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THE CLASH OF NATIONALITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VILNIUS, 1803-1832

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The purpose of the university is to serve science — and science stands above nationality. Precisely such an attitude was true of the Academy of Vilnius for the duration of two hundred years, while the Jesuits were in charge there. When in 1773 the Jesuits withdrew, due to the closing down of their order by Pope Clement XIV, the Academy of Vilnius found itself at the crossroads of reform. Moreover, at about this time, when the Commission for National Education was founded, the national Polish influence became much stronger in the school.

The very last of such reforms, carried out in 1803 by Czar Alexander I, bestowed upon the University of Vilnius an "Imperial" title. The university was meant to serve an empire, which a short while ago came to include eastern Slav territories — previously governed by Lithuanians — as well as the ethnographic Lithuania itself. The Russian government created a district of education for these newly annexed regions. It belonged to Vilnius and encompassed eight provinces. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski was appointed by the czar as patron of that district and curator of the university. He was an old friend of the czar's, a person who was a descendant of the Lithuanian dynasty of Gediminas but displayed Polish orientation.

The University of Vilnius was the only university in the entire territory stretching to the east, which included Kiev, and also in the territory lying to the west, including that part of Poland, which now belonged to Russia, with its center in Warsaw. Thus, the doors of the university stood open to receive all the young people of noble origin from this extensive region, which was very diverse culturally and linguistically.

The university had to decide what was to be its principal language — a language, which would be acceptable to the students of these various nationalities and also to their professors. This problem did not arise as far as the University of Tartu was concerned because the university was there for the German-speaking barons of Latvia and Estonia. At that university the principal language was German and remained such for a long time to come.

But what about Vilnius? How would the problem be solved there? What lay in store for the Lithuanians, for their language and for their culture?

INTEREST IN THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE

The number of students at the university was not large. In fact, just over 300 had registered during the first five years. The majority of the students originated from Lithuania. By 1812, their number rose to 468; however, in only a few years, the number dropped to about 200. The professors, who had worked under the Commission for National Education, remained. Reverend Hieronim Strojnowski, a Volhynian jurist, was chosen as rector. He succeeded Martynas Počobutas (Poczobutt), the former Jesuit, an eminent mathematician and astronomer. It was Strojnowski, therefore, who had to prepare the statute of the newly reformed university. According to this statute, Latin continued to be its principal language, just as it had been previously.

As regards the Slavic languages, the statute had plans for establishing a department of Russian language and literature. This was achieved in 1805 following the university reform. No chair or any other accommodation was arranged by the statute for the Polish language.

Perceiving this fact as an injustice, Jędrzej Sniadecki, a Polish chemist, began to teach his subject in the Polish language. To Martynas Počobutas the Polish language was inadequate for the teaching of science, especially in schools of a more advanced level; neither did he consider the language good enough for creative writing. He expressed this opinion when he wrote to the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Science in 1804.¹ The Society had been founded in 1800 and Martynas Počobutas was its honorary member.

He also went on to express to them his opinions about the Lithuanian language. He maintained, that "our Lithuanian language" has ties to the Greek, Latin, Chaldean, and Egyptian tongues.² Therefore, Lithuanian was just as important to linguists and to scholars as the above-mentioned ancient languages. Indeed, his views did arouse the interest of the Warsaw Society. Moreover, it appeared, that the instigator of the society, Tadeusz Czacki (who had been born in Volhynia), one of the earliest researchers of Lithuanian statute and law, himself showed an interest in the Lithuanian language. It also happened that during that year a Lithuanian was elected as the society's honorary president. He was Ksaveras Bogušas (Bohusz), a former Jesuit, and an honorary member of the University of Vilnius, who had been collecting material for a study about the origins of the Lithuanian nation and its language. (The paper was published in Polish in 1808.) Czacki wrote a letter to the bishop of Vilnius, to Jonas Nepomukas Kasakauskas (Kossakowski) requesting him to urge the University of Vilnius to study the Lithuanian language, Lithuanian history and ethnography; he also included in the letter some 27 questions concerning the origins of the Lithuanian language and awaited a reply. Bishop Kasakauskas passed on the queries to the university, explaining the matter to them.³

The university replied quickly and affirmatively. In the same year (1804) it set up a committee, on which the following professors were to serve: Juozas Mickevičius (Józef Mickiewicz), the physicist; Simonas Malevskis (Szymon Malewski), the lawyer and economist; Mykolas Šulcas (Michael Szulc), the architect; and Pilypas Goliauskis (Filip Golański), professor of rhetoric and poetics.

It must be noted that at that time the university did not have people who specialized in philology. Probably Józef Mickiewicz, who was a native of Grodno and a former Jesuit, was no stranger to the Lithuanian language. Szymon Malewski, who came from Vilnius and was not a nobleman, most likely spoke Lithuanian. Golański, on the other hand, a Polish Piarist, took an interest in Baltic and Lithuanian toponymy. Szulc, who had originally come from the Polish-German Pomerania and was a pupil and successor of the Lithuanian architect Laurynas Stuoka-Gucevičius, knew little about this language. However, the committee sent in a reply to the 27 questions raised by the Warsaw Society.⁴

