

# Memories of Discipline in Soviet Lithuania: Stories in Oral History

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**Abstract.** Totalitarian regimes attempt to restrict and control virtually every aspect of human life. Interestingly, conscious reflection on disciplinary practises takes up only a small part of the life-stories of interviewed Lithuanians, as far as the memory of the post-Stalin era is concerned. The interviews that form the foundation for this paper were conducted during the summer of 2017 in three different districts in Lithuania. The article aims to answer the following two research questions:

- 1) Which mechanisms of discipline did people recognize and reflect upon?
- 2) How were disciplinary actions remembered and described?

According to interviews, tangible individuals filled the role of disciplinarians in schools and workplaces. In addition, the responsibility for discipline and control lies within the imperceptible disciplinarian, supplemented by the invisible discipline of the collective. This led to overwhelming uncertainty in the society, where people invoked intuition and interpretations of who is trustworthy to adapt to uncertain situations. The greatest impact of the totalitarian discipline was that people effectively internalized it and consequently became their own most significant disciplinarians.

**Keywords:** discipline, ideology, collective

Data for the article was analysed and coded collaboratively with Ieva Kimontaitė, Rytė Kukulskytė, Karolina Lipnicienė, and Greta Radiul.

## Introduction

Totalitarian regimes attempted to restrict and control virtually every aspect of human life. The extensive social control of people's thinking and behaviour eventually replaced the measures of terror after Stalin's death. Consequently, during and after the collapse of the Soviet regime, a memory discourse of cultural trauma came to the foreground (Aareaid-Tart 2004). In addition, the memory of the inescapable and hostile Soviet regime in Lithuania (Čėpaitienė, 2007), which interrupted the normal development of society (Žilinskienė, 2014, pp. 8), dominated public discourse for a long time.

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One could expect to find similar memories of the regime in Lithuanians' life stories. However, the interviewees constructed two different types of life narratives, which correspond to two periods of Soviet occupation. The first type focuses on survival during the Second World War and the beginning of the Soviet occupation. The interviewees recall experiences of terror (deportations, trials, and torture), the turbulence of collectivization, and partisan warfare in relating life stories that include experiencing the Stalinist era. Accordingly, research of traumatic events—such as deportations and repressions—dominate empirical collective memory studies (Šutinienė, 2002, 2008; Žilinskienė, 2014, 2016; Davoliūtė, Balkelis, 2012, 2018; Gailienė, 2008, 2015). The second type of stories are related to daily life during the Soviet system's stabilization period (Leinartė, 2014). In the later stages of the Soviet regime, ideological indoctrination replaced direct measures of control and coercion (Pfaff, 2001). The empirical collective memory studies of the post-Stalin era society focus on attempts to resist Communist rule in Lithuania (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011; Ramonaitė, 2015). Recently, empirical memory studies shifted towards social history and memory of everyday life (Vaiseta, 2014, Klumbytė, 2004, Žilinskienė, 2014, 2016; Marcinkevičienė, 2007).

Interestingly, conscious reflections on discipline experiences make up only a small part of the Lithuanian interviewees' life stories, this is especially true regarding memories of the post-Stalin era. Does that mean that restrictions and indoctrination were not very severe? Alternatively, does that indicate that the people's experience of the Second World War (and related traumatic experiences) left them with no other choice than to adapt to the rules of social control later on? In that case, it is plausible that social control, discipline, and self-discipline became normal everyday life practices, which were not necessarily reflected upon. However, if the indoctrination of the entire society functioned remarkably well, then how after years of well-organized social control, were the independence movements that began in 1988 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union possible? (Putinaitė, 2007; Pfaff, 2001)?

While the mechanisms of discipline were intended to direct people's actions in one way or another, some people actively resisted the regime, while others were more likely to adapt to it. However, in order to resist, a person had to first recognize and comprehend acts of. Therefore, to understand how and when people adapted to or resisted the regime, it is first and foremost necessary to investigate how people understood and interpreted discipline, and what their attitudes towards the disciplinary system were. For this purpose, two research questions have been formulated: 1) What were the mechanisms of disciplining that people recognized and reflected upon? 2) How are experiences of disciplinary practices remembered and described?

The article should be seen as one of the few attempts in Lithuania to look into disciplinary practices of totalitarian regimes through the eyes of the interviewees. It is an attempt to look for memories of being disciplined or implementing discipline in the life stories of Lithuanians. The analysis primarily focuses on the everyday lives of Lithuanians rather than dissidence, resistance, or deliberate acts of protests. Lastly, even though the research does not focus on people who actively participated in the political life of the regime (such as political parties or governing institutions), the interviewees' involvement in disciplinary activities is also included in the analysis.

## Theory

The article attempts to merge two academic discussions. The first academic debate is concerned with disciplinary practices: Where does discipline come from? What were the disciplinary mechanisms? How did people react to discipline? Secondly, the field of collective memory studies discusses the relationship between past and present in social and individual memory, which equally inform the following analysis.

