Democracy and Civil Consciousness in the Historic Turning-points in Lithuania', 14–15 Sep. 2010.

¹¹ This research was funded by the Research Council of Lithuania. More than 200 interviews were recorded; more than 30 of them were with the participants in the ethno-cultural movement and the Catholic underground.

¹² R. Labanauskas, 'Eucharistijos bičiulių sąjūdžio ištakos ir raida 1969–1973', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2003, 1(13), pp. 93–112; idem, 'Vilniaus Eucharistijos bičiuliai', *XXI amžius*, 2004, No. 60 <http://www.xxiamzius.lt/numeriai/2004/08/13/istving_01.html> [address visited on 4 Apr. 2011]; L. Anglickienė, 'Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija sovietmečiu: žygeivių klubas 'Ažuolas'. *Kauno istorijos metraštis*, 4 (2003), pp. 165–176; A. Ruzgas, *Rezistentų pagrindiniai periodiniai leidiniai. Okupacijų metai, 1940–1989. A digest of publications* (Vilnius, 2010).

The first section of the article focuses on the concept of parallel society and its links to related concepts of civil society, second society and alternative culture. The following three parts dwell on the 'micro networks' of the ethno-cultural movement and Catholic underground attributable to parallel society. Finally, with the help of network analysis, the fifth section reveals links between the two movements that have been considered separate and discusses the manifestations of such institutions of parallel society in Lithuania as the system of self-education, alternative public sphere and alternative system of social norms.

Possibilities for applying the concept of 'parallel society' in Lithuania Methods and nature of resistance to the totalitarian system had been in important object of discussion of dissident political idea for a number of decades in Central and Eastern Europe before the fall of the regime. The concept of civil society was explicated in Poland in 1970s and 1980s. Similarly the concepts of 'anti-politics' and 'parallel society' in Czechoslovakia and that of 'second society' in Hungary emphasised the self-organisation of society and 'civil autonomy' from the state as the fundamental principle of opposition to totalitarianism. Organised society as opposition to state, which sought to usurp and nationalise all kinds of social relations became a goal in itself.¹³ Theoreticians and practitioners of civil society in Poland (A. Michnik, J. Kuron, L. Kolakowski) indicated the development of an autonomous, independent society as the goal of resistance rather than the destruction of the system itself. The negative action of nearly professional dissidents and fighters for human rights here is opposed to positive deed of development of alternative system.¹⁴

Similarly, the essence of resistance is identified by N. Putinaite in post-Soviet Lithuania: 'Resistance meant participation in certain alternative social structure even though there was no face to face confrontation between it and the structures of Soviet life'.¹⁵ Resistance to the system, which aims at re-creating human nature and annihilating normal conception of ethics, embraces the perception that Soviet life is abnormal as the liberation from the overall ideology alone disrupts

¹³ G. Baker, *Civil Society and Democratic Theory: Alternative Voices* (London–New York, 2002).

¹⁴ V. Benda et al., 'Parallel Polis, or an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe: An Inquiry', *Social Research*, 55, Nos 1–2 (1988), p. 211.

¹⁵ Putinaite, *Nenutrūkusi styga*, p. 276.

the legitimacy of the system. However, individual dissociation from the system, according to Putinaité, is not sufficient. The establishment of forms, sub-communities sub-cultures and other alternative forms of 'different' sociality is the only means of coping with the ambivalence of life 'forming islands of "normal" interaction in the Soviet totality'.¹⁶

The Czech dissident V. Benda expanded these ideas even further setting a goal not only of a personal moral attitude – 'living in truth', not only the formation of 'islands' of normal interaction but also the creation of a parallel polis, an alternative social environment, with a developed system of alternative institutions. Benda instigated the formation of parallel structures – a system of education, system of information, alternative culture, economy and public sphere – which would facilitate the existence of a real parallel community.¹⁷ Such community alone could restore meaningful order of values and safeguard human dignity.¹⁸ Parallel society is not a negative image of the official system (as the concept of 'second society' developed by Hungarian sociologist E. Hankiss proposes). The notion 'parallel' indicates a different sociality, however, does not mean a complete dissociation from official structures and absence of any contact points; he maintains that parallel course can be sustained only with the help of 'certain mutual respect and consideration'.¹⁹

Benda's idea of parallel polis, which was first formulated in 1978 and received a great share of attention from the members of Charter 77, was nonetheless considered more of a normative utopia rather than a real action plan. However, this article aims at demonstrating that manifestations of parallel society can be detected in Soviet Lithuania in the 1960s–1980s. The basis of parallel society in Lithuania was formed by two closely interconnected movements – ethno-cultural and Catholic – together with widely expanded networks of samizdat.

The extent and structure of the ethno-cultural movement The formation of the ethno-cultural movement in Lithuania started around the 1960s and peaked between 1968 and 1972. This movement, which

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁷ G. Skilling, *Samizdat and Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe* (Columbus, 1989).

¹⁸ Benda et al., 'Parallel Polis', p. 218.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 217.

anthropologists refer to as sub-culture,²⁰ consisted of three closely interconnected components: hikers' clubs, the Ramuva regional studies organisation with other circles of regional studies and folk ensembles that started appearing in Vilnius and other regions in 1968. Although the significance of the ethno-cultural movement as an oppositional force is perceived by the participants in the movement, people directly related to it²¹ and the Soviet KGB structures, historians and other investigators of the Soviet times still have not accredited this phenomenon. Some believe that after 1973 this movement was 'decontaminated' by the repressive structures of the regime.²² Others do not rank it as resistance as they fail to dissociate it from Soviet regional studies and ideological promotion of folk art.²³

The beginning of the institutionalisation of the *žygeiviai* (hikers) movement can be considered the year 1966 when the leaders of the movement V. Kavaliauskas, J. Dapkevičius, G. Ilgūnas and others signed the secret Punia Pact in Punia Forest²⁴ and the Tourist Statute stating hikers' fundamental principles: 'not a single hike without an aim', 'all members of hikers clubs are friends', 'no alcohol during hikes', and so forth.²⁵ By that time the hikers movement in Lithuania had acquired massive popularity. The Tourist Club (UTK) existed at Vilnius University where T. idikis and other leaders ensured compliance with hikers' principles; the UTK Gabija section was established in 1966 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and became particularly was particularly active. In 1966, a section of a hikers club called the Eiklios kojės (Fleet Feet) started its activities at the Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, later it was renamed Ažuolas (Oak) club. In the same year symbolically on 16 February the youth hikers club Sakalas (Falcon) was formed at Kaunas tourist club.²⁶ Following the initiative of R. Matulis in 1969 the Vilnius city tourist club, which for the most part cultivated sports tourism, was supplemented with a hikers section.

Even though in 1971–1973 repressive action was taken against the hikers movement (e.g. in 1971 the hikers section at the Vilnius

²⁰ E. Ramanauskaitė, *Subkultūra: fenomenas ir modernumas* (Kaunas, 2004).

²¹ This is emphasised in the interviews with R. Ozolas, V. Landsbergis, A. Medailinskas and a number of other leaders of the national movement *Sąjūdis*.