Nothing more is known about the further activity of this society; only that two of its members, Mickiewicz and Golański, served as inspectors of secondary schools. After 1803 these schools came under the direct guardianship of the university. Furthermore, in 1803 two people, Bogušas and Czacki, were appointed as chief inspectors of schools (Bogušas to the Lithuanian provinces and Czacki to Volhynia). Mickiewicz, Golański and W. Matuszewicz received their appointment as auxiliary inspectors to the ethnographic Lithuania and were to cooperate with Bogušas in their duties. While visiting schools, they strove to collect material pertaining to Lithuanian studies for the university. In 1804, for example, Matuszewicz encouraged the teachers of Kėdainiai, Raseiniai, Kražiai, and Padubysys "to diligently collect all the information they could find (no matter how detailed), which could throw light on the origins and characteristics of the Samogitian language", and to "forward to the university all the information obtained on this subject, including notes, writings, songs, and other material."⁵ In 1805 Prof. Golański also repeated the same request. When he had visited all the schools in Samogitia in the very same year, he suggested that the university should accept Lithuanian as a fundamental language in all its secondary schools.⁶

Was Lithuanian used at all for teaching purposes? Jurgis Lebedys, a late scholar in Lithuanian studies at the University of Vilnius, has shown an interest in this question. He described an interesting fact, which concerns a person named Zakarijas Niemčevskis (Niemczewski), who traced his origins to Samogitian people of common stock in Vainutas. When he had completed the secondary school of Kražiai and had graduated from the University of Vilnius, he began to teach mathematics at the latter school. In 1802, he went to Paris to deepen his studies in mathematics. There, he became acquainted with Count Conrad Malte-Brun, a geographer, and at his request contributed two chapters to his work: *Tableau de la Pologne* (1807). The chapters were "A Description of Lithuania" and "About the Lithuanian Language". A short French-Lithuanian dictionary was added on to the work. Niemczewski's knowledge of the Lithuanian language was quite authentic and had been acquired, no doubt, in the schools of Samogitia. J. Lebedys thinks, therefore, "that not only at the beginning of the 19th century, but also in the 18th century (at least in the Samogitian schools), Lithuanian was used as an auxiliary language."⁷

Yet why as an auxiliary one? Because Latin was the principal language in the secondary schools in Lithuania, as elsewhere. The schools aimed at preparing their pupils for the university, as well as for the seminaries, where everything naturally was being taught in Latin. Latin was taught also in some elementary parochial schools. Yet it is also true to say that the Lithuanian language played a part in the lives of the pupils of these schools where the primer *The Science of Reading Lithuanian Writings for Children* was used. From 1776 to 1799 fourteen editions of it had been published. At first 560 copies were printed and as many as 2,350 copies in 1799. At one time, the demand for these primers rose to over 3,000 copies.⁸ In the Kražiai school, where the Carmelite monks were in charge, a number of people excelled in Lithuanian studies (not only the above mentioned prof. Niemčevskis). Such notable scholars in Lithuanian studies as Leonas Uvainis and Silvestras Valiūnas were graduates of the Raseiniai school. For many years, the principal of the Raseiniai school in the second half of the 18th century was Kristupas Lopacinskis (Lopaciński). He spent a great deal of

time collecting material for his dictionary and involved his pupils in this work. There was also the Samogitian school in Kalvarija, run by the Dominicans. If the Lithuanian language had not been taught in these schools, even as an auxiliary language, the national Lithuanian movement at the beginning of the 19th century would not have emerged.

The university's interest in the Lithuanian language arose probably from a wide-reaching anxiety to foster its language and culture, especially in Samogitia. It is a great pity that this interest was of short duration and took place only in the last two years during which J. Strojnowski was rector. When the latter became a bishop, his place as rector was taken for one year (1806) by Szymon Malewski, a native of Vilnius. At the beginning of the academic year in 1807, Jan Sniadecki was appointed the new rector. He was the brother of Jędrzej Sniadecki, the chemist, and had arrived scarcely a year ago from the University of Kraków. Jan Sniadecki had received an excellent education in the West as a mathematician and astronomer. Poczobutt was also a mathematician and astronomer, but the two men differed greatly. Sniadecki was a positivist, a Scottish Freemason and stood in strong opposition to the Latin language. He did not deliver his inaugural speech in Latin, as was customary, but began and ended it in Polish. Poczobutt gave him a scolding, just as he had previously scolded his brother, the chemist, for daring to teach his classes in Polish and not in Latin.

Many improvements took place in the administration while Sniadecki served as rector. In 1811 he introduced the Polish language and in 1812 a Polish literature course within the department of rhetoric and poetics. Sniadecki aimed at openly opposing the Latin language, but while Poczobutt and Strojnowski were still alive (the former died in 1810 and the latter in 1815), he did not dare to abolish Latin. After Strojnowski's death, his own term as rector came to an end. Yet his plan to replace Latin by the Polish language at the university was successfully carried out in 1816. Thus Polish became the principal language of the university.

A CAMPAIGN OF POLONIZATION

The introduction of the Polish language into the university was not the beginning, but rather the foreseen result of the work of Polonization that had gone on for a considerable time. "The Polish language acquired even greater importance as soon as Sniadecki, the rector of the university, stubbornly began to attack the Latin influence in Lithuanian schools".^{8a} During the days of the Commission for National Education the Latin language had already been banished from the schools in Poland. Therefore, Polish patriotism demanded that Lithuania, as a "province", follow a similar line of action as homogeneous Poland.