### ***What is ideology in a totalitarian society? Social control and ideological indoctrination***

This section of the article conceptualizes discipline, discipline's relation to ideology, and people's reactions to discipline. How can we understand and define such a complex phenomenon as ideology? According to Hannah Arendt, "ideology is ... the logic of an idea" (Arendt, 1953, pp.316). Ideology is a foundation that grounds practices, decisions, and policies. Discipline, inherent (but not exclusive) to totalitarian regimes, subjects a whole course of events in the past, present, and future, to a given ideology (Arendt, 1953, pp.316). One should not consider discipline simply in terms of a straightforward hierarchical relationship between a unified disciplinarian power structure at the top and the powerless disciplined at the bottom. It is plausible that discipline depends on a complex configuration and competition between the agents of a political system, public discourse, and the different levels of centres of power, as is illustrated by the extensive research of censorship in Lithuania (Streikus, 2018, pp.24). Moreover, indoctrination is based on the idea that people engage in self-discipline, according to this strict logic of idea (Arendt, 1953, pp.320-321).

However, believing in an ideology and acting accordingly do not necessarily go hand in hand. Totalitarian regimes aim to blur the distinction between true or false, fact and fiction (Arendt, 1953, pp.321). Not only regarding a course of events, but all of reality has to function according to the disciplinary role of a particular ideology. People do not necessarily have to believe in a particular ideology in order to commit to it (Joseph Schull, 1992). To put it another way, if a person does not believe in the ideals of the regime, he or she does not necessarily resist indoctrination.

In that case, one should not perceive ideology as a structured belief system, which people simply receive and internalize. Firstly, ideology also served as a practical and pragmatic tool to maintain Communist leaders' power in Lithuania. Secondly, ideological measures were adapted to societal attitudes to limit resistance. Thirdly, people also behaved pragmatically – most of society was passive and adapted to what the regime required and expected (Putinaitė, 2015). Understandably, the war, post-war turbulence, and resulting trauma may have diminished willingness to stand against the social control.

Ideology served as an intermediary instrument that defined the relationship not only between the people and the state, but also among the people themselves (Vaiseta, 2014, pp.127). Different actors and institutions were responsible for the functions of ideological socialization. The design of the discipline was to punish unacceptable behaviour and promote encouraged behaviours. The process of socialization established the role of the ideology and, consequently, became essential to the functioning of the Soviet regime. Tomas Vaiseta (2014) introduces two forms of ideological socialization in his research. The disciplinary forms of ideological socialization involved not only the Komsomol or the Communist Party, but also social activities such as ideological lectures, labour

unions, self-education meetings, and cultural collectives. The regime regulated, or at least supervised, even private life with the purpose of “protecting” each individual’s morality. The mobilizing forms of socialization included different ritualized festivities, commemorations, and parades designed to bolster the enthusiasm of participants in the Soviet regime (Vaiseta, 2014, pp.129-132).

Recent studies by Laima Žilinskienė (2014, 2016) reveal how socialization was intended to indoctrinate. Žilinskienė focuses on how people resisted or adapted to the totalitarian regime in Lithuania. In the post-Stalinist era, extreme terror was replaced by social control in all fields of human life (political, social, economic etc.) (Žilinskienė, 2016). Control was especially significant in the education sector, where primary socialization took place. Ideology regulated educational life, not only in the classroom, but also in after-school activities. National organizations, such as the Komsomol and the Pioneers, were part of the formation of the Soviet person (Žilinskienė, 2016). Žilinskienė makes a distinction between internal adaptors (family) and external adaptors (public agents) of the socialization process. Three main external adaptors were active in the primary socialization of the Soviet person-to-be: teachers, organizations for schoolchildren, and local government (by organizing special activities) (Žilinskienė, 2016). In further periods of a person’s life, other adaptors became important, such as the political party, the party committee at the workplace, labour unions and cultural collectives at the workplace. Even though recent research claims that people ignored, rather than internalized or resisted, the ideological principles of the state-controlled organizations (Baločkaitė, 2016), this article discusses the person’s ability to distance oneself from ideological socialization.

In this article, the conceptual distinction between adaptors and the socialized persons has been deliberately abandoned, as it appeared to be rather artificial as far as the life-stories of the interviewees are concerned. People remember both ends of the disciplinary practices. While in certain settings, they implemented discipline; in other situations or environments, they experienced it. Their roles alternated between disciplinarian and the disciplined, depending on the situation. Therefore, this article attempts to present both sides of disciplinary practices, the perspective of the disciplinarian and of the disciplined, when data was available.

### ***Individual and collective memory***

Firstly, I present how collective memory functions, what the relationship between individual and collective memory is, and what might constraint analysis of the interviews. We start with the proposition, that all memories are social, but only individuals experience and can relate them. That means that every individual memory relates to a social context and, therefore, cannot be distinguished from it (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, 2011). Moreover, individual memory is constrained by collective memory and the contemporary dominating narrative. Collective memory provides a social framework for what individuals remember and share (Halbwachs, 1992). This theoretical premise is relevant to an analysis of issues that affected the society as a whole, such as disciplinary practices instituted by the regime.

