Michael Kimmage, *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009. 419 p. ISBN 978-0674-032-58-3

David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts*, Oxford University Press, 2009. 480 p. ISBN 978-0199-832-47-7

Political and ideological contexts often influence academia and intellectuals. The relationship is mutual. The ideological-political reality determines the intellectual, but he also has an influence by embodying and transforming this reality. The Cold War and the fear of Communism, like nothing else up to then, embraced Western society, forcing intellectuals to respond to the processes taking place in the competing camp, linking analytical activities with practical needs, and becoming directly involved in work for the state. Communist ideology and its representatives were perceived and presented as hostile elements. This approach is most clearly seen in the era of McCarthyism.¹ On the other hand, the dynamic of the Cold War and the expectations of the era of *détente* have turned to a state of 'peaceful coexistence', which opened up more conceptual and analytical lines analysing the Soviet Union, or expressing rhetoric in its respect.

In today's Lithuania, some moments, indicating the subordination of the analytical (scholarly) approach to political (practical) interests, are similar. Issues of de-Sovietisation and the Soviet occupation raised in the post-Soviet period strongly permeate local academia and other activities dealing with the history of the Soviet era, whereas historians, anthropologists and political scientists investigating the post-Soviet field often face this determinism. Under Putin's rule, Russia uses the triumphant moments of the Soviet past, and this, along with the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, encourages even more criticism towards the Soviet past in Lithuania. Scholars and analysts often look at the Soviet era by applying a normative approach, and discussing what should be the Lithuanian politics of history. In this context, it is very meaningful to get acquainted with two scholarly books written by American historians. Both publications are devoted to the topic of the Cold War period and intellectual life in the USA at that time. In the context of Lithuanian historiography, they are relevant both in the cognitive and the scholarly sense, seeking to look more deeply into the dynamics

¹ The discriminatory policies were named after the US Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, who prevailed in this area.

of the American anti-Communist discourse, as well as the birth, evolution and multi-layeredness of Sovietology in the USA.

It should be noted that in the context of Sovietology in the USA, we can see the footprint of some Lithuanian scholars and activists who lived in exile and participated in the discipline. In the early period, in the 1940s, after his displacement to the West, the Lithuanian journalist and diplomat Viktoras Kaupas won fellowships at Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley. While undergoing a fellowship in 1947–1948 at the Hoover Institute of Stanford University, Kaupas wrote a letter on 11 July 1948 to his relative Vincas about the postwar academic environment in California: ‘Although it sounds unbelievable, despite the anti-Bolshevik public opinion here, a strong movement to appease Soviet Russia at any price can be felt. There is a huge fear of war, and no one even wants to think about it. Bolshevik propaganda here is very well organised and has fertile soil. Cooperation with Russia at any price is acceptable for so-called liberals, among whom, I think, there are a number of Communist agents. I am sending you (separately) two copies of works by our students, in which I tried to blow up unmarked balloons of Russia’s propaganda. But this made me unpopular among the liberals, the majority of whom are university professors.’²

In the era of *détente*, the political scientist Aleksandras Štromas emigrated from the Lithuanian SSR to England, and took part in the field of Sovietology. He was one of the few who in the late 1970s quite boldly predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. We can note the articles by professor Vytautas Vardys or the historian Romualdas Misiūnas, as well as the case of the poet Tomas Venclova, who emigrated to the USA in 1977 and started working in academia. As an intellectual, Venclova had close ties with émigré Soviet dissidents, intellectuals from Russia, who in the 1970s and 1980s gave Sovietology new literary and cultural studies.

The approach to seeing the Soviet regime as multilayered, with various horizontal linkages (as opposed to a monolithic approach, emphasis on top-down relations), is important, because in Lithuania, despite the domination of the politics of history over research, as well as the escalation of the totalitarian approach, in the scholarship by young Lithuanian historians analysing the Soviet period in recent years, there is a rather active search for various methods and conceptual approaches to Soviet studies, abandoning a one-sided approach to the past.