²² Streikus, 'Lietuvos katalikų pilietinio', pp. 316 – 321.

²³ Putnaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga*.

²⁴ Interview with Juozas Dapkevičius, 5 Feb. 2001.

²⁵ *Traktatas apie žygeivius* (Panevėžys, 1997).

²⁶ Interview with Arūnas Vaicekauskas, 8 Mar. 2011.

Tourist Club was shut down, the Vilnius University Tourist Club was not granted permission to call itself a hikers club, two members of the Ažuolas Club, Š. Žukauskas and V. Povilionis, were arrested), it was not suppressed. Following their activities at the Ažuolas Club in Kaunas or the UTK in Vilnius former members organised clubs of analogous character in other institutions or towns. In 1974, a tourist club appeared at the Academy of Science where the most active members were former UTK leaders who had graduated from the university.²⁷ In 1980 V. Kavaliauskas, one of the inspirers of the Punia Pact, took the initiative to establish the Kaunas travellers' culture club Ažuolynas (Oak Wood)²⁸, in 1983 V. Almonaitis organised an active hikers section called Aitvaras (Kite) at the Faculty of History at Vilnius University and the former member of the Sakalas Club, V. Bezaras, reactivated the Gabija section.²⁹ In 1985, Giliukas (Little Acorn) club was opened in Kaunas. Around 1975 hikers from Panevėžys became active. Tourist clubs with inclinations to hikers' activities could also be found in other institutions of higher education (e.g. the Pilėnai Club at the Academy of Agriculture) as well as at certain factories in Vilnius, Kaunas and other towns such as Marijampolė (then Kapsukas), Kybartai, etc. There was extensive communication between the clubs – combined tourist conventions, hikes, working bees, festivals.³⁰

Hikers' activities comprised several goals: study of the country and region, ecology, monument preservation, physical and spiritual training and self-education. The slogan 'Not a single hike without an aim' presupposed that certain goals were set for each hike: to collect folklore, tidy up historical monuments, etc.; besides, there was a certain system of education created, as A. Patackas put it, a 'university on foot'. 'Each one had a task – to accumulate information on a certain subject and share with everyone. And the idea was to speak about real history not the made-up Soviet one, to say how it really was, so that these facts were not forgotten but passed from lip to lip and at the same time organise a kind of education'.³¹

²⁷ See the web page of the tourist club at the Academy of Science: <<http://sites.google.com/site/maturistklubas/klubo-istorija>> [address visited on 11 Apr. 2011].

²⁸ P. Katinas, 'Ažuolynas tebežaliuoja' *XXI amžius*, 2005, No. 21 (1322), <http://www.xxi.amzius.lt/numeriai/2005/03/16/kult_03.html> [address visited on 11 Apr. 2011].

²⁹ *Traktatas apie žygeivius* (Panevėžys, 1997), G. Zavadskis (ed.). *Universiteto žygeivių klubo metraštis* (Vilnius, 1998).

³⁰ Interviews with Tadas Šidiškis, Jul. 18, 2010, Juozas Dapkevičius, 5 Feb. 2001, Rimantas Matulis, 29 Apr. 2010, and others.

³¹ Interview with Saulius Pikšrys, 1 Jul. 2010.

The movement inspired by regional studies, which institutionalised at the end of the 1960s is closely related to the hikers' movement. The birth of the movement can be associated with N. Vėlius' initiative to organise integrated ethnographic expeditions, which were joined by more than a hundred people of various specialties (professional folklorists and ethnologists constituted only a fraction of the number). Various ethnographic materials were collected during the expeditions and at the evenings, there would be get-togethers, singing and conversation. J. Trinkūnas remembers: 'We would collect songs in a village, record them, socialise with people and in the evening organise a get-together. The whole village would come. Women would bring cheese and milk; we would sit on the grass; indulge in conversation, dancing, and singing. We would sing folk songs together. These were wonderful times. Then as Vėlius put it, we gave hope to country people that they are worthy of attention, that they were valuable as town people come to see them. And town people received a good share of traditional culture. Folk songs became extremely popular. Singing and get-togethers were organised everywhere, even in Vilnius'.³²

In 1969 on the basis of the participants of these expeditions the Vilnius club of regional studies *Ramuva* was founded³³ with A. Andriuškevičius as its official president and V. Bagdonavičius, V. Janulevičiūtė-Povilionienė, V. Jasukaitytė, M. Martinaitis, A. Statkevičius and J. Trinkūnas³⁴ as first members of the board. Prior to that, in 1967, on the initiative of future members of *Ramuva* J. Trinkūnas, A. Gudelis and A. Danielius the company of friends of India launched its activities and started organizing the first Midsummer festivals (*Rasos*) in Kernavė, which became a symbolic event not only of the ethno-cultural movement but also of the whole 'parallel society'. Midsummer festivals were frequented by members of Vilnius and Kaunas hikers' clubs, participants of the club of the studies of regional culture and history *Alkas* established in 1967 at the Special Design Bureau of Calculating Machines, a number of famous poets and cultural activists – M. Martinaitis, S. Geda, J. Čiurlionytė, J. Šalkauskas, V. Daujotytė, R. Ozolas and others – as well as future underground activists Algirdas Patackas, Birutė Burauskaitė and others.

³² Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, 8 Feb. 2011.

³³ Official name: *Ramuva* of Vilnius Activists of Regional Studies at the Society of Monument Conservation and Regional Studies of the Lithuanian SSR.

³⁴ *Ramuva*, informational letter of *Ramuva* of the Vilnius Activists of Regional Studies at the Society of Monument Conservation and Regional Studies of Lithuanian SSR, 1 Jan. 1989.

Vilnius Ramuva managed to organise a few expeditions, published three issues of the newspaper 'Ramuva' and in 1971 was forced to terminate its activities. However, another club of regional studies at Vilnius University established in 1970 by Trinkūnas, postgraduate of the university, was still in operation;³⁵ its formal leader was philosopher A. Šliogeris, later poet V. Braziūnas, and after that for a number of years, it was economist V. Mačiekus. University students of all specialties participated in the activities of the club of regional studies Ramuva at Vilnius University. Its major activities were annual integrated expeditions, lectures, meetings with famous people, get-togethers, and seminars of self-education.³⁶ The members of university Ramuva socialised with participants of the Vilnius University Hikers' Club – they would organise festivals and get-togethers, quite a few people were members of both clubs simultaneously.

In 1971, following the shutdown of Vilnius Ramuva and the hikers section at the Vilnius Tourist Club, activists from these organisations mostly on the initiative of R. Matulis and B. Burauskaitė formed the Club of the Folk Song, which later was transformed into the still active Raskila company. The Folk Song Club would gather at the House of Trade Unions but when they were made to change the venue, they would organise the meetings at the place one of the members. The major activities of the club included singing of folk songs; however, there also were lectures and hikes most frequently to the Kaliningrad District and other destinations.³⁷ The club took over the organisation of midsummer festivals.³⁸

Attempts to organise a Ramuva club in Kaunas were initiated by Trinkūnas' classmate J. Eitminavičiūtė–Dručienė, however, they were immediately stopped by the KGB.³⁹ The movement of regional studies in Kaunas, however, manifested itself in other forms. From 1973 to 1978, there was an active circle of regional studies at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute established by G. Masaitis with Eitminavičiūtė,

³⁵ The word 'ramuva' is deliberately spelled in lower case referring to it as a Lithuanian equivalent of the word 'club'.