Even though memory is framed in the past, it is recreated with respect to an individual’s current interests and values, and in relation to a society’s current dominant narrative (Confino, 1997). Consequently, context in the past, a contemporary social context, and the context of the interview

itself affect the whole process of the interview and the retrieval of memories of the past. The memory of the past is not only about what actually occurred, but also about what is currently occurring. Therefore, it is useful to consider which phenomena of the past are underlined, and what purposes they serve today in memory studies (Wertsch, 2002).

On the other hand, only individuals are able to remember and reflect the past. They are not solely passive memory consumers, but also active participants in using, transforming, or ignoring certain parts of their memories according to their interests (Kansteiner, 2002). They are active agents who apply different strategies to talk about the past: a strategy of collective amnesia used to ignore uncomfortable facts in the public discourse (Tunbridge, George J. Asworth, 1996); the strategy of demonization to address blaming particular groups of people (Šutinienė, 2003); the strategy of victimization to relate to the role of a victim by the one who remembers (Šutinienė, 2002); and the strategy of relativism to provide general evaluations and generalizations about the society in the discourse (Šutinienė, 2003).

Consequently, the individual narratives of the past are a complex amalgam of past experiences, contemporary social context, dominating public discourse, and an individual's intent to tell a story in a particular way. The results should be considered with caution as far as historical truth is concerned. However, individual stories of personal experiences of the past and today's reflections on them are probably the only source of information on how the overwhelming social control of the repressive regime was experienced and felt and is therefore the main object of this article.

## Methodology

The data was collected during a research project on oral history of the Soviet era conducted from 2016 to 2018. Research trips took place in three different regions of Lithuania: Varėna, Naujoji Akmenė, and Kėdainiai. The locations for the research trips were chosen according to several criteria. First, none of the cities were among the largest cities in Lithuania. One of the goals was to collect memories of life outside the country's main centres. Second, even though the cities were in different regions of Lithuania, each was significantly transformed by Soviet industrialization and collectivization. For example, Naujoji Akmenė was a new town, established in 1952.

The data was collected by conducting oral history interviews: interviewees were asked to tell their life stories, with a focus on the time from the post-war period until 1990. The interviewees were selected according to the following criteria. First, all of the respondents were seniors. As the main focus of the research was memories of Soviet Lithuania, those who had experienced the regime the longest were chosen for interviewing. Interviewees were 60 years old or older. Second, taking into consideration the special status of workers and partially collective farm workers in the Soviet system, sampling primarily focused on such people. In addition, people who worked in the service and education sectors were also interviewed to ensure a variety of experiences.

In this particular article, 20 oral history interviews were analysed in depth and quotes from 11 of them are presented in the result section. Six of the analysed interviews were with men and 14 were with women. Nine analysed interviews were conducted in the Kėdainiai district, in Varėna district 7 and in the Naujoji Akmenė district 4.

This article includes quotations from a limited number of interviews, although many more of them stimulated interest regarding discipline. Out of 11 quoted interviews, 4 interviewees

previously worked in factories, 3 were teachers, 1 had experience as a teacher and as a factory worker, 1 worked at collective farm, 1 had various work experiences and 1 was the head of the House of Culture.

The analysis is based on an interpretive approach. It is assumed that a picture of the reality of a certain moment of time is captured by the research. A close look is necessary to understand and to interpret the interviewees' attitudes towards experiencing or implementing discipline (Schwartz-Shea ir Yanow, 2012). As mentioned above, the article is not limited to reflections on the experiences of discipline, but also introduces the perspective of what it meant to implement discipline and practice self-discipline in everyday life.

## **Results**

Even though totalitarianism is associated with strict control and surveillance, the interviewees were not very keen to talk about their experiences with disciplinary practices. They were more likely to depreciate the process of indoctrination and discipline, unless they had first-hand traumatic experiences. Many of them told stories about their "ordinary life". The main impression that could be drawn from the interviews is that people often recollect the post-Stalin Soviet regime within a narrative of normalization, in contrast to experiences of the Second World War. Ideology and oppressive practises of the regime affected everyone during and after the Second World War (Gailienė 2008, pp. 161). However, experiences of social control do not dominate the life stories of the interviewees. Even though researchers expected to hear narratives of a constrained life during the Soviet occupation and within the totalitarian regime, the life stories of the interviewees appeared to be different. It can be assumed that telling the story of a constrained life would require either admitting the effects of indoctrination or, on the other hand, explaining one's own active resistance to indoctrination, which, however, was not a common experience. As it is inconvenient and unacceptable to admit publicly that one gave in to ideology and experienced the regime's control, often the interviewees did not mention indoctrination at all or presented it as unsuccessful.

People were being disciplined throughout different periods of their lives: it started at school and continued through the years spent studying and working. The disciplinary process continued without interruptions throughout the entire life of the Soviet citizen and was all-encompassing; a fact that is backed by the observation that the surveillance of public and private life was implemented by designated disciplinarians and the collective as an active agent.