Sniadecki, who had the approbation of Czartoryski, set about achieving this aim through the university, since the university supervised the training of the teachers, and even that of organists, who often simultaneously served as teachers in parochial schools. The teachers were required to be fluent in Polish, but not in Latin. They were asked to avoid the use of impure Polish that had been tainted by Lithuanian. The council of the university, guided by the rector, gave out and confirmed the appointments of teachers and also decided whom to appoint as headmasters. They took care to notice who among the teachers was interested in the Polish language and who was not. According to the regulations concerning education which had been passed in 1807, the university had the right to control even parochial schools although these schools had long since been under the guidance and protection of parish priests and bishops. The university appointed inspectors for schools; these naturally carried out the policy of the rector.

Thus, since 1807, at the time when Sniadecki began to serve his term as rector, the inspectors were entrusted to strengthen the position of the Polish language in the Lithuanian schools. Their reports showed, however, that the pupils, especially in Samogitia, understood Polish only with great difficulty; at first coming to school they were quite unfamiliar with the language. Some pupils, it is true, made a little progress in learning Polish, but their version of Polish was a Samogitian one. Moreover, the pupils were forbidden to speak Lithuanian among themselves. They were also watched and observed. "Watchdogs" from amongst them had been chosen and were to inform the teachers about those of their friends who disobeyed. Indeed, pupils who did disobey received a public punishment or were made fun of.⁹ When J. Mickiewicz visited the Kalvarija school in Samogitia in 1808, he found precisely such a discipline being enforced there. Perhaps, it is worthwhile to note, that Mickiewicz was the very same person whom the Committee had previously appointed to do research work on the Lithuanian language. Now he approved of the discipline heartily as a means to further the advancement of the Polish language.¹⁰

It was the university's task to examine school textbooks and give them its seal of approval. The university approved books of only one kind — namely, those that had been printed in Polish. It did not trouble itself at all with the Lithuanian textbooks and strove to paralyze the efforts of those people who took the initiative to further them. When in 1811 Aleksandras Butkevičius, a Basilian monk and a teacher at the school in Padubysys, submitted his *Kalbrieda*, a Lithuanian-Polish grammar book "to the dear Samogitians", only one of the professors, Z. Niemčevskis, spoke up for it; the other members of the university council did not approve of it and the manuscript seems to have perished. A former Jesuit Dominykas Mogėnas also failed to get permission to have his Lithuanian grammar book printed; his manuscript seems to have perished also. An arithmetic textbook, prepared by J. Stanevičius, a Carmelite, suffered the same fate. In 1814 A. Strazdas-Strazdelis published his *Secular and Religious Songs*, a book used in the parochial schools. In 1824 he asked

the university for permission to publish a new edition of it, but this was not granted to him, nor did he regain his manuscript. In 1818 A. Strazdas translated and published (without the university's approbation) a catechism for schools, written by Bellarmine — to be used in the Lithuanian elementary schools.¹¹

Józef Zawadzki, a Pole from Poznan, was in charge of the university's printing house. "He showed great care and initiative, as far as Polish books were concerned, but troubled himself about the Lithuanian ones only if they brought him profit. He boasted in his letter written to Czartoryski on February 23, 1818, that he had just published a primer in Arabian and a prayer book for the use of the Lithuanian Tartars."¹² Only a 'handful of Tartars resided in Lithuania at that time.

There was, indeed, quite a large demand for Lithuanian textbooks because in 1809 161 parochial schools flourished. There were approximately 4,170 pupils in the province of Vilnius, which also included the district of Lyda (which in reality belonged to the province of Gardinas).^{12a} According to a Samogitian, T. Dobševičius (Dobszewicz), the secondary schools were overfilled with approximately 500 pupils per school. Half of the pupils in attendance were children of peasants.¹³ Merely in the districts of Raseiniai, Šiauliai, Telšiai and Upytė (according to school inspector J. Chodźko), there were 2,427 peasant school-children. The total number of pupils reached 4,680.¹⁴ The children of the lesser Samogitian nobility differed in no way from the children of the free peasants, except perhaps in their dress. All of them spoke Lithuanian.

Quite a number of these peasant children later were to graduate, and several of them taught as professors at the University of Vilnius. Two of them — Z. Niemčevskis (Niemczewski) and S. Malewski we have mentioned already. Another person of peasant origin was Benediktas Klungis (Klongevičius), a native of Biržai. For a short time in 1822 he served as rector, and later became Bishop of Vilnius. Yet another person, far from fluent in Polish, was a commoner — Jonas Skydelis, originally from Telšiai, who at one time was a teacher of theology. The number of students, those of aristocratic birth and those of peasant origin, continued to rise. During the school year 1822-1823, according to J. Chodźko, almost a tenth of them in Vilnius came from the districts of Raseiniai, Telšiai, and Šiauliai.¹⁵ They were glad to get away from the secondary schools, which were under Polish influence, and were deeply moved by historian Joachim Lelewel's lectures at the university about Lithuania's past. They paid attention when he invited them to become better acquainted with the Lithuanian language and to foster it. However, in 1818, Prof. Lelewel was dismissed from the University of Vilnius. The Carmelite monks, who had been in charge of the Kražiai school since 1796, were told to leave in 1817. They were replaced by a number of teachers supporting Polish nationalism to greater or lesser degrees.

"The University of Vilnius," to quote A. Šapoka, "became a cultural Polish stronghold and set the tone for life as it was then lived in almost all of Lithuania. The university's policy was to promote strict Polish influence in all the Lithuanian schools, which were under its surveillance . . . Everyone, it seemed, by becoming a pupil at a school, had to become a Pole also."¹⁶

From the Polish point of view, this line of action seemed logical. After the constitution of May 3, 1791, Lithuania did not exist as an equal partner of the union. It was merely a province of the homogeneous Poland — of a country, which had yet to be welded together. This one-sided decision quickly aroused the opposition of the Lithuanians, but this opposition was quieted by various, sometimes even violent means.