³⁶ V. Mačiekus, 'Vilniaus universiteto kraštotyrininkų ramuvos kompleksinės ekspedicijos: folkloro rinkimo ir tautiškumo ugdymo patirtys', *Tautosakos darbai* 37 (2009), pp. 198–212.

³⁷ Interview with Rimantas Matulis, 29 Apr. 2010.

³⁸ B. Burauskaitė, 'Ką sulipdė Kernavės Rasa', *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 21 June 1997, p. 3.

³⁹ Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Feb. 8, 2011; R. Tamuliūnienė (ed.) *Laisvės proveržiai sovietiniame Kaune: nuo slapto pogrindžio iki atviro protesto* (Kaunas, 2007).

P. Martinaitis, A. Vaškevičius and others as its members.⁴⁰ In 1974 at the open-air folk museum in Rumšiškės V. Andriukaitis, the famous political prisoner P. Butkevičius and P. Vėlyvis, at that time an employee of the museum, initiated a music and folklore club, which would organise festivals of Lithuanian folk music at the museum. Due to restrictions that followed the termination of the activities of the circle its members joined the club of regional studies *Tėviškė* (Native Land) at the Institute of Physical Technical Issues of Electronics, which operated until 1983 and can be considered a substantial seed-bed of 'parallel society' in Kaunas.⁴¹

Finally, the third component of the ethno-cultural movement was folk companies that started emerging in Vilnius and other towns. Povilionienė picturesquely describes the birth of the first folk ensemble Ratilio and remembers that the idea to start a company was born at Vydūnas' commemoration event when she and several other girls from the choir sang a few polyphonic part songs – *sutartinės*: 'It was Vydūnas' commemoration evening and Čiurlionytė was there. After the programme she came to us and said, (I remember as if it was yesterday) "Well I never". As part songs were sung publicly for the first time after a very long time that was quite an occasion.' These girls formed the basis of Ratilio which was started in 1968 under the leadership of A. Ragevičienė. Later other companies started emerging in Vilnius and former members of Ramuva, Folk Song Club and participants in Midsummer festivals joined it: in 1971 the company Sadauja was formed at the Vilnius Research Institute of Electrography; in 1973 Poringė appeared; in 1979 the ethnographic company of the Academy of Science (now Dijūta) and in 1979, on the initiative of the Alkas club, the company Jievaras started its activities at the Factory of Calculating Machines; in 1980 a folk group at the Vilnius Engineering Construction Institute was formed, etc.⁴² Folk companies were also emerging in other towns. Besides, Trinkūnas and other former members of Ramuva initiated the formation of ethnographic companies in villages, especially in the Dzūkija region, that would

⁴⁰ Information received from Albinas Vaškevičius, 30 Mar. 2011.

⁴¹ Interviews with Vytenis Andriukaitis, 1 Dec. 2010, Ramunė Butkevičiūtė-Jurkuvienė, 22 Jun. 2010, Saulius Dambrasas.

⁴² K. Aponavičiūtė, 'Vilnius etninės kultūros centras: tautinio tapatumo tvirtinimas multikultūriniame mieste'. Unpublished MA dissertation, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, 2010.

continue to preserve authentic local singing traditions. Around 1988 an estimated number of folk companies in Lithuania amounted to about 900.⁴³

Resistant character of the ethno-cultural movement The concise review of the ethno-cultural movement in the previous sub-section renders at least a partial image of its scope and structure (naturally not every club and formal or informal group attributable to the movement were named). The estimations made by the participants themselves suggest that between 1960 and 1988 there could have been several thousand members of the movement.⁴⁴ The limited scope of the article does not allow a more detailed analysis of the activities of the movement, yet it is obvious that it was in continuous operation and actively developed in various forms from the 1960s to the late 1980s meaning that this movement was not suppressed in 1971–1973 as is sometimes believed. However, qualifying the significance of this movement in the light of resistance to the Soviet regime the question emerges whether and why the movement is attributable to ‘parallel society’ rather than to Soviet society. For instance, N. Putinaitė, mentions the folk movement in her search for the expressions of resistance to the regime in Soviet Lithuania, yet she arrives at the conclusion that this movement opposed modernisation rather than the Soviet regime. Even though it formed a certain anti-utopia opposing Soviet utopia, in Putinaitė’s opinion, ‘this anti-utopia had no explicit normative programme of values and was compatible with the general Soviet existential context’; or even it ‘was an integral part of the Soviet life’.⁴⁵ This qualification, which would obviously evoke drastic objection from the representatives of the sub-culture under discussion, requires a deeper insight into the essence of the movement and the context of its activities.

The fact that the Soviet regime viewed the ethno-cultural movement as a powerful and dangerous force is obvious from the special attention the KGB paid to the persecution of these organisations and

⁴³ Z. Kelmickaitė, N. Poškienė, Etnokultūrai skirtų programų Lietuvos nacionalinėje televizijoje ekspertizė, <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=2233&p_d=21390&p_k=1> [address visited on 11 Apr. 2011].

⁴⁴ ‘Nė vieno žygio be konkretaus tikslo’, interview with Kęstutis Čeponis II, 28 Jan. 2011 <<http://www.patriotai.lt/straipsnis/2011-01-28/nei-vieno-zygio-be-konkre-taus-tikslo-interviu-su-kestuciu-ceponiu-ii>> [address visited on 10 Apr. 2011].

⁴⁵ Putinaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga*, pp. 289–290.

their members.⁴⁶ The majority of activists claim that they were repeatedly interrogated by the KGB. In 1973 in the course of the so-called ‘case of regional studies activists’ the KGB interrogated more than a hundred most active participants of the movement in Vilnius and Kaunas.⁴⁷ The major menace that the KGB saw in these movements seemed to emerge from the fact that underground leaders were operating through these movements. As G.K. Vaigauskas, a KGB general, maintains in his booklet, ‘From the mid-1960s until recent years the KGB has been facing the attempts of clerics and nationalists to ideologically influence young people and the intelligentsia by infiltrating the organisations (clubs, sections) of regional studies and tourism’.⁴⁸ In other words, the ethno-cultural movement was dangerous because of its interrelation with religious and nationalistic underground and was in a way used for anti-systemic purposes.