The results of the analysis are structured according to the three themes that dominated the interviews: memory of discipline at school, at the workplace, and beyond. It should be taken into account that the intention was not to review all possible disciplinary practices. Therefore, discipline in the military, in the cultural sphere, within the political party, in bureaucratic institutions and on the market, etc. has not been covered. The most severe examples of discipline, such as interrogations and imprisonment, were also not a focus of the article.

### ***Discipline as the primary ideological socialization***

The school was a primary socialization arena. Teachers, as well as children and youth organizations, were the main adaptors in the process of ideological socialization. Their substantial role

was revealed by the fact that they also engaged in the electoral processes and participated in establishing collective farms (Raškauskas, 2008; Sniečkus, 1944). During their studies, teachers received extensive training in political issues and political ideology (Kašauskienė, 1982, cit. iš Janišauskas, 2017) to be able to act as replicators for the given ideology. Teachers were responsible for implementing the curricula. As one teacher remembers, she had to include information about the Communist Party into the programme: *There were, of course, lessons already written on the Soviet subject as well as history books. In addition, it was required of the teachers to insert somewhere that there was the Party* (Teacher, female, 87 years old, Varėna district). Ideological indoctrination was also put implemented through various cultural activities organized by teachers. The same teacher explained that cultural activities, even when their purpose was education, were supplemented with compulsory ideological material, such as Russian songs: *We used to participate in song festivals. You had to teach Russian songs first. I led all of these extra-curricular activities, choir, and dance classes. I had to teach a Russian song, it was necessary to learn them* (Teacher, female, 87 years old, Varėna district).

The learning process was subjected to the purpose of ideological indoctrination – the teaching and curricula in history was constantly changed to fit the logic of idea (Arendt, 1953). The logic of idea is overwhelming and becomes a part of a regular study process but does not seem to require any consideration, explanation, or deeper reflection. The indoctrination somehow seems minor in this teacher's story. It seems that small inclusions in the curricula did not have substantial consequences. It should be noted that in this particular story, the teacher recognizes her role in indoctrination process.

A second form of ideological socialization was implemented through children and youth organizations. Teachers were strongly encouraged to participate in the process of ideological indoctrination (Kašauskienė, 1982, cited from Janišauskas, 2017) and were responsible for persuading their students to join the Pioneers:

First, it is obviously necessary to persuade children to join the Pioneers, because they had meetings and so on. If you are working as a classroom teacher, you have to have more members of the Pioneers in your class than ... almost everyone joined. In the villages and in the cities some of them got away one way or another. We used to persuade them [to join the Pioneers], I did not force them though (Teacher, female, 83 years old, Kėdainiai).

The teacher seems to take a defensive stance and claims that she never forced the schoolchildren to join the Pioneers, but simply talked them into it. She admits, though, that schoolchildren felt pressured to join this presumably voluntary organization. Those who did not join the organization were mere exceptions. In addition, the teacher herself experienced discipline: teachers were required to convince a certain number of schoolchildren to join the Pioneers' organization.

The presented quotations illustrate several interesting findings. The first teacher claims that the presumably normal educational process was modified to fulfil ideological functions. Both teachers remember that all teachers were obliged to conduct ideological indoctrination. Consequently, responsibility for what are actually significant disciplinary actions lies with the invisible and intangible disciplinarian. Even though the responsibility for the ideological discipline is shared between the teacher and the main but invisible disciplinarian – presumably the state or the political



party – the interviewed teachers do not elaborate on this dissonance. Discipline is enacted only when first applied to the person him- or herself.

Schoolchildren were obliged to join the Pioneers and, later on, the Komsomol. Even though membership in these organizations was supposedly voluntary, one interviewee told the story of experiencing pressure to join:

My friend and I were asked to stay after class and told to join the Komsomol. Two of us were sitting; I was looking through the window... They said: "Do your parents prohibit it, or what?" We said: "We do not want to". There were only two of us. Twenty-six of us graduated from secondary school and only two of us (or one more, probably three) were not members of the Komsomol. Therefore, we were not able to study anywhere. We did not even apply to study; we did not even look at what they wrote in our biographies. (Worker, female, 85 years old, Kėdainiai)

Paradoxically, a lack of motivation to join the Komsomol was not a good enough reason to abstain from joining the organization; a plausible explanation was required. The interviewee repeats proudly that only a few schoolchildren avoided joining the organization. The fluency and structure of the story gives the impression that it has already been told at least several times before the interview. This personal "act of resistance" was met with implicit consequences. The person claims that standing up to the requirement to join the Komsomol restricted her from studying at institutions of higher education. Interestingly, the restrictions are implicit, but were not, in fact, experienced. The possibility of the sanctions explains the person's actions (or lack of them) afterwards. The possible disciplinary sanctions lead to refraining from the studies (or served as a reasonable explanation for a refusal to study).

One of the teachers, who was mentioned initially, tells a similar story. When an interviewee resisted joining the organization, she was threatened with future sanctions: *I was not actually in the Komsomol. I just joined, when the teacher said that I would either be able to work or I would not. So I joined then. But I was not in the Komsomol as a schoolkid (Teacher, female, 83 years old, Kėdainiai)*. The interviewee justifies joining the Komsomol, first, by explaining how she resisted, and, then, by making a distinction between an active and formal membership (equivalent to a chequebook membership).

