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The Political Mechanism for the Appointment of the Head of Soviet Lithuania in 1974

SAULIUS GRYBKAUSKAS

On 5 February 1974, a Tuesday, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Ivan Kapitonov paid a visit to the Politburo member Mikhail Suslov at Moscow’s Old Square. Kapitonov was accompanied by the Soviet Lithuanian functionary Valerii Kharazov, who presented to Suslov a blue notebook containing the opinions of the Lithuanian *nomenklatura* about the potential candidates for the position of first secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party (LCP). Kharazov’s visit to Suslov was the crucial moment in the appointment/election of the new head of the republic after the death of Antanas Sniečkus, who had held the position from 1940 to 1974.

Kharazov (b. 1918) has survived in Lithuanian collective memory as one of the most ruthless Soviet “governors-general.” This was the title “conferred” behind their backs on all the second secretaries of the Central Committee of the LCP, who—with the exception of a brief period from 1953 to 1956—were not locals but Russians sent from Moscow. The political institution of the second secretaries was important for Moscow as a means of controlling the national republics—functionaries would be sent from Moscow to all the national republics (with the exception of the three Slavic republics). Having arrived in Soviet Lithuania, the second secretary directly supervised the work of important departments—notably those of Organizational Party Work and Administrative Organs, which oversaw the judicial system and the Committee for State Security (KGB). His key function was to supervise the work of the

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local nomenklatura and report regularly to the sector for Belorussia and the Baltic republics of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Kharazov's career followed a trajectory similar to second secretaries of most other republics. Before being appointed to Lithuania, he worked as an instructor at the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU in Moscow. There he supervised the work of the party apparatus and administrative institutions in neighboring Belorussia.¹ In 1964, he was promoted to become an inspector in the Central Committee, already not "attached" to a concrete republic. Now he was directly responsible to the secretary and head of the Central Committee department rather than the head of the department sector.² Kharazov's duties included organizing inspections in the Soviet republics and leading commissions formed by the Central Committee for solving newly arisen problems or issues.

Kharazov was not the only actor in this election. The workings of the Lithuanian nomenklatura, and in particular its use of personal relations, provide an opportunity to look more thoroughly into all-union politics from the local perspective. That investigation, in turn, makes possible distinctions between the statuses of Soviet republic and Russian region (*oblast*), which fundamentally affected the nature of relations with the center. The long drawn-out "interregnum," which began after the death of Sniečkus on 22 January 1974 and ended with the election of Petras Griškevičius as the new first secretary on 18 February, is important not only as a case study of a period that marked a new stage in Soviet Lithuania's administration. It also sheds light on the changing relationship between the center and a Soviet republic in the Brezhnev era, as well as shifts in Moscow's cadre policy.

Three main theoretical approaches have been used to analyze center–region relations in the Soviet system. Two approaches—the totalitarian and the corporatist—have a direct bearing on the subject of Soviet nationality policy, while the third one—the patron–client, or clientelistic approach—is generally used by scholars investigating center–region relations rather than nationality policy. I explain why the totalitarian approach is not sufficient as an explanatory model and how the two other models—corporatist and clientelistic—can be integrated in the concrete case of Lithuania in 1974. I also make a distinction between union republics and regions within the

¹ Saulius Grybkauskas, interview with Valerii Kharazov (Archive of Lithuanian Institute of History [ALIH] f. 61, d. 28).

² Valerii Kharazov's personal file (Lithuanian Special Archives [LSA] f. 1771, op. 258, d. 383, l. 6).

RSFSR: corporatism and clientelism have much more explanatory reach in the former case.

The first approach, the totalitarian paradigm, predominates in the historiography of the Baltic countries. The most common argument runs that the local nomenklatura was totally subordinate to Moscow and had the key function of implementing Moscow's decisions across the territory of the republic.³ Works in this vein note the important role played by the second secretary of the republics as Moscow's representative in controlling and supervising the actions of the local nomenklatura and the appointment of cadres. The only scholarly synthetic study of the Soviet period, for example, asserts the following about Valerii Kharazov: "He controlled almost the entire life of Lithuania... Without his permission, no important matters in Lithuania were dealt with."⁴ By focusing on the role of the "governor-general," such studies emphasize the dependence of the local nomenklatura on the center and discard any possibility of local initiative.

The second approach, corporatism, implies institutionalization of the interest groups involved in decision making as well as a stable elite and highly articulated bureaucratic structures. It emphasizes compromise between the center and the local nomenklatura, manifested most importantly in the appointment of representatives of the titular nation as the first secretaries of Soviet republics.⁵ In the Soviet system nationalism was institutionalized, and nationality was understood as an objective reality rather than a constructed identity.⁶ The corporatist approach, which is used by researchers in analyzing Moscow's nationality policy, does not contradict the totalitarian characterization of the local nomenklatura as a transmitter of Moscow's decisions. The corporatist approach is more convincing than the totalitarian model, however, especially because it posits the active participation of the republican elites in political processes rather than their complete obedience to Moscow. Furthermore, it emphasizes the attempts of the local nomenklatura to balance between the tasks imposed by Moscow and the response of the

³ See, e.g., Česlovas Bauža and Petras Setkauskis, *Lietuvos valstybingumas XX amžiuje: Atkūrimas ir tęstinumas* (Vilnius: Vilniaus Universiteto Leidykla, 2002).

⁴ A. Anušauskas and V. Tininis, *Lietuva 1940–1990* (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2007), 491.

⁵ Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of the Brezhnev Era: The Rise and Fall of Corporatism," *British Journal of Political Science* 13, 2 (1983): 134–36; Ben Fowkes, "The National Question in the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev: Policy and Response," in *Brezhnev Reconsidered*, ed. Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 68.

⁶ Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, 2 (1994): 414–52.

local population, which meant attending to that population's needs.⁷ Local nomenklaturas were among the most important agents in the system, as they were responsible for the political control of nationalism: helping to develop the ethnographic and cultural nation while firmly blocking any nationalist political manifestations.

The third approach—the patron–client, or clientelistic—differs from the other two in that it focuses on another question: what made Soviet rule possible? Whereas the adherents of the totalitarian and corporatist approaches study Soviet ethnic policy by analyzing the flaws in Soviet politics that finally led to the collapse of the system, clientelistic studies are less concerned with the wider national, social, and economic context. Yet scholars of a patron–client bent, when analyzing center–region relations, often fail to notice the basic difference between the elite of the Russian oblast and that of a union republic. For example, John P. Willerton asserted in 1992 that the appointment of leaders of a Soviet republic in no way differed from the situation of first party secretaries in a Russian oblast. The position of first secretary of a republic was equivalent to that of an obkom secretary.⁸

In this way, historians following the clientelist approach appear to have substituted the career aspirations of individual members of the local nomenklatura for wider factors such as the institutionalization of nationalism, local nomenklatura representation of the republic's interests, and their participation in the corporatist all-union process of interest coordination. It would follow that personal promotion, preferably to Moscow, was the main goal of leading Soviet functionaries, whether at the obkom or the republican level. Yet many members of national nomenklaturas espoused some degree of economic nationalism and even national communism (in the case of Soviet Lithuania and Latvia this was in full view until 1959).⁹ Can such an agenda be “accommodated” in the model of a narrow, often informal relationship between the patron of a network in Moscow and his client at the head of the republic? Perhaps, then, the patron–client model places too much emphasis on formal and informal power structures and not enough on the value system of the republican nomenklatura.