The books *The Conservative Turn* by Lionel Trilling, *Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* by the Harvard alumnus Michael Kimmage, and the monograph *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts* by David Engerman, a University of California

² V. Kaupas Jr., the son of V. Kaupas, gave the author of this review, Vilius Ivanauskas, material about his father from the personal papers of V. Kaupas.

graduate now working at Brandeis University, reveal different perceptions of the Soviet Union, and the construction of this understanding within US academia. Both books belong to different genres of history: Engerman's book belongs to socio-political history, Kimmage's to the genre of intellectual (of ideas) and biographical history; but what both have in common is the widely evaluated postwar political-intellectual context of the USA relating to the country's approach to the USSR; and the ongoing dynamics depending on it between the ideas of intellectuals are assessed.

Engerman's book basically talks about Sovietology in the USA as an academic industry. The author has analysed more than 100 archival funds, 30 archives in various countries, from the USA to Russia, conducted about 80 interviews, including with famous American figures such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright, and reconstructed on the basis of abundant sources the course of the creation of Sovietology, with fine details about the initiative of managers of science, sponsors, customers and researchers. He divides it into periods, showing how it emerged from the completely marginalised pre-war Russian studies after the end of the war into the dominant area during the Cold War period, to which were allocated huge resources and state programmes relating to national security and institutions of foreign policy, including scholars of various fields who had to provide to the mentioned centres the best opportunities to 'know the enemy' – the Soviet Union. From just a few research centres, interested in Russia or the Soviet Union, in the prewar period, in less than a decade, many university departments, programmes, and whole groups of scientists who started work in the new field were created in the United States. Sovietology became a priority branch, reaching the corridors of the State Department, the Pentagon, and other institutions of power, and directly relating to articulated threats in the field of US foreign policy. In addition to the main research centres at Harvard and Columbia University, Sovietology expanded at Stanford, Berkeley, Chicago, Michigan and other prestigious or less prestigious universities. The industry of Sovietology was not merely a matter for the state: the Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller family foundations began to finance it, becoming actively involved in activities ensuring national security, and cooperating with state authorities. Engerman recreates in some detail the initiatives of various research centres, the activities of their founders, and the networks of specialists in the USSR and Russia, in the purchase and education of excellence, connected with the development of related associations, the procurement of specialists for various state institutions or think-tank organisations. The author shows vividly the course of the formation of the research and programmes. Although he presents a dense description of the organisational events, not concentrating on works of Sovietology or the presentation of their fundamental ideas, the essential works of Sovietology, authors, research trends and their development, as well as the analytical observations

by American scholars about the developed industrial society of the Soviet competitors, and the rapid modernisation are inevitably also mentioned. The rise of the main Sovietology figures, such as Richard Pipes, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Martin Malia and other actors, are shown also.

It is very important that the author highlights in his work past moments of tension in this discipline; for example, when separate fields (e.g. economics or literature) shut themselves down within their problems and made insufficient contributions to the interpretation of Soviet life which could be used for policy making. Also, we can see the tensions when the strengthening of social science methods revealed the 'totalitarian' and 'revisionist' camps, disclosing the methodical conversion of Sovietology from regional studies to a separate discipline.

The author of the other presented work, Michael Kimmage, focuses in his monograph on the lives of two people, revealing through them both the wider context of US intellectual life and the dynamics around it, seeing the earlier convergence of US public intellectuals: the shift of anti-Communist liberals from the centre to the left, and the increasing openness of right-wing anti-Communists, former closed traditionalists, and their shift from the right to the centre. He discusses this change in presenting the intellectual trajectories of two former Columbia University alumni, the spy Whittaker Chambers and the liberal Lionel Trilling, characterised by their creativity, public rhetoric, letters, descriptions by their contemporaries, and other sources. In his work, he reveals not only the process of the formation of modern American conservatism, but also the anti-Communist discourse running through the postwar US intellectual world.

In his work, Kimmage links the political change in the United States, during which the positions of isolation disappeared, with the processes of the 1940s and 1950s. He points out the trajectories of the intellectual lives of Chambers (who later became a fierce anti-Communist, and was a witness in the famous Alger Hiss case) and the liberal Trilling, favourably disposed to the Communists (later taking an ever more critical position in relation to the Communists, and expressing more open liberalism, which was manifested by ever less sympathy for Communism, and the partial assumption of right-wing values). In the political change in the USA, issues of political philosophy, strategic interests, party politics and ethical dilemmas intertwined, and also a specific type of American conservatism, stimulated by the growing anti-Communism in the era of McCarthyism, involving religion, the economy and the laissez-faire spirit of populism, became clearer. Ronald Reagan best embodies this type. The previous conservatism based on isolationism changed, and turned into another dominant conservatism, which provided for the active role of the US in the world and in the historical struggle with the Soviets. At the same time, this was a moderation of the left wing and the modernisation of the right wing in the USA, and this combination ensured the changed conservatism

(overlapping neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism) by the maintained anti-Communist position during the whole Cold War period.