Everyone was persuaded or forced to join the ideological organizations beginning in their early years. A common way to resist compulsory membership was to be present without *actually* being present, to participate without *actually* participating (instead of not joining the organization at all). Teachers *did not actually* discipline their schoolchildren and students *were not actually* involved in the ideological process. While the responsible disciplinary actor—who has the real power of coercion—remains, somehow, invisible, the memories give the impression of a simulation. This way, a person was able to avoid any possible sanctions. This *dissociation from the presence* is a recurrent theme in the interviews, illustrated fittingly by the following interview quotation:

Well, when you are young, you are inevitably involved. Well, the Komsomol [...] is such a formal organization. Of course there were meetings, there were some plans, something was organized [...] Just the young people gathered, sat in those meetings, clapped their hands when they had to, we knew ... Once again, we were all young and understood, but we did not say it, we could not say that something aloud, but we realized that everything here is fiction. You had to elect a



number of workers, of engineers, of men, of women, to the Republican Komsomol Congress. So that's what these elections were. You had to raise a hand, and you did it. [...] And we all knew that we were being supervised by some kind of an unfamiliar hand. (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai)

The interviewee remembers how he participated in the Komsomol and played the expected role in these collective rituals. His actual acts indicated approval of what was happening: he elected representatives and clapped for them just like everyone else. Nevertheless, he explains that he was only a passive actor in these collective and ritualized actions. Even though he makes a distinction between active and passive members of the Komsomol, the substantial difference is not clear. It seems that the indication of a difference between active and merely formal engagement lies in an *internal understanding* that the ritualized process is only a fiction. It can be claimed that the act of self-discipline replaced any active resistance in order to avoid sanctions: the person restricted their behaviour according to the rules of the regime. However, the rules were usually not explicit; they were often changed and adapted; they depended on the interests and attitudes of the disciplinarians. The metaphor of *control exerted by an invisible hand* describes discipline, when the actual disciplinarian remains invisible and intangible. However, it is impossible to conclude that the disciplinarian was only a product of the imagination in a rather tense society. Many people did actually experience real sanctions, consequences of surveillance, or terror. The experiences were shared among family members, neighbours, colleagues, or friends. This way, the individual's experiences transformed into a social memory of a dangerous, indeterminable, and unpredictable disciplinarian, which should be avoided at any cost. The only way to deal with the uncertainty of the situation was to restrict one's behaviour according to the predicted regulations. Personal understanding of the fictitious nature of the situation do not transform into any tangible expression and, as a result, the person follows the logic of idea (Arendt, 1953).

### ***Discipline at the workplace: the Party, the collective, the ideology***

After the person joined the Komsomol, the next logical and encouraged step was to join the Communist Party. However, the transition from one organization to another was not as straightforward as could be expected. While the scope of ideological indoctrination by the Pioneers and the Komsomol was limited, there was no doubt that the Communist Party was a much more influential (and much more resisted) ideological organization. The interviewees proudly told stories of how they resisted joining the Communist Party and of the "avoidance techniques" they developed:

There was this Party Secretary. The members of the Party Committee from Varėna used to come and ask, "Why don't you [join the Party], why don't you [join the Party]?" I used to tell them that I was doing well without the Party, that I was fine, and that I did not want to be in the Party. (Accountant, female, 76 years old, Varėna district)

Although I was encouraged to join [the Party], I stuck to that [laughs] Lithuanian point of view. Almost all engineers were obliged [to join the Party], and the superiors in the factory workshops ought to be members of the Party, they ought to be [members of the Party]. Yet the technologists somehow could not be [members of the Party]. I was used to getting rid of that Secretary.

Moreover, she felt she was a very big boss – this Party Secretary. (Teacher/factory worker, male, 86 years old, Kėdainiai)

I remember, when I was working at the warehouse, there was this Head of the Communists' [Party at the workplace] [...]. I used to see when she was organizing everyone to join [the Party] whether you wanted to or not. When I used to see her coming [...] I used to lock myself in the warehouse. (Collective farm worker, female, 79 years old, Varėna district)

It is worth noting that the interviewees experienced pressure to join the Communist Party and perceived it as an explicit disciplinary action against them. In contrast, to the previous examples, in these stories, disciplinarians acquire a tangible and visible form. The Party Committee Secretaries were the obvious and recognizable disciplinarians in the workplace. It seems that when discipline in memory is tied to a specific agent, resistance to discipline becomes at least imaginable. It is possible to resist discipline when a visible and a tangible person, rather than an invisible hand of control, implements it. Those visible and identifiable persons had an essential function to discipline and had an official title such as Party Committee Secretary. These conditions allowed people to recognize disciplinarians and to decide on their own how they would react to them. People could have confronted, dodged, or avoided official disciplinarians. The ability to recognize the disciplinarian allowed people to adapt and avoid a constant persuasion in the long-term.