Recent studies by Oleg Khlevniuk and Yoram Gorzki provide one tool to remedy this problem. Although they do not themselves treat matters of

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

⁸ John P. Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 37.

⁹ On national communism in Lithuania, see Walter A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

national identity or the political programs of republican elites, these works draw attention to the significance of horizontal relations and networks within the local nomenklatura in determining the status of the first secretary. By considering the consequences of the center's policy for cadre stability, they create a typology of first secretaries in Russia's regions. Khlevniuk distinguishes three types of obkom first secretary—the weak secretary, the dictator-secretary, and the firm secretary; in his view, already on the eve of Nikita Khrushchev's deposition conditions were ripe for the model of firm secretary (as opposed to dictator-secretary).¹⁰ Taking this theory into a later period, Gorlizki reveals how under Leonid Brezhnev informal relations replaced Khrushchev's excessive institutional interventions, and obkom secretaries approached the model of "strong leader."¹¹ Thus, in the articles by Khlevniuk and Gorlizki, the vertical relations described by Willerton are supplemented by horizontal networks. For a "firm secretary," the support of a patron in Moscow was essential not only to fulfill personal career aspirations but also to balance the activities of party activists in the region and to avoid sharp conflict among groups of local functionaries.

By integrating the approaches of Willerton, Gorlizki, and Khlevniuk, it becomes possible to link these clientelist studies with corporatist interpretations of nationalism. The first secretary—the leader of a Soviet republic, who belonged to the titular nationality of the republic—had to secure for himself the support not only of Moscow but also of the local nomenklatura, by promoting the economic interests of the republic and quite often by expressing sympathy with national communism. The situation of a republic vis-à-vis the center differed from that of a Russian region with regard to the dominance of the titular nomenklatura in the republic, the titular leadership's function of blocking political manifestations of nationalism, as well as the role of the second secretary of the republic sent in by Moscow. The activities of the titular nomenklatura in suppressing political nationalism were scrupulously supervised by Moscow's watchdog, the second secretary. The latter could not tie his further promotion ambitions to the position of first secretary in the republic: he knew that after several years of duty he would be recalled to Moscow. Were it not for the need to curtail political nationalism, the status of a Soviet republic would have been basically equal to that of Russia's regions, and the second secretary, rather than taking an interest in the potential candidates, would have put himself forward as a

¹⁰ Oleg Khlevniuk, "Regional'naia vlast' v SSSR v 1953—kontse 1950-kh godov: Ustoichivost' i konflikty," *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, no. 3 (2007): 48.

¹¹ Yoram Gorlizki, "Too Much Trust: Regional Party Leaders and Local Political Networks under Brezhnev," *Slavic Review* 69, 2 (2010): 680.

candidate for the post of the first secretary, most probably by making use of his hotline to Moscow.

The Blue Notebook

The most important material for this article came out of three interviews with Kharazov at the end of March 2010 and one conducted in January 2011. During the last interview, Kharazov allowed me to make a copy of his blue-cover notebook (anyone who lived in the USSR would perfectly remember its color and design), in which at the end of January 1974 he wrote down the opinions of representatives of the Lithuanian nomenklatura regarding Sniečkus's possible successor. During the interviews, we discussed the beginning of Kharazov's career in Moscow (1946–54) culminating in his appointment as the secretary of the party committee of the Pervomaisk district of Moscow, his further work in Kazakhstan (1954–61) as secretary of the Alma-Ata gorkom, and then as the obkom secretary of Guriev and Pavlodar, from where he was invited to take an important position in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1961–67). Finally, we discussed his work in Soviet Lithuania as the second secretary from 1967 to 1978, the apex of Kharazov's career.

Kharazov's interviews and his blue notebook are important in three respects. First, the interviews are valuable because Kharazov is probably the only surviving instructor and inspector from the Central Committee at the end of Khrushchev's rule. His narration takes us back to the second half of Khrushchev's period in office and sheds light on the activity of the most important department of the Central Committee—that of Organizational Party Work. Second, the survey of the Lithuanian nomenklatura contained in the blue notebook reflects Kharazov's own assessment of the situation as an envoy from Moscow and his involvement in the relations of the local nomenklatura.

Third, Kharazov's role in appointing the republic's leader is important, as it illustrates both the behavior of a specific "governor-general" in a specific republic and similar tactics of appointment in other republics and regions of the USSR. Kharazov's work experience in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU was crucial—we can distinctly see how the supposedly objective assessment of the Lithuanian nomenklatura presented in his notebook was influenced by his previous experience supervising the Belorussian administration for the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee. Moreover, according to Kharazov, he passed on his survey technique both to Kapitonov and Suslov, meaning that it might later have been shared with the representatives of other republics: "I told

them how I did it, and Kapitonov as well as Suslov knew about it, but I cannot say if they shared it with others. It is possible that they gave some recommendations when they were asked; maybe they said that it should be done like this.”¹² According to Kharazov, his conversation with Suslov lasted for two and a half hours, and many questions were asked.¹³

Kharazov's blue notebook is not the sole chronicle of the appointment of the new leader of the republic. It reflects only one aspect and completely leaves out another—the activity of the Lithuanian nomenklatura, which was not a passive observer of events. A number of memoir accounts exist that discuss the efforts of the representatives of the Lithuanian nomenklatura to prevent the chairman of the republic's Council of Ministers Juozas Maniušis from becoming first secretary. They mention personal contacts between members of the Lithuanian nomenklatura and Brezhnev.¹⁴ Kharazov did not bring up this aspect himself and, when he was asked, claimed to have no information about it. Certainly, both the memoirs by members of the Lithuanian nomenklatura and Kharazov's interview are vague on certain points, leading one to suspect either that the representatives of the Lithuanian nomenklatura had a false understanding of the aims of the “governor-general,” or that Kharazov consciously omitted particular facts. Kharazov's consistent strategy in the interviews of 2010–11 was to represent himself as an ingenious intermediary, who always managed to find a compromise between the wishes of the Lithuanian nomenklatura and Moscow's objectives, which he always succeeded in carrying out. It is hardly possible that Kharazov was unaware of the Lithuanian nomenklatura's contacts with Brezhnev through the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (CPU), Vladimir Shcherbitskii. His assertion that he personally did not support the candidacy of Maniušis, the chairman of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers, does not sound convincing, though he repeated it twice during the interview.¹⁵ Allegedly, Maniušis himself did not want to be appointed to the position of first secretary of the LCP. During the first session of the Bureau of the Lithuanian Central Committee after Sniečkus's death, however, Maniušis

¹² Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 29, 37th minute).