This assumption made by the KGB was not fallible: certain renowned underground figures affirm that they deliberately tried to use the movement of regional studies to mobilise anti-systemic forces – for recruitment, physical and spiritual training, and coordination of activities. For example, Povilionis claims that he searched the organisation of regional studies for ‘reliable people’ and viewed the hikers groups as a certain preparation for the defence of the country: ‘When I entered the university I thought that I had to bring people together in some activity that would combine physical training with certain education’.⁴⁹ ‘At the Polytechnic Institute [the hikers club Ažuolas – A. R.] we were organised into practically real tactical teams – kept to rules, allocation of functions, we had uniforms and insignia. We even had printed statutes. We realised that we are certain structures that may sometime be useful to Lithuania’.⁵⁰ A similar story is narrated by Andriukaitis: ‘As we started our activities in the musical circle under the leadership of Eitminavičiūtė, there were different people there, we quickly realised that quite a few of them are similar to us. I suggested

⁴⁶ See R. Bogušauskas, A. Streikus (ed.). *Lietuvos kultūra sovietinės ideologijos nelaisvėje 1940–1990. Dokumentų rinkinys* (Vilnius, 2005); G. K. Vaigauskas, *Lietuvių nacionalistų kenkėjiška veikla ir kova su ja* (Moscow, 1986).

⁴⁷ See *Aušra*, 1978, No. 9[49].

⁴⁸ G. K. Vaigauskas, *Lietuvių nacionalistų kenkėjiška veikla ir kova su ja* (Moscow), 1986, p. 79.

⁴⁹ Interview with Vidmantas Povilionis, 26 Apr. 2010.

⁵⁰ S. Matulevičienė’s interview with Vidmantas Povilionis, ‘Kraštotyrininkų byla’, *Liaudies kultūra*, 2007, No. 6, pp. 46–55.

that we should establish headquarters, create a group and try to coordinate our activities through regional studies'.⁵¹

However, most participants in sub-culture including the activists of the underground movement would not agree that their principal aim was to found an organisation opposing the system. A number of the interviewed members of the ethno-cultural movement claim that they did not consider themselves members of the resistance movement and made no attempts to subvert the system. Nonetheless, they agree that they were not part of the system: 'In principle it was a withdrawal from Soviet society. We were on different tracks'.⁵² The main objective was to disassociate from the system not through outward rebellion or submission to personal degradation as was the case with certain youth sub-cultures but by creating a positive alternative: 'We had a motto – we do not demolish the wall that is in front of us. We build another wall alongside it. We build our wall. ... That period created substance. Demolition does not create substance'.⁵³

The strength of the ethno-cultural movement in the Soviet times was its ability to employ legal and semi-legal structures in the creation of alternative society, not subjected to the Soviet ideology but modelling an alternative lifestyle and reality. In addition, it is possible that, in a way, accidentally regional studies, tourism and folk music became the medium for the evolvement of parallel society (the majority of participants agree that before their involvement into the movement they had no relation with ethnic culture and found it unappealing). It is possible that the employment of tourist clubs, regional studies and folk art in formation of such medium was rather unexpected to the Soviet security structures as these activities had no anti-systemic load in themselves and in other contexts were successfully used for the ideological benefits of the regime. As Putinaitė truthfully remarks in the Soviet times "song and dance festivals, even though they had certain national character, were mass festivals of Soviet society. ... National culture became mass culture, restructured and adapted to the standards of the Soviet existence".⁵⁴

The ethno-cultural movement, on the other hand, served as an alternative to that 'Soviet national identity'. Participants in the ethno-

⁵¹ Interview with Vytenis Andriukaitis, 1 Dec. 2010.

⁵² Interview with Arūnas Vaicekauskas, 8 Apr. 2011.

⁵³ R. Širvytė's interview with A. Gudelis, Jun. 11, 2007, see R. Širvytė, "Ramuvoš" sąjūdis: ištakos, tapatybė, veikla'. BA thesis. Vilnius University, 2008.

⁵⁴ Putinaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga*, p. 290.

cultural movement distinctly felt the watershed between Soviet folk culture and authentic folk music that they advocated for, between Soviet regional studies and those propagated by Ramuva circles, between Soviet tourism and hiking offered in hikers clubs and made efforts to emphasise that divide. For instance, the word *žygeivis* was specially coined to emphasise the distinction from sports and recreational tourism: ‘We had no desire to be tourists. ... There was the name issue. Estonians had the word “matkajate” – travellers, so I collected proposals and chose four variants: “keliūnas”, “keleivis”, “žygeivis”, “žygūnas”. We asked Trinkūnas as a specialist of Lithuanian philology; he looked at the words and said: “žygeivis”. That was how the name came into existence in around 1967’.⁵⁵

Similar distinction was between regional studies of Ramuva groups and those of the Soviet style: ‘At that time that ethnography was, as we would call it, science about “harrows and carts” – that much the Soviet authorities would tolerate. Ethnography was a dull subject and we had no interest in it’.⁵⁶ The relations between official organisations of regional studies and cultural movement were subject to the people prevailing in the former: sometimes they were friendly (for example, Vilnius Ramuva group and Alkas club were legalised under the umbrella of the Society of Monument Conservation and Regional Studies of the Lithuanian SSR) and sometimes hostile. The position of Ramuva organisations towards Soviet regional studies also varied. For example, Vilnius University Ramuva under the leadership of Mačiekus paid tribute to Soviet regional studies collecting materials on ‘revolutionary’ activities in Lithuania in the interwar period, ‘defenders of the people’, formation of kolkhozes, etc. to fill in the reports and safeguard the organisation against suppression.⁵⁷ Other clubs were not inclined to compromise and thus were banned, forced to terminate their activities or had to move to the underground.

Folk companies were also in every aspect different from song and dance companies used to propagate Soviet national identity. Harmonised folk songs, stylised national costumes used by these companies were direct contrast to the authenticity that the folk movement advocated for: ‘We disliked the Lietuva ensemble, disliked all those

⁵⁵ R. Matulis from: S. Matulevičienė’s interviews with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vacys Bagdonavičius, Antanas Gudelis, R. Matulis, V. Daujotytė, ‘Rasos Kernavėje’, *Liaudies kultūra*, 2007, No. 3, pp. 78–79.

⁵⁶ Interview with Antanas Gudelis, 7 Nov. 2010.

⁵⁷ Mačiekus, ‘Vilniaus universiteto kraštotyrininkų’, pp. 198–212.

“folk” companies, abused. ... we were in search for such authenticity in melodies, everywhere’.⁵⁸ Polyphonic part songs were revived at the rise of the movement; later, authentic national costumes were recreated. V. Musteikis brought the traditional *kanklės* (a national string instrument) from Latvia as in Lithuania it was extinct and learned how to make it, materials from archaeological expeditions facilitated the reconstruction of ancient brooches that became a sign of the identification of an alternative society: ‘You see a person with the brooch and you already know that they are from your clan’.⁵⁹

The folk movement was notably influenced by the Lithuanian Folk Theatre opened in 1974 on the initiative of P. Mataitis (the reorganised Lithuanian ethnographic company that started activities in 1967) at the open-air folk museum in Rumšiškės; V. Janulevičiūtė-Povilionienė was a member. D. Mataitienė, scenographer of the company, initiated the reconstruction of authentic national costume based on patterns preserved in the museum, besides, the company revived part songs that had been almost forgotten by that time.⁶⁰ This was an obvious contraposition to official folk companies thus, progressive musicologists had to firmly advocate for the company.⁶¹ However, this theatre could not be unambiguously attributed to ‘parallel society’ as it was a state funded company actively used to serve the purpose of the representation of Lithuanian culture as opposed to folk companies that existed for their own sake and did not fulfil any function projected by the authorities.