The stories above are concerned with strategies for avoiding joining the Communist Party. However, obviously not everyone resisted joining the Communist Party. Party membership brought privilege, security, and career opportunities, and, therefore, joining could be considered a rational decision from a pragmatic point of view. Despite that, even membership in the Communist Party could have been interpreted as a rather ineffective measure of ideological discipline. As one of the interviewees remembers, the decision to join the Communist Party involved considering personal *internal understanding* and the ability to resist indoctrination:

I was appointed to be the Head of the Salary Department in 1982 and the Party Secretary said: "Juozas, you need to join the Party, do you understand? The Head of the Department has to be a Party member. The Party members have to be the best in everything, don't they?" [...] I consulted my parents first. I asked them what to do. My father said very plainly, "Juozas, if it helps in your life, join [the Party]. I know that your character has formed already. You will behave as you do. Your character will not change. [...] That is what I did. I joined [the Party] (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai).

It follows that a person's activities aligning with the regime do not necessarily lead to changes in the person's inner moral values. The explanation provided suggests that even involvement in the most obvious ideological and political organization can be rationalized as being ineffective and irrelevant to the formation of the persons' inner moral values or character. Therefore, even a pragmatic requirement to join the Communist Party to pursue a career can be considered a disciplinary practice that is neither important nor effective. It is worth noting that the interviewee feels the need to explain his decision to join the Communist Party. He explains the decision to join by referring to a value judgement rather than pragmatic reasons. It can be hypothesized that the interviewee attempts to contradict the public narrative that all the Communist Party members were success-

fully indoctrinated and actively collaborated with the regime on ideological grounds. The story suggests the ability to participate in the organization and to remain unaffected by indoctrination.

While forms of ideological socialization in Communist organizations established discipline well, it was not limited to the sphere of these organizations only. Debates and reflections on communist ideology were restricted. Criticism of the Soviet regime could have led to a sentencing for “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda” (Anušauskas, 2005, pp.406). Therefore, visible and tangible disciplinarians, such as Communist Party members, were not the only agents of ideological indoctrination and social control; in addition; the collective performed a disciplinary function (Kharkhordin, 1999). The group of colleagues in a workplace functioned as the invisible disciplinarian who induced the personal self-discipline.

Despite that, people were looking for allies to whom they could share their lack of belief in the ideology. In the following quotation, an interviewee admits that some forbidden topics were secretly discussed among those who trusted one another: *We used to talk among ourselves that it is bad now, that we wanted to be better anyway. We used to feel [who we can talk to] (Worker, female, 85 years old, Kėdainiai)*. How did anyone know who can be trusted? The trustworthiness was primarily based on the only sources of information available – feelings, intuition, interpretations of actions, and presentiment. The decision not to trust a person was based on uncertain indications such as suspicious behaviour:

First of all, the question is, where the “second half” of a person works [...] We protected ourselves, you still felt, you did not speak about the religion directly [...] You see right away how this history teacher teaches, how she behaves [...] how she sits and talks in the teacher room. And we have already felt that she talks, wants someone to speak up, and just attempts to hear something [...]. So we simply avoided such people. You could get a peculiar feeling, you could still feel it. (Teacher, female, 83 years old, Kėdainiai)

Again, in various conversations we used to talk about those topics with the people, who, you know, understand. [...] There also used to be political hours to improve the political level of the workers. They taught us a bit [...] It was more interesting to talk to those people. You did not know if they were giving you the information intentionally, realizing that you might give away. Or maybe they were just trying to show that they knew more and understood. It’s only just among the very close friends, who had already tested each other, you could have talked more openly, talk about politics, everything else. (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai)

The feelings and sentiment could not be tested, and people could not be simply asked to reveal their true political and moral attitudes. As the interviewees remember, some people were trustworthy, and others were not. While the trustworthiness of a person was determined by intuition, widespread personal distrust could also have been the expression of a collective insecurity. This insecurity also served the regime by preventing collective actions. At the individual level, it meant that the only available and reliable source of information (feelings and intuition) could not be verified. When factual reality cannot be leaned on, imagination and intuition take its place. The following quote supplements the previous two in illustrating suspicion of the closest environment:

The secret police were around everywhere and you did not know if they were in your circle or among those Komsomolians, those who were recruited. [...] I really felt how the secret police

recruited people. Very argumentatively, you know. I said, for example, “I am an economist; I will not be able to work this job.” – “It does not matter; there are schools, we will teach you, you are young, you will learn.” – “But where are these schools?” – “Minsk”. [...] “I have two children”. – “It does not matter; the family will not suffer from this”. [...] Well, we all knew that there was someone from the secret police in the group and we practically knew all of them, because of their behaviour, of their conversations, everything. They had to prepare a certain report about their work. [...] So you behaved in a certain way. (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai)

The main underlying assumption or precaution was not to trust anyone. This way, the visible disciplinarian is not that relevant anymore. The less tangible the disciplinarian is, the more discipline power it has. And when the disciplinarian is less tangible, self-discipline flourishes. Self-discipline becomes the most important and available precaution and the only reasonable way to maintain security in uncertain situations.