¹³ *Ibid.*, d. 28, 30th minute.

¹⁴ See Jonas Januitis (former chairman of the republic's Radio and Television Committee, a member of the Central Committee), *Užvakar ir šiandien: Atsiminimai* (Vilnius: Rosma, 1998), 115; Antanas Barkauskas (ideology secretary of the Central Committee of the LCP, 1961–75), *Laikmečio įkairiai* (Vilnius: Gairės, 2009), 390–91; and Lionginas Šepetyš (ideology secretary of the Central Committee of the LCP, 1976–89), *Neprarastoji karta: Siluetai ir spalvos* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2005), 221.

¹⁵ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 30, 1st minute).

was nominated to the position of chairman of the funeral committee.¹⁶ We may presume that Maniušis was well familiar with Soviet tradition and could predict what it meant to preside over Sniečkus's funeral arrangements—in fact, this signaled a serious claim to become his successor.

Despite all these inconsistencies, the nomenklatura memoirs do not fundamentally contradict Kharazov's version or undermine the authenticity of the information contained in his notebook. The chronological order of events is quite evident—Kharazov took on his “sociologist's” work only after it became clear that Maniušis's candidacy had been “suspended,” and that his own authority had been shaken both in Moscow and Lithuania because he had backed this candidacy.

In addition to the interview with Kharazov and the Lithuanian nomenklatura memoirs, I have drawn on archival sources from the Lithuanian Communist Party and other interviews.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the files of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU for the Brezhnev period are off-limits to scholarly investigation, and the archival material of the Department for Organizational Party Work does not include any information on the appointment of the republic's new leader.

While recalling his survey during the interview, Kharazov reflected on the extent to which the opinions he had gathered might be reliable. In his words, the survey was necessary to avoid subjectivity, as only an opinion shared by “many people” could be “objective.”¹⁸ Thus Kharazov made the large claim that he was reflecting the views of the Soviet Lithuanian nomenklatura. He contrasted this survey with his former work in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU. At that time, while preparing a proposal on a cadre question he supposedly would look through the personal files, which contained a general characterization from the candidate's institution as well as several further references. According to Kharazov, he generalized in his notebook the opinions of 47 senior functionaries in the republic on the potential candidates and made quantitative calculations: “Then I did some

¹⁶ Minutes of the session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, 22 January 1974, no. 56 (LSA f. 1771, op. 249, d. 28, l. 1).

¹⁷ With Lionginas Šepetyš, Vytautas Astrauskas (the former head of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the LCP), Valerijonas Baltrušas (the first secretary of the republic's Komsomol), and Jonas Kubilius (the rector of Vilnius University, a former member of the Central Committee of the LCP). I also had telephone conversations with Griškevičius's widow, Sofija Griškevičienė, and the first secretary of the Kaunas city party committee Kazimieras Lengvinas, as well as consulting Vytautas Astrauskas further by telephone.

¹⁸ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 29, 37–38th minute).

mathematics and counted who was mentioned as the first choice and who as runner-up.”¹⁹ This mathematics was the basis for his claim of objectivity.

This begs questions about the thoroughness of the survey and the choice of the respondents. Judging from the nomenklatura memoirs, one gets the impression that these were not detailed and deep conversations but rather statements of opinion. For example, the head of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the LCP Vytautas Astrauskas argued that he did not remember his conversation with Kharazov in detail. He expressed the categorical opinion that Kharazov himself was the “godfather” of the eventual successful candidate, Griškevičius. Kharazov’s interviews are not mentioned in the memoirs of Jonas Januitis or those of Antanas Barkauskas and Lionginas Šepetyš, both secretaries of the Central Committee of the LCP.²⁰ Kazimieras Lengvinas, mentioned in Kharazov’s notebook, had only a vague recollection that such a conversation took place.

One should not forget that Kharazov was not an unbiased observer—he had his own opinion, having begun to analyze who should replace Sniečkus as early as his arrival in the republic in 1967. The limits of Kharazov’s impartiality are also revealed by the list of his respondents. At first sight, it looks well founded and proportionate. It includes both party and state functionaries and draws on opinion from various levels of the apparatus. According to Kharazov, he questioned 7 members of and candidates to the bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, 1 deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, 6 ministers and chairmen of governmental committees, 4 heads and 3 deputy heads of departments of the Central Committee of the LCP, 3 secretaries of city committees, 16 secretaries of district committees, and 13 representatives of other organizations.²¹

Kharazov’s selection criteria, however, raise some doubts. Asked according to what principle he had selected the respondents, Kharazov answered after a slight hesitation that due to the long distances he had not been able to question the heads of the more remote districts, among them the republic’s third largest city, Klaipėda. Since time was indeed very limited, it is true that Kharazov could not linger over this issue. Yet it was not only lack of time but

¹⁹ As can be seen from the notebook, Kharazov spoke to 55 persons on this “election” issue. One of these interviews included as many as five people, and another included three. The numeration in the notebook shows that Kharazov regarded an interview with a group of functionaries as one opinion. Such group interviews were conducted with Soviet activists and instructors of the Central Committee rather than high-level functionaries. Thus in this article 47 is the number of interviews rather than the number of interviewed persons. The quoted passage comes from Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 28, 27th minute).

²⁰ Januitis, *Užvakariršiantien*; Barkauskas, *Laikmečio įkaitai*; Šepetyš, *Neprarastoji karta*.

²¹ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 30, 8th minute).

also Kharazov's relationship to the republican functionaries that determined the circle of his respondents.

So what were the results of the survey of the republican nomenklatura conducted by Kharazov, which provided the basis for electing a new leader of Soviet Lithuania? The candidates nominated for the position of the first secretary were the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR, Juozas Maniušis; the three remaining secretaries of the Central Committee of the LCP—for industry and construction Algirdas Ferensas, for ideology Antanas Barkauskas, and for agriculture Rimgaudas Songaila; the first secretary of the Vilnius city party committee, Petras Griškevičius; the chairman of the Trade Union Committee of the LSSR, Kazimieras Mackevičius; and the head of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the LCP, Vytautas Astrauskas.