In the context of both discussed works, it is clear that the US anti-Communist discourse did not rely on the formation of a one-sided image of the USSR. The earlier attention to a quite one-sided (monolithic) approach (e.g. the works of Merle Fainsod) about the Soviet Union was replaced by a much more dynamic interpretation of totalitarianism, and the nascent field of Sovietology acquired a more contrasting dynamism, juxtaposing the competing scholarly approaches to the totalitarian perspective. The totalitarian approach operated particularly in the early phase of Sovietology, but later its use as an analytical concept declined. Some of the insights of Kimmage and Engerman allow us to observe how totalitarianism gradually became used less and less as an analytical category, but it is equally important to understand its practical impact, the overlap with the strict anti-Communist posture of the intellectuals, about which Kimmage writes.

More than one Soviet researcher acknowledges that the concept of totalitarianism is ineffective for understanding the dynamics of the post-Stalinist period, i.e. when it was not the system that determined the changes (even having total political control over the way it should be), and with the inclusion of interest groups, the maneuvering of networks or other players, modifying the Soviet landscape, 'totalitarianism' in many cases lost its analytical nature. It is relevant only for explaining a few cases: first, identifying the mobilising total movement (Hannah Arendt talks about this); second, analysing the structure of the political control (Fainsod analyses this); third, discussing the formation of Stalinist civilisation, when there appears the quite internalised 'speaking as a Bolshevik', which Stephen Kotkin notes in his work.³ But we should not underestimate the 'totalitarian' concept, because in certain contexts such questioning looks are even not legalised. It remains a very powerful practical tool of historical politics, initially emphasising to the West the nature of the functioning of the Soviet Union and the terror, later stressing the remaining instruments of control, the structure and ambitions to make society totalitarian. That is, totalitarianism as an ambition with all institutions, measures of control, always survived, but in the pursuit of control there was a lack of efficiency in the use of existing resources. Kimmage's work is quite illustrative, because we can see that the anti-Communist posture was formed from various intellectual traditions, but their common interest after the war helped to create together the neo-liberal tradition. According to him, the clear understanding that Stalinist civilisation could take over the 20th century united Chambers and Trilling. The cataclysms piercing the environment of the period and intellectual life united both of them, after the former, flirting with socialist ideology, found

³ S. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (University of California Press, 1995).

his way to an anti-Communist posture. Together, their example illustrates that specific model of US intellectuals becoming anti-Communists, with which the majority of US intellectuals were able to identify. Kimmage provides examples of individuals who identified with the anti-Communists. For example, the conservative intellectual David Horowitz completely identified with the political and intellectual development of Chambers, characteristic of many members of their generation: the fascination with leftist ideas characteristic of adolescence, the subsequent collision with the threat of Stalinist totalitarianism, and the fierce ideological fight with the enemy, who 'was more often imagined than real'.⁴ The intellectual and political environment surrounding them formed during the Cold War and was continuous. For neo-conservatively inclined US intellectuals of the 1970s such as Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol, Trilling's ideas were well known; and at the same time the archetypal neo-conservative posture of Chambers, which was completely different to the position of US conservatives in the 1930s, impressed them. Kimmage also shows that universities could not always maintain a strict anti-Communist posture, that early totalitarian interpretation; but in reality, through the administration institutions of US presidents (such as H. Kissinger or Z. Brzezinski), certain influential magazines, and other measures that the network of neo-liberal and anti-Communist neo-conservatives influenced, the strict version of anti-Communism in the USA maintained a high status. One can argue that Kimmage has grabbed an intellectual discourse based on values, for whom it was most important to declare first not knowledge of the enemy, but 'defeating the enemy'.