The structure of the Catholic underground The second constituent of ‘parallel society’ was the Catholic underground which embraced the widely spread network of Friends of the Eucharist, the system of publication and distribution of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, the ‘Rūpintojėlis’ (Man of Sorrows), the ‘Aušra’ (The Dawn) and other underground Catholic publications, closely interacting and co-operating networks of youth groups and self-education groups organised by active priests and at parishes.

⁵⁸ R. Širvytė’s interview with A. Gudelis, 11 Jun. 2007, ‘Ramuvos sąjūdis’.

⁵⁹ Interview with Vytautas Musteikis, 7 December 2010.

⁶⁰ V. Apanavičienė, “Lietuvių folkloro teatras – tautinio atgimimo šauklys”, *Praeities ir dabarties kultūros metraštis Gimtasis kraštas*, 2009 <http://www.ziemgala.lt/saugykla/pdf/3_apanaviciene.pdf> [address visited on 11 June 2011].

⁶¹ One of the most zealous advocates for the ensemble was V. Landsbergis, who dedicated a few reviews and a booklet to it. Interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, 23 Feb. 2011.

The movement Friends of the Eucharist (FE) was one of the most extensive underground organisations. It started activities in 1969 on the initiative of Sister Gema Stanelytė who travelled around Lithuania and instigated the organisation of FE groups. According to the data provided by R. Labanauskas, around 1971 FE groups were operating in the majority of districts of Lithuania. The most active operation of Friends of the Eucharist was observed in Kaunas with several strong groups in action – in Viliampolė, Petrašiūnai and other suburbs.⁶² It is more complicated to name people or groups attributable to the movement in Vilnius as such activists as A. Vinclovas, who had a FE badge and participated in joint activities with Friends of the Eucharist in Kaunas, are not completely sure whether they can consider themselves part of the movement.⁶³

The meetings of Friends of the Eucharist were spiced with lectures not only on Christian doctrine but also on subjects of Lithuanian history and philosophy, historic or religious performances. Members of the groups would participate in church festivals in Šiluva and Žemaičių Kalvarija, would celebrate Independence Day on 16 February, the Midsummer festival and other important days, would take up preservation of religious and national monuments.⁶⁴ Friends of the Eucharist actively participated in the distribution of underground publications, supported state prisoners. As a considerable number of participants of the movement were from the families persecuted by the Soviet authorities, participation in FE group would lend moral strength and practical advice on how to handle the investigation, etc.⁶⁵

The movement of Friends of the Eucharist had no fixed membership though used certain attributes of involvement – a book of regulations, badge and participation in meetings. The movement operated in small groups consisting of twenty to thirty members. The groups would meet in private apartments. They would interact through regular meetings of the leaders and special recollections organised for the

⁶² Labanauskas, 'Eucharistijos bičiulių sąjūdžio', pp. 93–112.

⁶³ Idem, 'Vilniaus Eucharistijos bičiuliai', <http://www.xxiamzius.lt/numerai/2004/08/13/istving_01.html> [address visited on 11 Apr. 2011].

⁶⁴ A. Streikus, *Sovietų valdžios antibažnytinė politika Lietuvoje (1944–1990)* (Vilnius, 2002), p. 253.; R. Truskauskaitė, 'Eucharistijos bičiuliai Petrašiūnuose', *Atėitis*, 2009, No. 8, <<http://www.zurnalasateitis.lt/prisiminkime.php?straipsnis=343>> [address visited on 03 Apr. 2011].

⁶⁵ Interview with Ramunė Jurkuvienė, 22 Jun. 2010.

leaders.⁶⁶ Ordinary members of separate groups would meet in various festivals and on feast days.⁶⁷

Parishes with active priests became centres of attraction where groups of Catholic youth would operate, members of FE movement would meet, participants of hikers clubs would come and underground publications would circulate. One of such influential centres was Kybartai where Fr Sigitas Tamkevičius worked from 1975 to 1983. It was not only the centre of publication of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, but also the centre of the activities of the Catholic youth, which operated in a similar manner to FE groups (although Tamkevičius patronised Friends of the Eucharist there is no reliable evidence suggesting that the group attributed itself to Friends of the Eucharist). They would celebrate religious and national festivals together, participate in recollections, attend trials of state prisoners, produce performances, travel around Lithuania, learn hymns and folk songs, organise secret summer camps for young people, go on pilgrimages to the Hill of Crosses and Šiluva.⁶⁸ An important centre of attraction was Javantai where Father Juozas Zdebskis worked, though he travelled a lot around Lithuania, organised recollections in other places. Another location for the meetings of various groups was Paberžė, where Fr Stanislovas worked. Paberžė was frequented by Kaunas hikers group led by Š. Boruta⁶⁹ and the groups of the hikers movement under the leadership of Ilgūnas; Andriukaitis and others would receive their copy of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and other underground publications there.

Finally, one more important constituent of the Catholic underground was the private self-education circle. It is hard or even impossible to reconstruct a complete picture of the network of these circles, yet a few prominent and significant centres of attraction should be mentioned: Doctor P. Butkevičius' house on Molėtų Street, the political prisoner J. Brazauskas' place in Kaunas, Aukštieji Šančiai suburb, A. Patackas' room in the hostel for postgraduate students in Vilnius and his organised network of self-education lectures in Kaunas and other towns.

⁶⁶ Labanauskas, 'Eucharistijos bičiulių sąjūdžio', pp. 93–112.

⁶⁷ Truskauskaitė, 'Eucharistijos bičiuliai', <<http://www.zurnalasateitis.lt/prisiminkime.php?straipsnis=343>> [address visited on 03 Apr. 2011].

⁶⁸ R. Žiburytė, 'Nieko nėra brangesnio už tikėjimą ir tėvynę; *Ateitis*, 2009, No. 10, <<http://www.zurnalasateitis.lt/prisiminkime.php?straipsnis=425>> [address visited on 3 Apr. 2011].

⁶⁹ Anglickienė, 'Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija', pp. 165–176.