With the arrival of Napoleon in 1812, a separate government was formed for Lithuania in Vilnius. The Poles occupied the most important positions in the government. Jan Sniadecki, for example, became Minister of Education and Cults. After Napoleon's defeat, all the other members of Lithuania's government fled to Dresden, Germany, with the exception of Sniadecki, who under the protection of Czartoryski, stayed behind in Lithuania and was again rector at the university. Now he and his friends were concerned that eventually Czar Alexander I would separate Lithuania from Poland, since the czar had promised to restore the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and asked a prince from Rietavas, Michal Ogiński, to prepare its constitution. For this reason J. Sniadecki, supported by Czartoryski, strove through the influence of the university and of the schools to educate as Poles the new generation of Lithuanians, so that they would join Poland's ranks in the latter's struggle for a homogeneous Poland.

Czartoryski, although pretending to be faithful to the czar, in reality schemed to break away from Russia. Sniadecki, as well as Czartoryski, belonged to the same group of Polish patriots, who were under the influence of the French Revolution.¹⁷

THE SAMOGITIANS' COUNTERACTION

Did the Lithuanians continue to oppose this polonization? Or did the opposition cease completely? In his studies the Polish historian J. Iwaszkiewicz writes of the Napoleonic days, when the Poles took over the leading posts in Lithuania's government and when its president, the Polish count J. Sierakowski proclaimed Lithuania's annexation to Poland on July 14, 1812. Iwaszkiewicz accused Lithuania's clergy: "Through the entire duration of the Napoleonic War, the clergy (with a few exceptions) did not show any compliance to the government of the country. The Lithuanian clergymen lacked a more deeply felt sense of patriotism, as well as ardor of citizenship, which was the result of the extremely demoralizing influence of the bishops Józef Kossakowski and Ignacy Massalski."¹⁸

Indeed, during the Napoleonic times, the Samogitian bishop Juozas Arnulfas Giedraitis (Giedroyć) opposed J. Sniadecki's wish to control church funds, church courts, monastic and parochial schools, and the appointment of priests. Previously Bishop Giedraitis had cooperated with the University of Vilnius and with its rector when there was the need to promote the general and especially the elementary education of the Lithuanian children. Now, the bishop seemed to do nothing, but hinder and paralyze J. Sniadecki's program, which the latter did not forget for a long time. When, after three years, Czartoryski, as a patron of education, inquired what he thought of Giedraitis, Sniadecki replied curtly: "There is nothing good that can be said about this bishop."[18a](#)

The year 1815 was Sniadecki's last year as rector. It was the last year, as well, in which Latin was the principal language of the university. With the introduction of the Polish language at the university, the opposition of other Samogitians became apparent, as there was no lack of them really in various administrative departments in Vilnius. Simonas Stanevičius, indeed, had cause to write in his ode, "In Praise of Samogitians":

"I saw Vilnius, a gallant town,
the ancient city of learning,
frequented by the Samogitians
in great accord with each other . . .
There had revived amongst them
praise for their ancestors,
and for their tongue.
Theirs was a loving relationship,
which gladdened even a Lithuanian."

Kazimieras Kantrimas (Kontrym), a Samogitian and a nobleman of Šiluva, is worthy of mention. He had established himself at the university soon after its reform in 1803, first as an accountant, later as a librarian with the adjunct's title, and from 1808 as the secretary of the university. Kantrimas, with many others who worked at the university, belonged to the Freemasons (to the lodge of "Zum guten Hirten"). He was a close friend of Prof. Joachim Lelewel; the friendship of the two men went back to student days. Jan Sniadecki was rector of the university when Kantrimas worked there as its secretary. Kantrimas orientated himself to the Lithuanian side, yet retained his admiration for Polish culture.

Kantrimas, as reported by his contemporaries, was of a very lively character and he influenced life in his day in Vilnius. His influence was substantial even among the professorial staff since he was also active as head clerk of the senate. He was in touch with men of letters and with city planners. He was acquainted with the noblemen (Samogitians for the most part), who came to Vilnius to hold the diets-. Kantrimas was on especially close terms with students. He even founded a charity organization for them. Together with J. Zawadzki, they established the Society of the Press. Kantrimas also took Tomasz Zan under his wing, who gave lessons to his son and for a time even resided with them. The older man urged Zan to organize students into a secret society of Philomaths and Philarets.[19](#)

Although Simonas Daukantas attended the same course at the university as Tomasz Zan and Adam Mickiewicz, he did not join either of these societies. He, together with S. Stanevičius, Kaj. Zabitis, Reverend J. Čiulda, and others, belonged to a different Samogitian group. Kantrimas seems to have had no direct connection with this group, although he was in touch with its older Samogitian members, such as Leonas Uvainis, Silvestras Valiūnas, and others. He also interested himself in the activities of Dionyzas Poška and Bishop Juozas Arnulfas Giedraitis.