Engerman's book allows us to see the changes in the academic environment and the slowly emerging dynamics of 'knowing the enemy'. He records the interesting moment when in Sovietology conclusions were reinterpreted. For example, in the new edition of Fainsod's book *How Russia is Ruled* (1963, the first edition came out in 1953), corrections were made assessing the otherness of Nikita Khrushchev's rule. Fainsod newly observed the 'enlightened' or 'rational' totalitarianism characteristic of Khrushchev, and associated his rule with evolution, emphasising the efficiency of Stalin's super-centralisation for rapid industrialisation, but assessing that such a model of rule is not appropriate for a society of advanced industrialisation. The steps taken by Khrushchev seemed to provide greater hope. Several years later (in 1967), Fainsod agreed with the opinion of the political sociologist Barrington Moore that 'industrialisation' was very important for the Soviet Union, and in an article in the journal *Problems of Communism* emphasised that Soviet society was becoming a society of specialists, and much more differentiated, while the contours

⁴ M. Kimmage, *The Conservative Turn: Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and the Lessons of Anti-Communism* (Cambridge, 2009), p.11.

of interest groups were becoming more clear (on p. 218 of the journal). Soon the Soviet experts Gordon Skilling and Robert Tucker, from the perspective of comparative studies, began to criticise the totalitarian approach of a lack of scholarship. During the *détente* period in the 1970s, at the same time expanding the approach of the social sciences, social history clearly revealed the research by such investigators as Sheila Fitzpatrick⁵ and other authors. On the other hand, there was also the response from the totalitarian side, based on the fact that changes to an autonomous society truly exist; however, as Brzezinski noted, the Soviet government developed new technologies of control under the conditions of totalitarianism. Both sides in the next 20 years kept finding counter-arguments, and criticised or developed the concept of totalitarianism, but with time, the concept itself became rather far-fetched, so in the field of Sovietology or post-Sovietology, one can talk more clearly about a particular area of management, interest groups, and the nature of control, instead of dragging all the elements into one schematic diagram; especially when the relevance of 'totalitarianism' as a practical category, and therefore also as a threat, declined somewhat after the USA won the Cold War.

Adapting these thoughts to the context of Lithuania, in certain situations this category is useful; in the case of Lithuania, even in bilateral relations, emphasising the value-based dimension. For example, liberation and support for a restored Lithuania was one of the more serious bases for close relations between Lithuania and the United States. Since the times of the Cold War, the discourse of USSR 'enslaved/liberated nations' continues up to now (the Republican Party supports it). It became one of the incentives for the Lithuanian-USA strategic partnership, together with other Central and East European countries, an opportunity for the USA to maneuver in Europe (the concept of a 'New Europe'), and a common denominator connecting geopolitical interests, ensuring Nato membership, and raising the question of responsibility for the consequences of totalitarianism in the region. Through this expression of the policies of history, the value position being formed is of communication with the USSR, assessing favourably Russia, or sharing with Central and East European countries issues of the socialist past. Totalitarianism remains a powerful metaphor, reflecting the experience of Central and East European countries after the Second World War, and a means to question the issue of the non-validation of the former regime at the political level. It is also used for the effective prevention of any possibility of the renewal of Communism, showing the consequences of the regime or of the former structure of control, as well as the activities of the repressive apparatus. Structurally, through encouragement in

⁵ S. Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, 1917–1921* (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

former territories of the USSR (a kind of 'cluster region'), 'orientation to the West' helps to support it. In the case of Lithuania, such activity coincides with the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, with Lithuania, Poland and several more former socialist countries being much more actively involved in this line than the 'Old European' countries are. In a peculiar way, observations that the findings that Poland and Lithuania are the last warriors of the Cold War,⁶ or symbolic decisions (such as the creation of a strategic Ronald Reagan Center in Lithuania, as a kind of attempt to adapt the Lithuanian form of conservatism to the American Cold War settled neo-conservatism), validate this line. This very effective concept of history in politics or even geopolitics is not so effective in scholarly texts, because it is more appropriate for the research of static subjects; but it is very rigid in evaluating the changes in contemporary society or elites. In the studies of Sovietology today (post-Sovietology), paradigms in the direction of more social research dominate, but keeping in mind the permanent challenges of the politics of history and the context of the very sharp tensions in international politics in the region, for every researcher into Soviet and post-Soviet period processes, it would be particularly relevant to become acquainted with the mentioned books, which allow us to see certain commonalities between the analytical discourses and academic life of Lithuania and the US intellectual tradition, seeking to 'identify the enemy', 'know the enemy' or 'defeat the enemy'.

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⁶ The evaluation submitted by the European Council on Foreign Policy in November 2007 about relations between the EU and Russia.