Of 47 opinions contained in Kharazov's notebook, the majority supported Griškevičius: in 12 interviews he was named as the first candidate, and in 29 as a possible candidate (among others).²² Conversely, only one person named Barkauskas as the first candidate, and 11 persons mentioned him as worth considering. Songaila was never mentioned as the first candidate, while nine people suggested him as a possibility.²³ Like Songaila, Mackevičius was no one's first choice, but in six interviews he was named as a possible candidate.²⁴ Maniušis, who was considered one of the most serious candidates among the republican nomenklatura, did not receive a single "first choice" vote, while he was mentioned as a possibility in only 17 interviews.²⁵

Thus Kharazov's survey revealed clearly both the candidate preferred by the Lithuanian nomenklatura—Griškevičius—and the unpopularity of Maniušis, who was considered by Moscow to be a strong contender. The weak support offered to Maniušis by the Lithuanian nomenklatura could be seen as a "vote" against him, a fact that has an important bearing on the way we interpret center–republic relations at this juncture. After this survey, was Moscow really still free to nominate any candidate it liked for the Lithuanian leadership? The survey can be seen as a means of balancing the interests of the center and the republic: by letting Kharazov canvass opinion in this way, Moscow was already recognizing the right of the local nomenklatura to participate in choosing the leader. This episode reveals the limits of Moscow's control and of the totalitarian theory of center–periphery relations.

²² *Ibid.*, d. 28, 27th minute.

²³ *Ibid.*, 28th minute.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, d. 31, 1st minute.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, d. 30, 11th minute.

Interestingly enough, the notebook contains a kind of conclusion written by Kharazov after he had conducted all his interviews. Here Kharazov sketched out his own thoughts on what characteristics the new first secretary would need in the current situation. Observing that the successful candidate should govern by collective decision making instead of relying on his own opinions, Kharazov stated: “at the current time the most pressing problems in the republic concern ideological rather than economic issues: the struggle against the influence of nationalist elements and Catholicism; instilling internationalism in the younger generation, strengthening the friendship of nations. It needs to be someone with a strong position on these questions who fully grasps the problems.”²⁶

Reconstructing the “Election”

In the spring of 1967, Valerii Kharazov took the train from Moscow to Vilnius. Heavy responsibilities awaited him in Lithuania. After talking to his predecessors, the former Lithuanian second secretaries Boris Sharkov (1956–61) and Boris Popov (1961–67), he was aware of the difficult character of Sniečkus, the long-term head of the republic. Kharazov was not unaware of the Party’s inner conflicts and was prepared to act decisively—he already had some experience of making tough decisions as an inspector of the Central Committee of the CPSU. However, an unpleasant beginning was in store for him in Soviet Lithuania. One of his first tasks was to get ready for a change of first secretary, which meant replacing Sniečkus, who enjoyed great authority among the local nomenklatura.

The notorious stagnation of cadres did not seem to apply to the first years after Brezhnev came to power in 1964, certainly not in the leadership of the union republics. In 1972, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPU Petro Shelest was replaced with Brezhnev’s old acquaintance Vladimir Shcherbitskii; in 1969 and 1972, in reaction to large-scale corruption, the leaders of the Caucasian republics Azerbaijan and Georgia were removed.²⁷ This all-union context did not allow even Sniečkus, who had supported Brezhnev’s group in 1964, to feel totally safe. Sniečkus ingeniously maneuvered by dropping hints about his planned resignation, discussing in private conversations who might become his successor. As Griškevičius’s wife asserted, Sniečkus promised more than one person, including her husband, that he would recommend him as his successor. Still, when the real threat of replacement arose, Sniečkus was able to push his rivals into insignificant positions. For example, in 1971, when the first secretary of the Vilnius city

²⁶ Kharazov’s notebook, 1974 (ALIH f. 61, d. 32, ll. 41–42).

²⁷ Fowkes, “The National Question in the Soviet Union,” 69.

committee, Kazimieras Mackevičius, inadvertently said to his friends, “When I have this post, we will carry on differently,” he was dismissed and demoted to the noninfluential position of chairman of the Lithuanian Council of Trade Unions.²⁸

Sniečkus’s prolonged leadership probably suited Kharazov as well, though the latter asserted during the interview that Moscow had reproached him for not raising the issue of replacing Sniečkus.²⁹ Criticism from the center was, however, fully offset by Kharazov’s increased importance in the republic. First, he found a way of working with Sniečkus and reached a certain *modus vivendi*. According to Kharazov, although they used to have arguments, they resolved their differences at private meetings. By way of illustration, he mentioned a case when, as he left Sniečkus’s office following a heated discussion, the door slammed because of a draught; Sniečkus thought that Kharazov was enraged and soon made a call to appease him. Second, Sniečkus’s further term in office increased Kharazov’s political dividends among the local nomenklatura. Knowing Sniečkus’s age, they predicted that the question of his successor would arise soon; and they guessed that Kharazov, as Moscow’s representative, would heavily influence the decision of whom to appoint as the new secretary. For example, the memoirs of former party functionaries ridiculed Ferensas, the economics secretary of the Lithuanian Central Committee, who constantly allied himself with Kharazov and tried to curry favor with him. Interestingly enough, in the blue notebook we find critical words about Kharazov uttered by Ferensas during a drinking party in 1972 in Leningrad. According to one of Kharazov’s respondents, “After half a liter of vodka per person, [Ferensas] candidly declared, ‘Today I have to yield to Kharazov, but I believe a moment will come when I will show him his proper place.’”³⁰

Despite Moscow’s intention to replace Sniečkus, he survived in office until his death on 22 January 1974. The appointment of his successor took an atypically long time for the Soviet regime: it was not until almost one month later, on 18 February, that Griškevičius was appointed. On 22 January, Kharazov chaired a session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, during which the decision was made to establish a state committee for Sniečkus’s funeral, and Maniušis was appointed its chairman. Griškevičius was also a member of the committee, while Kharazov’s name did not appear

²⁸ Vytautas Tininis, *Antanas Sniečkus: 33 metai valdžioje* (Vilnius: Lietuvos karo akademija, 2000), 208.

²⁹ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 34, 13th minute).