Interestingly, the quotation above reveals a rather prevalent conviction that people were able to recognize who worked for the secret police. Those who took part in disciplinary work were imagined as having distinguishing features. However, the interviewee, who was approached by the secret police, does not consider himself any different from his colleagues. He was trying to avoid this service just like everyone else. It is possible that admitting inability to identify any specific differences between disciplinarians and the disciplined shatters a constructed antagonism between a clear and identifiable disciplinarian and passive members of the society who became victims in the process.

### ***Discipline after work: political elections, cultural activities, and religious practices***

In addition to membership in political organizations, people were obliged to participate in political elections to sustain the government’s legitimacy: *The election was mandatory. They voted for one [candidate]. They used to bring [the bulletins] to you and you had to [vote], whether you wanted to or not, it was obligatory (Collective farm worker, female, 79 years old, Varėna district.)* Elections are remembered as an abstract ritual that happened to everyone else, but not to the interviewee personally. The individual seems to be eliminated from the process of election. Elections are not how the people expressed their will, but a procedure that *happened* to them. The following quotation illustrates how the election *happened* to the person:

Election, what election? There was no election, only one bulletin, one surname. One surname. So what? You had to vote. Once I had left for the village and they came with Volga for me to vote that time. What [election]? Only to write 99.99% of that vote. (Worker, female, 85 years old, Kėdainiai)

The invisible disciplinarian does not respect boundaries of privacy because political matters are considered to be above privacy and personal choices. Moreover, people were encouraged to participate in elections through various means of force or entertainment. The stories hint at a memory of everyone being encouraged to vote—except for the interviewees, who did not actually believe in the process. They acted as passive observers in the stories they told. The interviewees distance themselves from the activities that they participated in and tell a generalized story in

which the actors do not actually make decisions. They are present in the story without actually being present:

And in Soviet times, just like everyone else [...], but very rarely did anyone go. Unless, except for the party members who already watched [...]. Other [bulletins] were just put in and it was 99.9% [...] There were shops in the collective farms centres, and on the day of election, the shop had to be open. A group of people needed to have a drink. They were going to the polls because of the open shop: it was an opportunity to have a drink and to perform a duty at the same time. I emphasize that it was an obligation, but not a right. (Factory worker, male, Kėdainiai)

The state control was not restricted to the workplace, and engagement in the political party was not the only way to experience ideological socialization. Social control was also transposed to the spheres of culture and religion, which could be considered a realm of privacy. Beginning in 1966, religious practices, such as the organization of religious education for minors, religious meetings, and rituals “violating public order” were forbidden and could be punished with a year of imprisonment (Anušauskas, 2005, pp.575).

People remember the collision between private family life and public life at school. The following interview excerpts reveal different experiences of punishment for practicing religion.

Again, you were raised religiously in the family, you know. You come to school, and they explain to you that we are all atheists and you are not allowed to go to school here, while your parents take you to the church on Sunday. And you are punished at school on Monday, because the teacher stood at the corner of the church and saw everything. (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai).

There was a man in the collective farm who went to Varėna to church, and the locals reported him. They reported which people went [to church]. They reported him and the head [of the collective farm] said that he would be rebuked. (Teacher, female, 87 years old, Varėna district).

You know, you were not allowed then, in was forbidden, unacceptable. [...] When I baptized my oldest son, there was a meeting, I was still working at the House of Culture and I was charged as a criminal against everyone when they found out. (Assistant of factory director, female, 71 years old, Varėna district)

Special commissions were established to control religious life, including listening to the priest's sermons (Anušauskas, 2005, pp.575). Different disciplinarians imposed sanctions for the violation of rules regarding religious observance: teachers, heads of the collective farm, the director. All of the leadership positions belonged to the Communist Party. It is worth noting that discipline took place publicly in all of the participants' stories. Even private matters and activities, which did not take place not at the workplace or in school, were brought back into the public light for sanctions. In this way, hierarchical and collective discipline could complement each other.

Even though such regulation could be considered straightforward, its implementation was highly contextual, which meant that practicing religion was possible where the people were not familiar and discipline by the collective could not be implemented easily:

My wife's mother was a believer in Radviliškis, so I used to go to the church in Radviliškis, but I did not [go to church] in Kėdainiai. We used to go only to funerals. They did not forbid this too much, they overlooked it somehow. Everyone knew that I was attending. The director has even come to my wedding and congratulated us. He knew that I was getting married in a church, but everything was kept silent. (Chief engineer in factory, male, 68 years old, Kėdainiai)

You tried [to baptise] the children in a different town. So if I lived in Kėdainiai, they could easily be baptised in my hometown, or in my wife's hometown. The locals never... The nationalism was more alive in the villages, so no one would go and report you to someone or say that he baptized his child here. (Director of finance in factory, male, 63 years old, Kėdainiai)

It should be added that discipline also depended on who implemented a rule. Exceptions were applied to those who were loyal to the regime:

I used to go [to the church]. They started prohibiting it when I was in secondary school. Later, when I was working, I was not even allowed to get married at church. My sister was a teacher, so they secretly got married at church. It was forbidden, young people were forbidden [to go to church]. The Communists who worked used to secretly go to church, baptized their children, and get married at church, but only in secret. (Worker, female, 85 years old, Kėdainiai).