A number of renowned activists of the national movement Sąjūdis and present-day politicians were educated under the tutelage of former political prisoner physician P. Butkevičius: Patackas, Povilionis, Algirdas Saudargas, Andriukaitis – to name but a few. His house on Molėtų Street in Kaunas was a real centre of attraction for young people. Butkevičius himself actively participated in the publication of underground press (he initiated the publication of the 'Lietuvos ateitis' (The Future of Lithuania) and actively aided the publication of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania), was part of the movement of regional studies, Friends of the Eucharist organised meetings at his place. As Patackas asserts, the doctor had a strong influence on young people. Teaching conspiracy, he also taught them to act. 'Those educated under the tutelage of P. Butkevičius now form a kind of core of what is decent and positive in Lithuania'.⁷⁰

The political prisoner J. Brazauskas provided a slightly different kind of education. One of the leaders of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation Ateitis in the interwar period, who studied in France, also educated and trained young people but did it in a more conspiratorial manner. His trainees were A. Patackas, Fr Gintaras Vitkus, V. Valiušaitis, V. Kukulskis and others. Brazauskas' followers would meet in small groups at his place in the Šančiai suburb. They would travel around Lithuania together, visit active priests, and go on canoe trips. Brazauskas was not involved in the publication of the underground press but took up making copies of self-made books including illegal Lithuanian literature (books by Grinius, Maceina, Brazdžionis and others) and translations from the French language.⁷¹

Patackas, a 'student' of both 'schools', together with his colleagues publishers of the 'Pastogė' (The Shelter), organised a network of self-education at the hostel for postgraduate students of the Academy of Science in Vilnius. Later he and A. Žarskus would travel all over Lithuania giving lectures. As Patackas relates, 'there was a certain tradition of lectures, we would travel from Kybartai to Klaipėda if someone had to say something'.⁷² There was an expansive network of people and places in Kaunas that would deliver self-education lectures on religious and philosophic subjects. It is difficult to detect the

⁷⁰ R. Jurkuvienė (ed.) *Gydytojas: atsiminimai apie Povilą Butkevičių, laiškai, dienoraščiai* (Kaunas, 1996).

⁷¹ Interview with Fr Gintaras Vitkus, 31 Mar. 2011.

⁷² Interview with Algirdas Patackas, 11 May 2010.

margins of the network as it operated according to the principle of networking (employing Manuel Castells' concept), i.e. had no defined organisational centre and unanimous identity.⁷³

The structure of parallel society and its institutions Separate analysis of ethno-cultural and Catholic movements begs the question of to what extent they were interrelated and to what extent these separate 'micro networks' can be considered a parallel society manifesting a certain common identity and developed institutions. What parallels can be drawn between the ethno-cultural movement looking for *raison d'être* in traditional rural communities or the countryside with a slight inclination to paganism and the Catholic underground movement trying to withstand atheism and revive the Church?

The answer to this question lies in the diagram showing the interaction of networks presented in Picture 1. This scheme generated with the help of special software for network analysis UCINET visualises the interrelations of micro networks (the notion micro networks embraces formal and informal clubs, groups with more or less defined membership and structures of *samizdat* analysed in the article). Ties between the nodes depict the overlap of members meaning that the two interconnected networks have at least one common member or members of one network participate in the activities of another. White colour denotes the networks of the Catholic underground, dark grey – ethno-cultural movement, light grey – networks that cannot be accurately attributed to either of the sub-cultures. The thickness of the line indicates the strength of the bond, i.e. the number of dual memberships.

Characteristics of the network show its high total density – 0.270 (the density of a network is calculated by dividing the total number of ties by the total number of possible ties). Separate calculation of internal density of the three blocks – ethno-cultural movement, religious underground and networks of intermediate character – revealed that the density of the Catholic network is higher inside the block (0.44 excluding the networks of underground publication) than between the blocks and the internal density of ethno-cultural movement (0.271) almost equals the density of the whole network. This validates the thesis raised in this article stating that the ethno-cultural movement and Catholic underground form an integral parallel society.

⁷³ Interview with Algirdas Saudargas, 28 Mar. 2011.

The diagram* discloses that there was not only certain interplay between ethno-cultural movement and Catholic underground, these organisations were closely interconnected and formed a tight common network with a huge number of mediators. For example, activists of Friends of the Eucharist group in Kaunas – Fr Ričardas Repšys, Š. Boruta (brother of the editor of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, now Bishop Jonas Boruta) and his wife Danutė, D. Samėnas, V. Snieška and D. Snieškienė, A. Miklyčius and A. Miklyčienė, R. Butkevičiūtė-Jurkuvienė, S. Kelpša, E. Šiugžda and others were also members of the hikers club Ažuolas, club of regional studies Tėviškė and/or other groups of regional studies. According to L. Anglickienė, when Boruta was the leader of the Ažuolas Club the majority of its members were from Friends of the Eucharist movement.⁷⁴ Patackas, Butkevičius and his family were also important mediators between the two sub-cultures: Butkevičius and his daughter Butkevičiūtė-Jurkuvienė were members of Friends of the Eucharist group yet actively participated in the circles of regional studies. Patackas was an active member of Vilnius Ramuva, later joined the Folk Songs Club, and went on trips with Ažuolas and other hikers groups. The leader of another school, Brazauskas, did not directly participate in the ethno-cultural movement though a number of members of the group were involved in the movement, thus singing of folk songs, participation in Midsummer festivals in Rumšiškės and similar activities was common practice.⁷⁵

Many observe that the ethno-cultural movement in Vilnius was more of pagan rather than Catholic orientation, nonetheless groups related to Friends of the Eucharist attended the Folk Songs Club which can be referred to as the centre of underground activities in Vilnius. Certain groups that were not members of hikers or tourist clubs organised trips to the mountains or around Lithuania ‘privately’: for instance, Sister Birutė Gučaitė organised trips, which were joined by members of the ethno-cultural movement as well as by Fr Kazimieras

* Note: the diagram reflects networks that were in operation between 1967 and 1986, disregarding their development in time. The period under consideration is until 1986 as in 1987 new movements – the Greens, groups of monument preservation, Vydūnas clubs and other – started their activities on the basis of parallel society and they are not analyzed in this article.

⁷⁴ Anglickienė, ‘Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija’, pp. 165–176.

⁷⁵ Interview with priest Gintaras Vitkus, 31 Mar. 2011.

Ambrasas, associate of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and occasionally by Fr Juozas Zdebskis.⁷⁶

It is complicated to attribute certain elements of 'parallel society' to one or another of its branches. An example could be the temperance movement supported by renowned priests. The club would organise specialist lectures on the hazards of alcohol, arrange weddings and other festivals without the consumption of alcohol, interact with teetotalers and dissidents from Russia, Ukraine and Latvia. This club was closely interrelated with the Folk Songs Club, would organise festivals together, a number of its members were involved in the activities of both clubs.⁷⁷

All the networks were bound together by the publication and distribution of the Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and other periodicals of samizdat: 'Rūpintojėlis' (Man of Sorrows), 'Aušra' (The Dawn), 'Lietuvos ateitis' (The Future of Lithuania), 'Pastogė' (The Shelter) that was more of a cultural format and others. Alongside the periodicals the underground publication of books should be mentioned, for example the publication networks of A. Vinclovas and G. Jakubčionis that again were intermediates between ethno-cultural and church networks. Various books which were not available legally were distributed via these networks: Lithuanian history books by A. Šapoka and Z. Ivinskis, 'Krikščionybės įvedimas Lietuvoje' (Introduction of Christianity in Lithuania), 'Mikalojus K. Čiurlionis' and 'Žmonės ir žvėrys Dievų miške' (People and Beasts in the Forest of Gods) by S. Yla, 'Tauta ir tautinė ištikimybė' (Nation and National Loyalty) by J. Grinius, 'Lietuvių liaudies menas' (Lithuanian Folk Art) by P. Galaunė, works by A. Maceina and others.⁷⁸

However, the most unexpected link (that is not reflected in the diagram) is Midsummer festivals revived by the Ramuva club and attended not only by activists of regional studies, members of hikers clubs and participants of folk companies but also by various Catholic groups ranging from Kaunas Friends of the Eucharist to young people from the Kybartai parish or the network of publishers of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania from Marijampolė. As Antanas

⁷⁶ Interviews with Meilutė Ramonienė and Alfonsas Ramonas, 2010–2011.