³⁰ Kharazov’s notebook (ALIH f. 61, d. 32, l. 2).

on the list.³¹ The second secretary prepared and delivered a speech at the funeral proceedings (although, according to Kharazov, Maniušis tried to dissuade him from doing so). Though no hint of Kharazov's speech has been found among the documents of the Central Committee of the LCP, the fact that Kharazov spoke is confirmed by archival photographs showing only two people delivering speeches at the funeral events of 23–26 January 1974 at the Vilnius Sports Palace—Kapitonov and Kharazov.³²

The issue of Sniečkus's successor would undoubtedly have been solved much quicker if Maniušis, the candidate favored by Kharazov, had been appointed.³³ As Kharazov recalls, Maniušis drew his attention as a potential successor to Sniečkus from the very beginning of his time in Lithuania. Maniušis, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR, was a Lithuanian born and educated in Russia, who arrived in Lithuania after World War II and spoke Lithuanian with difficulty. He was well acquainted with members of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU. According to Valerijonas Baltrūnas, the sons of Maniušis and Kapitonov were fellow students.³⁴ In his memoirs Maniušis wrote of his friendly relations with some members of the department. By a long-established tradition, both in Moscow and in the republics, the person appointed as head of the funeral committee had to become the successor of the deceased. According to Kharazov, Moscow and in particular Suslov himself favored Maniušis's candidacy. Suslov's preference for this candidate is attested in the memoirs of the Lithuanian nomenklatura. As Barkauskas, former secretary for ideology of the Central Committee of the LCP, remembers, while Sniečkus was still alive, Suslov preferred to maintain contact with Maniušis rather than with the first secretary. Barkauskas asserted that Suslov's friendship with Sniečkus was a mere rumor.³⁵ According to Januitis, upon hearing of Maniušis's candidacy, Suslov said, "He is a valuable candidate."³⁶

³¹ Minutes of the session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, 22 January 1974, no. 56 (LSA f. 1771, op. 249, d. 28, l. 1); decision of the Central Committee of the LCP, the Supreme Council of the LSSR, and the Council of Ministers of the LSSR, 22 January 1974, no. 33 (LSA f. 1771, op. 249, d. 28, l. 6).

³² Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCSA) f. 1-21836.

³³ Januitis, *Užvakar ir šiandien*, 110–17. During our interview, Kharazov denied having protected Maniušis—Maniušis himself supposedly did not want to become the first secretary.

³⁴ Grybkauskas, interview with Valerijonas Baltrūnas (ALIH f. 61, d. 35).

³⁵ Barkauskas, *Laikečio įkaitai*, 332. Still, in my opinion, Barkauskas contradicts himself in trying to deny Sniečkus's friendly relations with Suslov—on the same page he vividly describes how Sniečkus did not hesitate to call Suslov when problems arose with obtaining permission for the republic's song and dance ensemble Lietuva to go abroad (*Laikečio įkaitai*, 332).

³⁶ Januitis, *Užvakar ir šiandien*, 111.

The apparently logical appointment of Maniušis as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the LCP was, however, interrupted by a telephone call to Brezhnev from Vladimir Shcherbitskii, the first secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee. Shcherbitskii was calling on behalf of Kazimieras Liaudis, a party veteran and a former chairman of the republic's KGB (1954–59), who later held a rather uninfluential position as honorary chairman of the Revision Commission of the LCP. Liaudis, in turn, had been persuaded to contact Brezhnev, whom he knew from prewar times in Dnepropetrovsk, by people ill-disposed toward Maniušis from Sniečkus's entourage.³⁷

Quite a few other members of the Lithuanian nomenklatura were ill-disposed toward Maniušis. For example, Januitis, one of the instigators of the "telephone call to Brezhnev," asserts in his memoirs that Šumauskas, the chairman of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, returned in a hurry from Moscow to the funeral and "had barely closed the door of his home" when he received a visit from Liaudis, Aleksandras Drobnys (the chairman of the Planning Committee of the LSSR), and Januitis. These men began to make plans "to hinder Kharazov from installing Maniušis in this post."³⁸ When Šumauskas turned down the suggestion that he talk to Moscow on the grounds that "they might think that I want Sniečkus's post," the conspirators recalled Liaudis's personal relations with Brezhnev.³⁹ Still, Liaudis did not dare to call Brezhnev directly; instead, he asked his acquaintance from Dnepropetrovsk, Shcherbitskii, for a favor. Today it is difficult to establish the exact time when the call to Shcherbitskii was made. We can assume that having learned about the death of his close companion, Šumauskas took haste to leave Moscow for Vilnius earlier than Kapitonov, who had to make arrangements for Sniečkus's funeral with the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU. As Januitis asserts in his memoirs, the call to Shcherbitskii was made right after Šumauskas had returned to Vilnius.

Januitis's memoirs contain an indirect reproach to those secretaries and members of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP who did not approve of Maniušis's candidacy but did not take any measures against him.⁴⁰

³⁷ Šepetyš, *Neparastoji karta*, 221.

³⁸ Januitis, *Užvakar ir šiandien*, 115.

³⁹ This party veteran had known the general secretary since before the war, in Dnepropetrovsk. There were rumors in the republic that he was Brezhnev's party godfather and had written a recommendation for him to join the Party. According to Kharazov, he asked Liaudis directly about the recommendation; and Liaudis answered that he did not write it but confirmed that at that time he was the chairman of the factory's party committee. Thanks to this acquaintance, Liaudis was the first in the party apparatus to receive the award of Hero of Labor (on the occasion of his 70th birthday).

⁴⁰ Januitis, *Užvakar ir šiandien*, 115.

It was hardly Maniušis's personal qualities alone that caused the Lithuanian nomenklatura not to wish to see him in the top position. Associates of Sniečkus, too, may have been reluctant to be overshadowed and ruled by the political tandem of Kharazov–Maniušis, which would definitely have meant the republic's greater dependence on the center. Here we find the likely reason for Maniušis's appeal to Kharazov to refrain from delivering a speech at Sniečkus's funeral. Maniušis was afraid that this action would provoke dissatisfaction and raise suspicion about the dominance of the "governor-general" in the republic's political arena. The Lithuanian nomenklatura was far from taking a unanimously positive view of Kharazov, as can be seen from memoirs, interviews, and other sources. For example, when the members of the Central Committee of the LCP were elected at the 16th congress of the LCP on 3–5 March 1971, Kharazov collected the most votes "against"—as many as 50 delegates voted against him.⁴¹

After the funeral, at the train station, Kharazov asked Kapitonov, who was on the point of leaving for Moscow, "Ivan Vasilych, did you manage to discuss who might become the first secretary?" The latter answered, "No, I didn't; you'd better get ready."⁴² Thus Kharazov embarked on the work of a party sociologist. Kharazov himself offers an interesting explanation of why he decided to conduct the survey instead of solving the question in some other way. He could have recommended a candidate—for example, his close associate Maniušis—on his own initiative, without regard to the mood and opinion of the local nomenklatura. Kharazov felt that he was forced to consult them, however, as there were threats to disrupt the electoral plenum of the Central Committee of the LCP. The blue notebook's sample of 47 reveals whom Kharazov treated with apprehension: this group included not only the above mentioned Liaudis and Drobnys but also Juozas Petkevičius, the chairman of the republic's KGB. During his interview with Kharazov, he stated: "In the event of Maniušis's presentation as a candidate I will speak against him. There will be opposition at the plenum."⁴³ Similarly, in a conversation with Kharazov, Liaudis stated, "If the candidacy (of Maniušis) is advanced, I will speak against it at the plenum."⁴⁴ Kharazov's fear of having the plenum fail was probably caused by his Belorussian experience: almost ten years earlier, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Belorussian CP failed to elect

⁴¹ Minutes of the 16th congress of the LCP (LSA f. 1771, op. 244, d. 176, l. 493).