Neither the rules nor the implementation were straightforward. Soviet life was full of uncertainty and duality (Putnaitė, 2007, pp.169-171). The official policy of the regime was to organize various attractions (similar to those organized during an election), such as mass celebrations, youth festivals etc. to distract people from religious services (Lietuvos komunistų partijos Centro Komitetas, 1962). Party organizations in cities, villages, collective farms, and factories were obliged to offer free time activities: to organize "amateur art concerts, sports tournaments, hiking trips" etc. (Ibid.). Understandably, the role of cultural activities became very important. Like cultural after-school activities, employers organized after-work cultural activities. The head of the House of Culture in a Lithuanian village states that cultural events and activities necessarily had to involve ideological content and ideas, which is what she remembers and recognizes:

If you worked at the House of Culture, if you were a representative of the ideological front, if you chose the profession, you had to work for it. [...] But I had to do what I had to do, and I did it with respect. Otherwise never. During all the celebrations, the artists used to create in such a way that you could pass out from beauty, but nothing was ideological. [...] And everything was in Lithuanian. Maybe we sang several songs in Russian, [...] but not because we were required to, but because the song sounded better in its original language. After all, the original always sounds good. But no one gave us any instructions. (Head of the House of Culture, female, 73, Naujoji Akmenė district)

Several layers of different disciplinary restrictions arise in this story. First, her personal decision to work in her particular professional area was followed by certain requirements and restrictions. The interviewee admits her responsibility in the process of ideological indoctrination, but she does not elaborate on the origin of understanding which behaviours were appropriate. The disciplinarian, who presumably instructed the interviewee on required and prohibited behaviour, remains unknown. Second, she explains that she and her team did not actually believe in the ideology,

in contrast to true believers, and did not do anything ideological in their cultural celebrations. Even the decision to include Russian songs is explained and rationalized without referencing instructions from the top. To the contrary, she denies instruction to include Russian songs in the repertoire. Intuition was applied not only to decide who is trustworthy, but in determining what an appropriate cultural event is. Through self-discipline, she knew very well what was appropriate and acted according to what she perceived was expected from her. This conclusion is supported by her answer to the interviewer's question regarding who implemented control and if the disciplinarians were Party members: *If you know that this is an ideology, and you are [the ideological worker]... Now, let's say, you come to visit me and do some nonsense. Why? You know who you are coming to. (Head of the House of Culture, female, 73, Naujoji Akmenė district)* Interestingly, while she did not identify any disciplinarians influencing decisions about cultural celebrations, it seems that the main disciplinarian is the ideology itself. If the person knows what is required of them and agrees to work in a position, which requires following the ideology, supervision is no longer needed. The person is firstly disciplined to act in a certain way and then applies self-discipline to act as a disciplinarian in their workplace. In this way, ideological indoctrination was implemented to its fullest capacity (Arendt, 1953, pp.320-321).

People acted according to the ideology without believing in it (Joseph Schull, 1992). Some of the interviewees claim that they did not believe in the imposed ideology, which could consequently indicate a critical stance towards the ideology. However, the prevalent disbelief did not necessarily lead to actively questioning its provisions. It seems they were misled by the assumption that believing in the ideology was what was required of them. People were more likely to have reconciled with the ideology and with the often-reiterated ideological slogans, because open discussion, criticism, and change seemed impossible (Putinaitė, 2007, pp.169-171). Consequently, it can be argued that self-censorship or tricking or cheating the disciplinarian only actually took place in the heads of the creators (Streikus, 2018, pp.28).

## Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results presented above. Ideological discipline was introduced during the early stages of a person's life. Teachers and organizations acted as the main adaptors during the primary stage of socialization. Later on, individuals became able to identify real disciplinarians in their workplaces: to perceive an actual person who occupied this particular role. The separation of the disciplinary and mobilizing functions of the ideology is artificial. It seems that any mobilizing activity could have been accompanied by sanctions. In other words, all ideological activities needed to be perceived as disciplinary in nature.

However, the visible and tangible disciplinarian was supplemented by invisible discipline: the collective. An important characteristic of the collective's invisible disciplinary power is its uncertainty and vagueness. People adapted to the uncertainty of the situations they lived through by using feelings and interpretations. When the disciplinarian is invisible and the rules are not clear, feelings and suspicions are the only available and seemingly reliable reality.

When the disciplinarian is invisible, the responsibility for retaliatory actions does lie with anyone. Not even political structures seem to be fully responsible. The success of totalitarian discipline is that it was internalized and people became their own most important disciplinarians.



It can be hypothesized that the most difficult thing for people who experienced the totalitarian regime is to admit their inability to control and or rationalize the uncertainty, and to admit that they probably were not able to recognize the disciplinarians. Consequently, they became their own strictest and most severe disciplinarians.

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