In 1816, when Polish became the principal language at the university, he began to edit a humorous newspaper, *The Street News*. A society sprang up in 1817, connected with the newspaper. This society called itself "*Naughty Ones*", or "*Scoundrels*" and was born as the result of Kantrimas' new friendship with two Samogitians: Ignas Šidlauskas, a Vilnius high-school teacher, and Jokūbas Šimkevičius, who had not long since returned from his studies in Paris; he was a Freemason then and the first orthopaedic specialist in Lithuania and Russia. Prof. Z. Niemčevskis, S. Valiūnas, Tomasz Zan, and other Lithuanian patriots from Vilnius, such as I. and J. Chodźko's, M. Balinski, L. Rogalski, to mention but a few (30 persons in all), joined the society.

Some were interested in Lithuanian history, others in geography, linguistics, folklore, or mythology. They signed their articles with such Lithuanian pen names as Audras, Auslavis, Ganiklis, Gardaitis, Gulbé, Kiela, Pergrubius, Perkūnas, Poklius, Sotvaras, Vaižgantas, Viršaitis, Visagirdis. At the head of the society was Dr. Šimkevičius — Perkūnas.[20](#)

If one ventured to fight the prevalent evils of society, it was wise to hide behind a pen name. The evils were obesity, laziness, banqueting, alcoholism, gambling, litigation, taking advantage of the peasants, greed, dislike of learning, boasting of one's titles, humbling oneself unduly before important people, sentimental-ism, and the imitation of French manners. Such articles aimed at improving the aristocracy and the townspeople. This was successfully depicted in Kantrimas' poem *Mixtum Chaos*.

Another of Kantrimas' aims was to reform the Lithuanian Freemasons, who undoubtedly were of a too subservient spirit to the Grand Orient of Warsaw. A fitting opportunity occurred in 1817 with a publication of a brochure. Its author was Michael Dulski. He was a canon of Vilnius and had aspirations to become its bishop. He was also the president of the German Rosicrucians' chapter and the Master of Arts of the "Zealous Lithuanian" (Gorliwy Litwin) lodge. Monks, who resided in

Vilnius, especially the Dominicans, influenced by the condemnation of the Freemasons, began to raise panic from the pulpits. Dulski, therefore, aiming to disperse the alarm, which had been stirred up among the people, attempted to prove in his brochure, in a naive way, that the Freemasons were a religious society, which had originated in Palestine and insisted that Christ himself had belonged to it. Since the brochure was printed in the university's printing house, the university was placed in an uncomfortable position. Thereupon, Dr. J. Šimkevičius, the honorary member of the university, submitted on March 16, 1818, a letter to the "Zealous Lithuanian" lodge, demanding that it discontinue the mystification of the Freemasons, to stop suspicions that were beginning to be felt among the people. The people, according to him, looked upon the Freemasons as being harmful, whereas the philosophers regarded them as useless. Everybody, including the learned people, would regard them in a different light if only the Freemasons would give up their secrecy and all the unnecessary ceremonies and devote themselves to useful, public works, being anxious to further prudent, moral behavior in society. He invited the "brothers" to reform the lodge, or to establish a new, reformed one.

With the exception of Dulski and one or two others, the majority approved of Šimkevičius' suggestion and soon the second reformed lodge of the "Zealous Lithuanian" came into being, hoping to involve itself in works that were positive and useful to Lithuania.²¹ Šimkevičius himself, however, was not present at the first meeting of the reformed lodge and did not take part in its further activities. He disappeared from Vilnius and died toward autumn due to unknown circumstances in the manor house of Tautkeliai, in the district of Ukmergė. According to Ig. Chodźko, the entire plan for the reform had been prepared not by Šimkevičius, but by Kantrimas. Soon after the reform, Kantrimas left his "Zum guten Hirten" lodge and found himself among those members that had fallen away from it. He became one of their leaders and set to work to prepare a brochure that aimed at reforming, in a similar way, all the Freemasons of the world.²²

The desire of the Samogitians to redirect the Freemasons toward useful work for the country, was reflected also in the Philomaths student movement. In their rules (1819) they noted the following aim: "to work for the improvement of the education of the country, having the country's interests and welfare at heart." As they set to prepare the instruction form for their projects, they reexamined critically the work of the university inspectors, especially in regard to the language question in schools. The expression of the following opinion has been found in the Philomaths archives. (This has been attributed to Dionyzas Klevinskis, a Samogitian from Adakavas). "Is the Polish language, which the child hears in the school, his native one, the one which he has inherited by birth? This matter is of great importance. There is a markedly more prosperous population in Lithuania and Samogitia, in the districts nearer to the Baltic Sea . . . which is able to send their children to schools. Their native language, however, is Lithuanian and not Polish. It would be interesting to know, how many of these children were likely to have further need of this language for any future studies?"^{22a}

This new spirit, which began to be felt amongst the Vilnius Freemasons and Philomaths, drew a response from Warsaw. For some time now, *Towarzystwo Patriotyczne*, or the "Patriotic Society", which had been active there for some time, expanded and could boast of provincial chapters in Lithuania and Volhynia. It issued an order now to its provinces to accept for membership only such people who were faithful to the Warsaw policy, because the duty of a patriot is to promote the "national" i.e., Polish, spirit in lodges and in other secret gatherings, especially those of youth.