⁴² Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 28, 22nd minute).

⁴³ The chairman of the republic's KGB was in a position to influence the relationship among the CPSU apparatus, the KGB, and the republic-level Party. It seems from this example that Petkevičius was more "titular nomenklatura" than "chekist."

⁴⁴ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 31, 9th minute).

Tikhon Kiselev, the candidate who had Moscow's blessing, and during a later session in 1965 the candidacy of Petr Masherov was unexpectedly advanced and put to a vote.⁴⁵ If a similar scenario had occurred in Lithuania, Kharazov would have lost his authority and quite probably would have been recalled to Moscow. The "sociological survey" was an effective political move that gave the second secretary the role and influence of an interpreter of opinions. Tellingly, Lionginas Šepetys asserts in his memoirs that Griškevičius was not as independent from the center as his predecessor Sniečkus, since he received the post from the "hands" of the second secretary.⁴⁶

When he first began conducting the survey, Kharazov would invite to his office two party functionaries at a time, but he found the representatives of the Lithuanian nomenklatura rather unwilling to talk. Seeing this, Kharazov began private conversations, in which his interlocutors expressed their thoughts and opinions about the possible candidates much more frankly.⁴⁷ During my interviews in 2010–11, Kharazov even took pride in the fact that his conversations with Lithuanians were open—he regarded this as a sign of respect and recognition of his authority. In his view, their willingness to talk proved that the representatives of the Lithuanian nomenklatura trusted him more than each did the other.

However, another interpretation of this Lithuanian "openness" is possible. Lithuanians regarded Kharazov as "Moscow's ear," into which they could voice their opinions. The second secretary was "other," "alien," and thus even though a Lithuanian functionary may have feared that his support for one or another candidate might later turn against him, the danger was not so great: in that case the account of "Moscow's henchman" would have been regarded as an attempt to sow discord. For example, Šepetys, the former secretary for ideology, recalls that Nikolai Dybenko, who replaced Kharazov in this post, was fond of causing intrigues: he would take a Lithuanian functionary aside and tell him that someone was spreading rumors against him.⁴⁸ Although the second secretary was not trusted as "kin," however, he was a valuable hotline to the center. Kharazov's interviews clearly illustrate that the Lithuanian functionaries regarded conversations with him as "telling Moscow." According to Kharazov, after a conversation with him Šumauskas once admitted in public, "I told it to Moscow."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Grybkauskas, interview with Baltrūnas (ALIH f. 61, d. 35).

⁴⁶ Grybkauskas, interview with Lionginas Šepetys (ALIH f. 61, d. 37).

⁴⁷ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 28, 24th minute).

⁴⁸ Šepetys, *Neprarastoji karta*, 103.

⁴⁹ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 29).

Although Kharazov himself did not mark the dates he conducted the survey, memoirs and archival sources clearly reveal when he was engaged in this activity. According to Januitis, Kapitonov went back to Moscow on 27 January. Thus it could be assumed that Kharazov set to work that day. The data gathering may have taken slightly more than a week, as the material had to be ready on 5 February. On that day a meeting of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP took place without Kharazov's participation. The session was led by Secretary for Ideology Barkauskas.⁵⁰ Its participants included Griškevičius, the first secretary of the Vilnius city committee. Bearing in mind that the meetings of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU took place on Tuesdays, one can confidently assert that on 5 February 1974, a Tuesday, Kharazov visited the Central Committee complex on Old Square in Moscow, where he presented his notes to Kapitonov and Suslov and proposed Griškevičius's candidacy.⁵¹ As is evident from Kharazov's account, after quite a long conversation Suslov approved the candidacy. He asked Kharazov to wait until the end of the meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee so that if need arose he could be called in. In the event, Kharazov's explanations were not needed, so it seems that Griškevičius's candidacy did not raise any doubts among the secretaries of the Central Committee. At the end of the meeting Kapitonov confirmed to Kharazov that the candidacy was approved and would be presented for consideration at the Politburo.

Having returned from Moscow, the second secretary did not inform Griškevičius of the results of his trip—the Central Committee's approval of his candidacy—in the interests of “avoiding any talk.” According to Kharazov, it was not until the end of the Vilnius city party conference on 7–8 February 1974, in which Griškevičius was re-elected the first secretary of the Vilnius city committee, that he and Griškevičius went to a rather remote location, the Bare Hill in Vilnius, where he informed his colleague of the decision in his favor. Kharazov suggested that Griškevičius should get ready to go to Moscow: “You are invited to the Politburo.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Minutes of the session of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, 5 February 1974, no. 57 (LSA f. 1771, op. 249, d. 30, l. 1).

⁵¹ Unfortunately, even the *opisi* of the Secretariat and Politburo files are not available for researchers in the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI). Nevertheless, copies of them in the archive of the Hoover Institution (Stanford University) allow us to check the date of the Secretariat meeting and to prove that it took place on 5 February. See Archives of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet State Microfilm Collection, reel 1, Finding Aid to *fond 4, opis' 16, delo 148*: “Protokol no. 112 zasedaniia Sekretariata TsK KPSS ot 5 fevralia 1974 g.”

⁵² Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 28, 35th minute).

Naturally, the appointment of the first secretary of the republic had to go through all the necessary nomenklatura procedures. This post was on the nomenklatura list approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, thus the decision of the Secretariat was not sufficient. Griškevičius had to go to Moscow personally and present himself to the Politburo. Although the exact date of his visit to Moscow has not been found in memoirs or interviews, it can be asserted quite confidently that he was invited to Moscow on 14 February. On that day, a Thursday, a session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU took place. According to his wife, conversations with the secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU did not come easy to Griškevičius, who complained that he was reproached for ideological failings and manifestations of nationalism in the republic.

The supposition about Griškevičius's visit to Moscow on 14 February is also confirmed by events in Lithuania. As Astrauskas recalls, Kharazov tried to keep Griškevičius's candidacy a complete secret, even putting Astrauskas in a strange position. Knowing full well that Griškevičius had already left for Moscow, Kharazov told Astrauskas, who supervised the congress of the republican Komsomol, to include Griškevičius on the guest list. Naturally, Astrauskas was not able to contact Griškevičius. The account of Griškevičius's wife also supports Astrauskas's words about the special aim of Griškevičius's trip to Moscow and its secrecy. She asserted that she was told not to make contact with anyone on those days and to leave Vilnius. Having seen her husband off to the Vilnius–Moscow train, on which he traveled as an ordinary passenger rather than in the compartment reserved for the government, she could inform neither the party figure Feliksas Bieliauskas nor the writer and Lenin Prize winner Eduardas Mieželaitis that she and her husband would be unable to come to dinner as previously arranged.