⁷⁷ J. Niūniavaitė–Lesienė, A. Lesys, 'Tęskime, ką esame pradėję. Blaivystės sąjūdžio apžvalga', <<http://www.varniai-museum.lt/index.php?mid=80&art=564&langID=1>> [address visited on 24 Oct. 2010].

⁷⁸ J.G. Jakubčionis, 'Visuomeninės veiklos trumpas aprašymas', Jul. 2010 (unpublished manuscript received from the author).

Gudelis, one of the initiators of midsummer festivals, maintains, that was a certain public manifestation of parallel culture. People of anti-systemic orientation would go to the festival to 'check in' –and to experience the sense of community; it was a certain sign of opposition⁷⁹: 'Midsummer festivals were fundamental events in many senses as they would bring together people, unify them. It was a manifestation of unity, highly important'.⁸⁰

The interrelation between the ethno-cultural movement and the Catholic underground can be defined as a two-level structure: the lower level comprised the networks of samizdat, Friends of Eucharist, 'schools' of former prisoners of state and the upper level consisted of hikers clubs and activists of regional studies that were persecuted by the KGB but not outlawed. An important yet unexpected symbiosis emerged between the two constituents: underground activities rendered 'depth' and a more articulate anti-systemic attitude to the ethno-cultural movement whereas the latter ensured a wider space for activities and a possibility to live normal life avoiding the isolation in a very narrow circle of people yet remaining in the parallel culture, outside the limits of the system.

This effect is vividly described by Butkevičiūtė-Jurkuvienė. The daughter of a political prisoner persecuted by the Soviet structures from childhood, she felt strong isolation and tried to escape it joining the youth group of Friends of the Eucharist where people talked openly: 'Can you imagine – a room full of people and all of them speak openly.' The second significant turning point was involvement in the activities of the groups of regional studies and participation in the first Midsummer festival: 'We celebrate, dance, sing and the atmosphere is amazing – people feel so close ... And they sing the whole night nonstop. And they know so many songs... The whole night! And it feels so good to be together'.⁸¹ Thus, after the involvement with the regional studies there appeared a wider group of people that facilitated the feeling of togetherness though on another level.

Analogous thoughts are expressed by other members of the Catholic underground: 'Membership of hikers clubs was a more official and public action whereas the activities of Friends of the Eucharist were more confidential, the organisation had a more rigorous control

⁷⁹ Interview with Antanas Gudelis, 7 Nov. 2010.

⁸⁰ R. Širvytė's interview with A. Gudelis, 11 Jun. 2007, see eadem, 'Ramuvos sąjūdis'.

⁸¹ Interview with Ramunė Jurkuvienė, 22 Jun. 2010.

and screening as it was involved in the distribution of underground publications. There occurred numerous provocations from the circle of very good acquaintances and even closest friends. We were really tired of it.⁸² Even though the FE was the most numerous and best structured organisation of religious underground the scope of its membership could not equal the extent of the more or less legal ethno-cultural movement. In accordance with Labanauskas' estimations, in 1973 some 400 people could have considered themselves Friends of the Eucharist,⁸³ whereas the movements of hikers and Ramuva, according to the calculations of their participants, could have embraced more than ten thousand members. This accounts for the 'attraction' of the members of the Catholic underground towards the ideologically different yet spiritually close ethno-cultural movement.

Value based affinity of the movements first and foremost lied on a certain alternative ethical code which, in the words of Benda, attempted at restoring normal system of values, the sense of community and responsibility for one another that were deliberately being destroyed by the totalitarian regime. The fundamental values of 'parallel society' were solidarity, respect to those around you, temperance and green way of life: 'That movement was really idealistic, moral. People from Kaunas would go out, those from Vilnius would unexpectedly join – we get together, talk, dance. Relations were based on concepts of brotherhood and sisterhood; there was no alcohol – not even a thought about it'.⁸⁴ These principles were explicitly recorded in the hikers' Punia Pact but in general it was an unwritten rule that initially surprised new members as it completely disagreed with common social rules,⁸⁵ but once people accepted these rules, they became part of the alternative community.

The best-developed institutions of parallel society can be considered alternative system of education and alternative public sphere, whereas least developed because of quite obvious reasons was alternative economy. The system of education was primarily developed on the principle of self-education, yet specialists sympathetic to the

⁸² Interview with Dalija Snieškienė, cited from Anglickienė, 'Jaunimo kultūrinė rezistencija', pp. 165–176.

⁸³ Labanauskas, 'Eucharistijos bičiulių sąjūdžio', pp. 93–112.

⁸⁴ S. Matulevičienė's interview with Vidmantas Povilionis, 'Kraštotyriminkų byla', *Liaudies kultūra*, 2007, No. 6, pp. 46–55.

⁸⁵ See e.g., Albinas Vaškevičius' story – Tamoliūnienė, *Laisvės proveržiai*, or Vytenis Almonaitis, reminiscences about Saulius Gričius in A. Vaitkutė, *Vardan tos Lietuvos: Kauno savivaldos kūrėjai (1990–1995)* (Kaunas, 2005).

alternative culture – historians, naturalists, experts of literature, psychologists and others – were invited to give lectures. An important aspect of alternative system of education was underground publication of books, which was aimed at the satisfaction of demand for publicly unavailable literature.

The alternative public sphere embraced networks of live debates and underground periodicals which served not only as informational network but also as a platform for expression of ideas and free uncensored writing.⁸⁶ Even though it is frequently claimed that Lithuanian samizdat did not manifest an extremely high intellectual standard it still managed to effectively break the monopoly of propaganda spread by the regime. Similarly, an alternative cultural sphere was limited to get-togethers, folk concerts, amateur performances, but authentic folklore performed live by such presenters as P. Zalanskas or such singers as V. Povilionienė could perfectly meet the cultural requirements of people with a good artistic taste.

From the theoretical point of view, one of the institutions of parallel society ought to be alternative economy (it is incorporated into Benda's conception and mentioned in the works of several other authors who researched alternative society though the scholars themselves frequently question the validity of this dimension). However, in Lithuania it could not have been developed because of certain reasons. Firstly, although shadow economy existed in Lithuania as in other socialist countries, the core of it was reselling of goods produced by official economy that were in low supply. In other words, shadow economy was not autonomous; it 'parasitised' in the official system of economy partially correcting its distortions and was basically tolerated by the regime. Therefore, it would be unjustified from the theoretical point of view and reasonless from the empirical point of view to consider the phenomenon that is commonly known as 'shadow economy' an institution of parallel society as shadow economy was exercised by those best integrated in society rather than the opposing part of it.