There was a counteraction also from the Warsaw Freemasons of the Grand Orient. In January of 1819, they announced to Vilnius that the right to independence of the "Union of Lithuania" had been taken away from them; and from now on its status was that of a provincial lodge and subject to Warsaw.²³ This called forth a new reaction, which aimed to separate itself from Warsaw and establish Lithuania's Grand Orient. To support this undertaking, "brother" Narcyz Olizar donated 15,000 rubles; a house was bought with this money in Bernardinai Street (previously the property of the Kasakauskas family) as the center of Lithuania's Grand Orient.²⁴

The Russians followed closely the dispute between the Lithuanian and the Polish Freemasons. Naturally, they had their spies in these lodges. One was St. Makaniewski in the "Zealous Lithuanian" lodge, who attempted "entirely by himself to fight against 350 Lithuanian Freemasons". He kept the Russians informed and urged them to close down the Lithuanian lodges. As it happened, they closed down the Polish Freemasons first, in the very same year, that the latter had issued their decree to the "Union of Lithuania" lodge.²⁵ The Russians were quick to sense a new spirit in Poland after the Naples' revolution (1820). For this the "Carbonari", the radical Freemasons, were to blame. At that time they had expanded quite widely through Europe. Groups of them were also active among the Russian officers. Even the private guards of the czar had been affected by the revolutionary spirit. For this reason the czar had dispatched them to Vilnius to cool off.

Two years later, in May 1822, Czar Alexander I came to Vilnius, accompanied by his two brothers, Constantine and Nicholas. They found the guards even more moved with enthusiasm for revolutionary ideas; the students especially were influenced by the Polish patriots and demonstrated their revolutionary mind.

Lithuanians expected that, upon his arrival, the czar would proclaim the long since promised constitution and then would proclaim himself the Grand Duke of Lithuania, as he had already done in Finland. He did nothing of the kind, however, and went away highly irritated. As Constantine, the czar's brother, came across Czartoryski dressed in the university uniform, he shouted: "Oh, so you are wearing the uniform of those students, the rascals!" Czartoryski replied: "We shall try to do what we can to improve them".²⁶ More was required than the vouching of such a promise.

THE SAMOGITIANS VERSUS THE RUSSIANS

After two months had passed, on August 1st, the Russian government proclaimed a decree to the effect that all the Lithuanian Freemason lodges and all other secret organizations had to be closed down. Because of the student demonstrations during the czar's visit, Rector Malewski was suspended. Prof. Klungis-Klongevičius took over his duties temporarily, until J. Twardowski, a White Russian from Pinsk, was elected. J. Sniadecki's astronomy course was taken over by adjunct professor P. Slaviński.

We may remember that in 1818, Prof. J. Lelewel, an influential historian, had been made to withdraw. Now, he returned to the university once more and was received with great enthusiasm. Caught up by this enthusiasm and perhaps even encouraged by Lelewel himself, K. Kantrimas took it upon himself to ask Czartoryski to establish a department (faculty) for the Lithuanian language. (The Poles also had similar hopes.) Kantrimas prepared a memorandum. His motives were as follows: The department of Lithuanian studies had already been flourishing for a long time at the University of Königsberg, Prussia; while in the University of Tartu, Latvian and Estonian language courses were being given. In Prussia future parish priests, lawyers, and other officials, whose task was to serve the Lithuanian-speaking people, had no choice but to study Lithuanian. Yet, people who spoke Lithuanian also lived in Lithuania and Užnemunė; therefore, they desired to have a faculty of Lithuanian studies in Vilnius. Kantrimas suggested that Leonas Uvainis be appointed as dean of the faculty. He was an expert in ancient and modern languages, a Samogitian writer, and a compiler of a Lithuanian etymological dictionary. He also pointed out: "It was necessary to know Lithuanian, the language of an erstwhile powerful nation, in order to understand many things in the old Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, and Tartar history."²⁷ These were the very same motives used by the historian Lelewel in his lectures and writings. And what reply did Czartoryski, the descendant of this "powerful nation" give? In the same year he introduced a course, not in the Lithuanian language, but in Arabic.

At the beginning of the following year (1823), the Russians began to search Vilnius and the university. They were on the lookout for revolutionary hiding places — and it did not take them long to come across the activities of Philomaths and Philarets. 108 students were arrested. Tomasz Zan and Adam Mickiewicz, who had already completed their studies, were amongst them. As they continued their investigations, they discovered little groups of "Black Brothers" in secondary schools. The outcome of the children's interrogation was that a whole number of them were sentenced and deported to Russia. Gymnasium students from Kražiai, Kaunas, and Panevėžys were made to suffer especially. The pupils of a Protestant school in Kėdainiai were accused, incredibly, of an attempt to murder the czar's representative, Duke Constantine, and for this reason the school was closed down.²⁸

Nikolai Novosiltsev, the senator of the czar, was responsible for carrying out this policy. The Russians were punishing the children for the "crime" that their elders, i.e., the students had committed, the crime of carrying patriotic ideas into schools. They kept the students in local jails for a short time and then released them; but 18 of them (with Adam Mickiewicz and Zan amongst others) were deported to Russia. Yet they condemned pupils who were scarcely more than children to a harsh fate. Their tragedy is depicted by Ad. Mickiewicz in his work "Forefathers' Eve". These lines, which come from his "The Litany of the Pilgrim" must have also been inspired by their memory: "Save us, oh Lord, through the intercession of Lithuania's young people, through the sufferings which they endured by being beaten to death, in the pits, in exile."