There was a logic behind Kharazov's behavior. Before the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU had made its decision, it was loose and dangerous to speak of a successful candidate: if Moscow had changed its mind, Kharazov's authority would have been shaken in the eyes of the Lithuanians. Still, there is a great difference between refraining from spreading the news and attempting to maintain absolute secrecy. This gives us reason to suspect that Kharazov was afraid of possible dissatisfaction from those who were ill-disposed toward the candidacy of Griškevičius. Because Griškevičius had made his career in ideology, some heads of the republic's districts feared that as the boss of the republic he would not devote enough attention to agriculture. This, at least, was Astrauskas's claim.

Griškevičius's participation in the Vilnius party conference on 7–8 February and the fact that he was informed of his candidacy only after this event allows us to ascertain that he was expected to appear at the session of the Politburo the following week, on 14 February. Since Griškevičius had gone to Moscow without making it public, Astrauskas was unable to contact him and invite him to the congress of the Lithuanian Komsomol on 13–14 February. Griškevičius's name does not appear on the guest list of the congress.⁵³

A few days later, on 18 February, the 13th Plenum of the Central Committee of the LCP took place, during which Griškevičius was elected first secretary. As was customary, Moscow's representative—Nikolai Perun, the deputy head of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee—participated in the plenum and introduced Griškevičius from the podium. According to Kharazov, when Griškevičius's name was announced, several people applauded, which pleased Kharazov, as it meant his work behind the scenes had reached a successful conclusion. In his inauguration speech, the newly elected leader of the LCP told the assembly he had been made aware of “certain suggestions and wishes” regarding the need to increase the efficiency of industrial production. Griškevičius also noted that dissatisfaction with the manifestations of nationalism in the republic had been expressed at the Central Committee in Moscow: “Certainly, recent manifestations of negative phenomena in some cities and districts are extremely unpleasant. Just in the last few days, anti-Soviet nationalist leaflets have appeared in some places.”⁵⁴ These words support the contention that an ability to suppress nationalism was the main criterion for political success in the republican nomenklatura.

As Griškevičius's wife recalls, her husband revealed to her what Šumauskas, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR, told him after the plenum: “Don't get too excited: they applauded not because you have been elected, but because a certain other person has not been elected.” If this is true, it confirms once again the memoir evidence that the Lithuanian nomenklatura was strongly disposed against Maniušis's candidacy.

Theoretical Interpretation of the “Election”

The manner in which the Lithuanian first secretary was appointed in 1974 could be seen to lend support to three different views of Soviet politics: the totalitarian paradigm (according to which the role of the second secretary was paramount), the clientelistic view (which emphasizes the personal relations

⁵³ Minutes of the Congress of the Lithuanian Komsomol (LSA f. 4421, op. 28, d. 5).

⁵⁴ Text of Griškevičius's speech at the 13th plenum of the Central Committee of the LCP, 18 February 1974 (LSA f. 1771, op. 249, d. 3, l. 8).

of the republic's functionaries with Brezhnev), and the corporatist approach (which stresses the role of the titular *nomenklatura*). Overall, material drawn from Kharazov's blue notebook and interviews, supplemented by archival material, suggests that the totalitarian approach, which emphasizes Moscow's control, has been overplayed, and that the influence of the local *nomenklatura* has been unduly belittled.

Naturally, the prominent role played by "Moscow's eyes and ears"—the second secretary—lends credence to the totalitarian model. Kharazov was able to satisfy his masters on Old Square in Moscow without causing a political storm in Lithuania. He had enough room for maneuver both to select a candidate suitable for Moscow and to satisfy the local *nomenklatura*. He was able to avoid rocking the election boat or transgressing the narrow boundaries of "democratic centralism" while making himself important in the eyes of the local *nomenklatura*. His survey allowed him to justify his selection to Moscow while giving him scope to defend himself against any dissatisfaction the Lithuanian *nomenklatura* might express: after all, he was only reflecting the views of that same *nomenklatura*. Thus, if need be, the blue notebook could serve Kharazov as a political shield in both Moscow and Vilnius.

The extreme secrecy surrounding Griškevičius's appointment also supports the totalitarian model. It confirms once again the great importance of Moscow and its representative. Secrecy was intended to impress on Griškevičius the important role of Kharazov in the appointment/election and to bring the "governor-general" political dividends—to ensure that the new first secretary would be well disposed to the second. This degree of confidentiality also allows us to suspect that this candidacy met the expectations of Kharazov himself; we can agree with Astrauskas's above-mentioned statement that Kharazov was Griškevičius's "godfather." This view is further confirmed by Kharazov's reminiscence that Suslov asked him during their conversation in the Central Committee if it was true that Kharazov's proposed candidate Griškevičius had been directly subordinate to him when he worked as the head of the Department for Organizational Party Work of the Central Committee of the LCP.⁵⁵

Yet Kharazov's efforts to ensure the secrecy of the election procedure may prove that Moscow's representative was not omnipotent and had to play the game of the local *nomenklatura*. Kharazov would hardly have taken so much trouble to conceal his scenario had he been convinced that the election process would go smoothly and nothing would interfere with Moscow's choice. Here a question arises—was Griškevičius indeed the choice of the center? As can be seen from the account in Kharazov's interview, Suslov preferred

⁵⁵ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 28, 30th minute).

Maniušis's candidacy; besides, the latter was the chairman of Sniečkus's funeral committee. Thus according to the totalitarian model Maniušis ought to have become the first secretary.

This case study reveals a shift in bureaucratic politics: although the system, as embodied by Suslov and Kharazov, sought to curb the titular nomenklatura, it finally had to step back and give way to a clientelistic solution. According to Oleg Khlevniuk, after Stalin's death the road of "liberating" the regional nomenklatura was taken. In the period of stagnation, a well-established regional nomenklatura had achieved a significant degree of independence from the center.⁵⁶ Quite possibly, clientelism was already so well entrenched after the Khrushchev and even late Stalin periods that Brezhnevian "trust in cadres" was the only practical way to proceed. Thus, if we take into account the context of center–region relations since Stalin's death, we can see the prevailing clientelism not only as a sign of the weakness of Brezhnev's political milieu but also as a necessary political course after a certain "privatization" of the nomenklatura had occurred.⁵⁷

It is obvious that the Soviet system did not have a well-developed mechanism for coordinating the interests of the republics and representing them.⁵⁸ In the absence of such a mechanism, clientelism played the leading role. The result was a highly complex style of interest balancing. As the election of Sniečkus's successor in 1974 suggests, new practices of interest coordination emerged within the Soviet system during the so-called stagnation period. Above all, the local nomenklatura obtained the right to elections. In the Brezhnev period the center could no longer behave as it had in Soviet Latvia in 1959, when it appointed Arvīds Pelše, useful and acceptable only to Moscow, and thus purged the national nomenklatura. As Rein Taagepera pointed out with respect to neighboring Estonia, the Soviet regime did not have the political will for another round of party purging after 1968.⁵⁹ But the question remains: what lay behind this lack of political will? The answer probably has much to do with the increasingly intricate business of interest coordination. As mentioned earlier, the appointment of Masherov in the Belorussian SSR, which bypassed the influential Department for Organizational Party Work, may well have fit this pattern.