Working from home, underground publication of books, illegal distribution of music records can be considered a certain attribute of a

⁸⁶ I would disagree with V. Klumbys who suggests that the notions of 'social sphere' and 'public sphere' encoded in the English concept of 'public sphere' should be separated and the notion 'public sphere' should be reserved for the semi-official public sphere. See Klumbys, 'Lietuvos kultūrinio elito'. However, this discussion requires a separate article.

parallel economy, however, this business could not be profitable in the Lithuanian-type 'parallel society' as it contradicted the ethical principles of its members. A. Vinclovas relates about the book publishing 'business' that he developed together with Gediminas Jakubčionis: 'We experienced losses as Gediminas and I had a rule not to charge eleven roubles for a copy of the book for which we paid ten roubles. It would have been wrong, morally bad. It would have been making a profit'.⁸⁷ It is obvious that the ideology of free market and especially the mechanisms of a shadow socialist economy, marked by the usage of the so-called *blat* and continual stealing from factories, contradicted other ethical principles practised by parallel society, thus the development of the dimension of alternative economy was inconceivable on principle.

Conclusions This article aimed at demonstrating that an alternative to the Soviet society social environment with expanded parallel institutions of education, information and culture that were independent of the regime and impervious to its ideology existed in Soviet Lithuania which answers the idea of 'parallel polis' developed by Vaclav Benda, famous Czech dissident and theoretician. To substantiate the above statement, first of all the concept of 'parallel society', which is not widely known in Lithuania, was disclosed relating it to the conception of opposition to totalitarian system that has been discussed also by Lithuanian philosophers for some time past. Secondly, the article dwelled briefly on the structure of the primary components of parallel society – the ethno-cultural movement and the Catholic underground – revealing their scope and forms of operation. This description facilitated the disclosure of the way alternative institutions of education, information and culture as well as public sphere functioned. Finally, an attempt was made to reveal the interrelation of the two sub-cultures and explain their unexpected symbiosis, validating the statement that they could be considered elements of an integral alternative society.

It would be possible to discuss whether this social environment should be called society or a community. Some of its members claim that it was a community where people 'knew each other' at least by sight. On the other hand, there are testimonies of different character which emphasise a strange feeling that would overwhelm during, for example, Midsummer festivals that all the people around are friends

⁸⁷ Interview with Alfonsas Vinclovas, 18 Jul. 2010.

even though they are complete strangers. These testimonies suggest that this social environment better meets the definition of 'imagined community'⁸⁸ rather than traditional community where all members are related through a direct personal bond. Imaginary affinity among the members of the community was enhanced by means of samizdat (it was possible to learn its content not only directly but also listening to foreign radio stations, thus, in reality its distribution reached a much wider circles than the networks analysis disclosed) and even to a greater extent through physical manifestations of the sense of community during Midsummer festivals and other occasions of mass gatherings.

It seems that members of this society knew nothing about the concepts of Benda and other dissidents from Central and Eastern Europe and did not reflect on their lifestyle making use of these notions (this should not sound surprising as, for example, V. Vasiliauskaitė claims that publishers of underground literature in Lithuania were in total ignorance of the samizdat press in Central and Eastern Europe.⁸⁹). Nonetheless, the lifestyle of this community defined by its leaders precisely agrees with Benda's idea and reveals the vitality of parallel society in Lithuania: 'That was a separate world and it existed beyond the limits of official Lithuania. It was absolutely sufficient for us as we had all we needed, lived full-blooded life not being part of the Soviet system. We participated in the system only on occasions that we could not avoid, had to stand in lines, etc'.⁹⁰ Metaphorically, the essence of the idea is best rendered by the word 'attic' employed by Algirdas Patackas: 'Attic' is the word. Attic is not an apartment, is it? Downstairs everyone leads a normal life: landings, apartments, electricity – and here is an attic, not a basement – we did not like basements... You can have a nice view and fresh air in the attic. So, we 'from the attic' found a niche for ourselves where ... we could feel human, withstanding the abuse'.⁹¹

Parallel society, as Benda himself remarks, could not have avoided contact and collision with the official social environment – the reasons for that being not only the obligation of its members to use physical facilities and the economy – stand in lines and go by trolleybuses but

⁸⁸ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London–New York, 1991).

⁸⁹ V. Vasiliauskaitė, *Lietuvos ir Vidurio Rytų Europos šalių periodinė savilaida (1972–1989)* (Vilnius, 2006), p. 14.

⁹⁰ Interview with Algirdas Patackas, 11 May 2010.

⁹¹ Ibid.

also the attempts made by the official system to destroy the alternative. Burauskaitė says: ‘We merely wanted to live and learn this way and the authorities would impede, we did not interfere with the authorities’.⁹² The aim of parallel society was not to struggle against the system but to create *its own* reality. However, in the system that had aspirations for totalitarianism this striving was more dangerous than explicit confrontation.

Author details

Ainė Ramonaitė (born in 1976) is an associate professor at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University. In 2005 received a doctorate for her thesis ‘The Relation between Citizens and the State in Post-Communist Democracy: Analysis of Political Alienation in Lithuania’. Major academic interests: civil society, political culture, social movements, political parties. This article prepared within the framework of project ‘The Phenomenon of Sąjūdis: the Network Analysis of Civic Movement’ funded by the Research Council of Lithuania.

Address: Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University, Vokiečių g. 10, Vilnius LT-01130

Email: aine.ramonaite@tspmi.vu.lt.

SAVOS TIKROVĖS KŪRIMAS KAIP PASIPRIEŠINIMAS: „PARALELINĖS VISUOMENĖS“ SOVIETINĖJE LIETUVOJE KONTŪRAI

Santrauka

AINĖ RAMONAITĖ

Straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kad sovietinėje Lietuvoje egzistavo žymaus čekų disidentų ir teoretiko Vaclovo Bendoro „paralelinio poliaus“ idėją atitinkantis alternatyvus sovietinei visuomenei sociumas su išplėtotomis paralelinėmis, nuo režimo nepriklausančiomis ir jos ideologijai nepasiduodančiomis švietimo, informacijos, kultūros institucijomis. Stengiantis pagrįsti šį teiginį, pirmiausia atskleidžiama Lietuvoje nelabai pažįstama „paralelinės visuomenės“ koncepcija, kuri susiejama su pasipriešinimo totalitarinei sistemai samprata, pastaruoju metu plėtojama ir Lietuvos filosofų. Antra, glaustai aptariama pagrindinių paralelinės visuomenės komponentų – etnokultūrinio judėjimo ir katalikiškojo pagrindžio – struktūra, parodant jų mastą ir reiškimosi formas, kartu atskleidžiant, kaip veikė alternatyvios švietimo, informacijos, kultūros institucijos. Galiausiai, remiantis socialinių tinklų analizės įrankiais, pademonstruojama šių dviejų judėjimų tarpusavio simbiozė, pagrindžiant teiginį, kad juos galima laikyti vientisos alternatyvios visuomenės komponentais.

⁹² R. Širvytė’s interview with Birutė Burauskaitė, June 11, 2007, see eadem, ‘Ramuovos sąjūdis’.