His work completed, Novosiltsev also submitted information about the two-faced role of Czartoryski and immediately the latter was dismissed from his duties as patron of the educational district and as curator of the University of Vilnius. (During the same year, incidentally, J. Sniadecki retired from his post as head of the Vilnius observatory). Novosiltsev also included a statement in his report to the effect that Czartoryski had delayed the russification of Lithuania for a hundred years.²⁹

In that dramatic year of 1824 the Lithuanians struggled with the university censors. As we have already mentioned, two Lithuanian publications had been submitted to them through Reverend Vincas Valmikas, the curate of the Cathedral of Vilnius. They were: A. Butkevičius' Lithuanian-Polish grammar book "Kalbrieda" (put together for the second time) and "Daynos" (Songs), a collection of poems by A. Strazdas. Permission was not granted by the censors, thereupon Reverend Valmikas and Strazdas approached the university authorities, but in vain. Then they took their case to Petersburg, to the Ministry of Education and the Supreme Committee of Censorship. They requested that a separate, competent censor be appointed for Lithuanian affairs at the university.

The case dragged on, but was finally won. Juozas Valadka (Volodzka), a Samogitian from Vainutas and a doctor of philosophy, was appointed as censor for Lithuanian publications. He took up his duties in 1828, but unfortunately died after a year. Prof. J. Lebedys surmises that Valadka's appointment as censor was chiefly due to the efforts of the Samogitian students of the University of Vilnius, especially to those of Simonas Stanevičius.³⁰

In 1825, as patron of the educational district of Vilnius and as the curator of the university, Novosiltsev was appointed in Czartoryski's place. Without doubt, in his office he must have come across Kantrimas' memorandum, which concerned the establishing of a department for the Lithuanian language. Instead of granting this request, which would have pleased the Lithuanians, he dismissed Kantrimas from the university. He also dismissed Kantrimas' trusted friend, Prof. Lelewel, as well as several other professors. He expelled the Polish language from the university office and introduced the Russian.

Later he appointed Prof. Waclaw Pelikan, who had taken part in the interrogation of the school children, as new rector, not permitting him to be elected.

Czar Alexander I was still alive when in June of 1825 the Russian Minister of Education inquired of Novosiltsev what should be done to enlarge and improve the 1803 statute of the University of Vilnius. Novosiltsev invited the professorial staff of the university to have their say in this matter. At the beginning of the new academic year (September 8), the whole staff of the faculty of literature and liberal arts gathered for a meeting. The outcome of this meeting was that courses in the Lithuanian language were proposed besides the already existing language courses in French, German, English, and Italian. The following was given as a motive to support this decision: the Lithuanian language is an important language, both from the philological and from the practical points of view. Lithuanian is spoken not only in the Vilnius region, but in other nearby provinces. It is the language used by priests in churches.³¹

These motives had been previously expressed in K. Kantrimas' memorandum; therefore, the faculty professors must have been familiar with it. And who were the professors who served on the faculty at this time? There was Ernest Grodeck, prof. of classical philology (Greek and Latin). Kantrimas had worked with him for a long time in the university library and helped him with the magazine *Gazeta Literacka Wileńska*, as its technical editor. Ivan Lobjko was the professor of the Russian language, literature, and history. He kept in close touch with Dionyzas Poška and other Lithuanian public figures; he showed an interest in Lithuania's past and had also written about the ancient Samogitian burial mounds and the cities of Lithuania. In the summer of 1823, together with K. Zabitis, he travelled in Samogitia doing research work on the dialects of the language. Leon Borowski, a White Russian, was dean of the faculty of rhetoric and poetics. He had worked in an office at the university before Kantrimas' day and later had belonged to Kantrimas' so-called "Naughty Ones" group. The following men-of-letters were among his Samogitian students: K. Zabitis, S. Stanevičius, and S. Daukantas.

And what was the further development of this project, namely of the introduction of the Lithuanian language course, not that of a department? Nothing came of it. On November the 19th of the same year, Alexander I died and his throne was taken over by his brother Nicholas I. A radical change took place in all the spheres of activity, which concerned Lithuania and Lithuanians, especially in the sphere of politics. For the second time a paradox occurred. Instead of the introduction of courses in the Lithuanian language, in the following year (1826) a course in Persian was introduced.

The new czar was the grandson of Czarina Catherine II, who 30 years ago had finally succeeded in absorbing Lithuania into the Russian empire. He regarded the historical Lithuania as being Russian and planned to make her into an integral province of Russia once again. He even set to abolish the very name of Lithuania, calling it the "Northwest Region".

Nicholas I was not popular among the Russian military officers. Many of them refused to swear allegiance to him. In December 1825, an officers' uprising took place; it was a so-called revolt of the "Decembrists" and was put down drastically. Since the rebels had kept in touch with Lithuanian secret organizations, several of the leaders of these organizations were made to suffer. The Poles could not contain themselves and in the autumn of 1830 began an uprising. But the Lithuanians did not hurry to join them. However, when the students of Vilnius left for the Christmas holidays, they did not return. After the New Year, in February, there was an uprising in Lithuania also. Many students left for the battle field.

With the suppression of this uprising, Czar Nicholas I closed down the University of Vilnius. Only two faculties were left to function — the faculty of medicine and the faculty of theology. He named them the Academies. Other faculties, with all that belonged to them, were transferred to Kiev.

The Academy of Medicine remained undisturbed up to 1840 — approximately until the time when the Poles began to send their emissaries to prepare for a new uprising. Since several medical students had become involved in this, the courses of the first three years in medicine were closed down and only the final-year students were allowed to continue with their studies. However, in 1842 the Academy of Medicine was transferred to Kiev. Not long afterwards, the Vilnius Academy of Theology, together with its personnel and its assets, was also moved to Petersburg.