⁵⁶ Khlevniuk, "Sistema tsentr–regiony v 1930–1950 gody: Predposylki politizatsii nomenklatury," *Cahiers du monde russe* 44, 2–3 (2003): 263, 266.

⁵⁷ The term "nomenklatura privatization" was introduced by Oleg Khlevniuk.

⁵⁸ For instance, only at the end of the 1980s, when the Soviet system was in fear of its own collapse, were representatives of all Soviet republics (the party first secretaries) made Politburo members.

⁵⁹ Rein Taagepera, *Estonia: Return to Independence* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993), 97.

Even if this complicated practice of appointing the first secretary was not used in other republics, the case of Soviet Lithuania in 1974 is significant at least in that it proves that such relatively independent actions by a republican elite were possible. The crucial fact was not that Kharazov played the leading role here, but rather why and how he did so. After Liaudis's associate Shcherbitskii called Brezhnev, it became obvious that his close companion Maniušis would not become the first secretary. The threat of Šumauskas, the chairman of the Council of Ministers who held great authority in the republican party organization, to make the plenum fail carried with it the danger of Kharazov's recall from the republic. By conducting the survey and putting forward Griškevičius, Kharazov escaped political isolation. Having taken the initiative, Kharazov not only retained his influence but also increased his power, as he could present himself in the republic as having contributed the most to the election of the first secretary. The growth of his power is also revealed by his statement during one of the interviews that, after Griškevičius had been elected, Suslov wanted to recall him to Moscow and appoint him ambassador to Morocco; however, Kapitonov interceded by stating that the republic had a new leader who needed help, and thus it was inexpedient to recall Kharazov.⁶⁰

The personal call to Brezhnev shows the importance of patron–client relations between the center and the republic. Yet it is important to note that Liaudis was not alone; he acted on a request from his colleagues—the functionaries who worked with Sniečkus. Besides, they knew or at least sensed the opinions and mood of other secretaries and members of the bureau of the Central Committee of the LCP, who were unwilling to taking action themselves against Maniušis's candidacy.

The clientelistic approach seems to imply the use of personal relations in seeking the appointment of the desired leader. In the case under discussion, however, the Lithuanian nomenklatura was not so much for a certain candidate as against the appointment of Maniušis. Besides, the main foursome of “plotters” against Maniušis and Kharazov initially discussed other means of action, specifically the possibility of using Šumauskas's authority, and this option was rejected only because of the possibility that such a course of action might have been interpreted as an attempt by him to further his own career aims. Thus the “call to Brezhnev” was not quite as clientelistic as it might seem. If this incident were to fit the ideal-typical clientelistic scenario, Šumauskas himself or Liaudis, at the former's behest, would have

⁶⁰ Grybkauskas, interview with Kharazov (ALIH f. 61, d. 30, 90th minute).

had to contact Brezhnev and persuade him of the necessity of appointing Šumauskas as the first secretary. Likewise, according to the clientelistic model, Griškevičius would have played first fiddle and striven for career advancement, if necessary through direct personal contact with Brezhnev. As it turns out, Griškevičius was a rather passive player who, according to his wife, was completely satisfied with the post of the head of the Vilnius city committee and never expected the invitation to Moscow.

The patron–client approach is not sufficient to explain the character of relations between the center and the republic. Consider, for example, the fact that the circle of local players involved was far wider than one or two persons, or that those players failed to identify a preferred candidate by name to their Moscow patron. The question remains, however: To what end did Liaudis make his appeal to Brezhnev? Was this a matter of personal or small-group interest? Or can this phone call be seen as representing the interests of an entire Soviet republic (as these were interpreted by the titular nomenklatura)? Was there not a common understanding of the republic's economic and social interests which united the local nomenklatura and motivated it to act?

What mattered was not only the call to Brezhnev but also the fact that so many nomenklatura members had voiced an opinion to “Moscow's ear,” Kharazov. In this way, the Lithuanian nomenklatura, which had grown and consolidated itself under Sniečkus, transmitted to Moscow an implicit set of conditions: Moscow would not appoint an unwanted person as first secretary, and the Lithuanian nomenklatura would retain its political power and autonomy in settling the republic's affairs. The clientelistic approach, therefore, needs to be supplemented by the corporatist if we are to explain relations between the center and the Soviet republics.

What consolidated the ethnic nomenklatura was, above all, the issue of nationalism. The elites of the Soviet republics could now refer to nationalism to legitimize their power, which until then had been rather vaguely defined and highly dependent on the center. They did so by accepting the task of keeping nationalism under control in exchange for wielding influence in the republic. The criticism addressed to Griškevičius during his visit to the Central Committee, as well as his inauguration speech at the 13th Plenum of the Central Committee of the LCP, shows that the task of blocking political nationalism was top of the agenda for the republican nomenklatura.

The need to control nationalism in the republic and the method of interest coordination between center and periphery can help us understand the reasons for the collapse of the USSR. Among these reasons some authors focus on the shift of power from the center to the local nomenklatura, while

others prefer to emphasize the importance of nationalist movements.⁶¹ The case study of Lithuania in 1974 suggests that the two factors are linked. The republican nomenklatura was interested in emphasizing or even inventing some specific national features or character so as to establish its own credentials as the only effective representative of the republic and the only effective intermediary between Moscow and the local population. It might even be said that the roots of the secession of the Lithuanian Communist Party, which was the first to split from the CPSU at a time when the Soviet Union still very much existed, extend back to 1974. After Sniečkus's death, his associates, who had had their formative political experiences in the post-Stalin era and were strongly committed to national communism, faced the threat of losing their autonomy as the titular nomenklatura if a pro-Moscow first secretary (Maniušis) were to be appointed.

To conclude, one may ask whether, if it had taken another course of action in 1974 and tried to purge the national Communists as it had done in Latvia in 1959, Moscow could have blocked the rise of national communism. But that question feeds directly into another: were Brezhnev and his political circle by this time free to act differently with regard to the republics and the regional nomenklatura?

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⁶¹ For more on possible reasons for the collapse of the USSR, see David Rowley, "Interpretations of the End of the Soviet Union: Three Paradigms," *Kritika* 2, 2 (2001): 395–426.