The last Lithuanian to leave his Alma Mater of Vilnius was Motiejus Valančius, its former student and now its doctor and adjunct professor. On moving to Petersburg, he found his countryman Simonas Daukantas, the graduate of the University of Vilnius, doing research in the archives. They were joined by other younger men, the former students of the university. Daukantas, who was an able historian, wrote his works and booklets in Lithuanian and would sign them with several different pen names. Apparently, he wanted the Lithuanian nation to think that it had a number of capable, highly educated writers. Not only did Valančius write a great deal himself, he also mobilized folk-teachers, book-smugglers, and printers to work for their country. He was the inspiration of the priests; he encouraged mothers (who sat at the spinning wheel) to give their children a Lithuanian elementary education and thus raised the literacy in Lithuania significantly higher than that in Russia.

The academic, official university of the nobility was dead. Due to the persons trained by the first university, a second secret university of the people came into existence, which eventually provided the foundations of national rebirth at the end of the nineteenth century.

* Rev. Stasys Yla, a Catholic philosopher and student of Lithuanian cultural history, has written widely on these topics. Among his numerous scholarly works is the historical study *Šiluva Žemaičių istorijoje* (Šiluva in the History of Samogitia, 1970) and the memoirs of his experiences in the Nazi concentration camp, *A Priest in Stutthof* (1971).

1 M. Baliński, *Dawna Akademia Wileńska*, Petersburg, 1862, pp. 372, 378.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 378.

3 The letter of Bishop Kossakowski is published in the dissertation of V. Maciūnas, *Lituanistinis sąjūdis XIX a. pradžioje*, Kaunas, 1939, p. 308.

4 The answers of the commission are published in P. Augustaitis *Lietuvybės elemental lenkų romantizme*, Vilnius, 1921, p. 33.

5 J. Lebedys, *Simonas Stanevičius*, Vilnius, 1955, p. 53.

6 M. Lukšienė, *Lietuvių švietimo istorijos bruožai XIX a. pirmoje pusėje*, Kaunas, 1970, pp. 92, 139.

7 J. Lebedys, *Lietuvių kalba XVII-XVIII a. viešajame gyvenime*, Vilnius, 1976, p. 21.

8 M. Lukšienė, *op. cit.*, cf. the chapter "Gimtoji kalba pradinėje mokykloje", pp. 92-106.

8a *Vilniaus universiteto istorija 1803-1940*, Vilnius, 1977, p. 94.

9 J. Lebedys, *Simonas Stanevičius*, p. 46.

10 Cf. Mickevičius Juozapas, *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, XVIII, pp. 352-353.

11 M. Lukšienė, *op. cit.*, pp. 194, 339-341.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

12a *Ibid.*, p. 82.

13 T. Dobszewicz, *Wspomnienia z czasów które przeżyłem*, Kraków, 1883, pp. 47, 73.

14 Cf. *Darbai ir Dienos*, Vol. VIII, 1939, p. 78.

15 *Ibid.* pp. 44, 75.

16 A. Šapoka, *Vilnius Lietuvos gyvenime*, Toronto, 1954, p. 64 and *Vilnius in the Life of Lithuania*, Toronto, 1962, p. 79.

17 Cf. B. Leśnodorski, *Polacy Jakobini*, Warszawa, 1960, and *Les jacobins Polonais et leur Confrères en Europe*, Wrocław, 1964.

18 J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Litwa w roku 1872*, Kraków i Warszawa, 1912, p. 262.

18a *Ibid.*, pp. 415-416.

19 Z. Skwarczyński, "O działalności Kazimierza Kontryma w Wilnie 1812-1822", *Przegląd nauk historycznych i społecznych*, IV, 1953, pp. 99-105.

20 J. Bieliński, *Szubrawcy w Wilnie 1817-1822*, Wilno 1910, pp. 37, 73; Z. Skwarczyński, "Kazimierz Kontrym". *Towarzystwo szubrawców. Dwa studia*, Łódź, 1961.

21 For more details on proposed reforms of masonic lodges, see St. Malachowski-Lempicki, *Wolnomularstwo na ziemiach dawnego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego 1776-1822*, Wilno, 1930, pp. 69-109.

22 Cf. Ig. Chodźko, *Obrazy Litewskie*, Wilno, 1875.

22a M. Lukšienė, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

23 Text of the letter of the Warsaw Grand Orient in St. Malachowski-Lempicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-43.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 109-140.

26 *Lietuvos TSR istorijos šaltiniai*, Vol. I, Vilnius, 1955, p. 407; cf. St. Malachowski-Lempicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-190.

27 St. Pigoń, "Projekt katedry języka litewskiego w dawnym uniwersytecie wileńskim", *Z dawnego Wilna*, 1929, pp. 23-28.

28 A. Janulaitis, "Juodieji broliai Kražiuose", *Praeitis*, Vol. I, Kaunas, 1930, pp. 240-42, 244.

29 W. Feldman, *Dzieje polskiej myśli politycznej*, Vol. I, 1913, p. 67.

30 J. Lebedys, *Simonas Stanevičius*, p. 157; for details about this case, see A. Kaupuž and I. Lukšaitė, "A. Butkevičiaus gramatikos byla", *Kalbotyra*, Vol. V, Vilnius, 1962, pp. 122-161.

31 V. Merkys in his study of *Simonas Daukantas*, Vilnius, 1972, pp. 63-64, writes about a new attempt to introduce a Lithuanian language course in the University of Vilnius.