

# Women's Initiatives and the Reform Movement of Lithuania (1988–1989)

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**Abstract.** Over 30 years have passed since the beginning of the Reform Movement; however, women's initiatives in the Reform Movement of Lithuania have not been analysed. Commemorating the anniversary of the Reform Movement, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania declared 2018 as the year of the Reform Movement and highlighted the period of 1988–1990 as a period of great importance in the Lithuania history when Seimas of the Reform Movement acted as a partial yet legal democratic representative of the nation in the Soviet occupation system.

The article analyses women's engagement into the initiative groups of the Sąjūdis, their participation in the initiative group and congress. The aim of this article is to shed light on the role of women in the building of the Soviet Union and the specific nature of the activities of the women's Sąjūdis, the degree of involvement, the problems raised and the solutions proposed.

In order to achieve this goal, the archival material contained in the fund of the Lithuanian Perestroika Sąjūdis of the New Archive of the Lithuanian State, the fund of the Kaunas Movement of the Kaunas Regional State Archive, the periodical press of the time were analysed, and the following scientific research was made available.

**Keywords:** Women's Reform movement's; Women's Reform movement's initiative groups; Women's council; social policy; meetings; assemblies.

## Moterų iniciatyvos Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdyje (1988–1989)

**Santrauka.** Nuo Sąjūdžio pradžios praėjo daugiau nei trisdešimt metų, tačiau moterų iniciatyvos Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdyje nėra analizuotos. Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, minėdamas Sąjūdžio jubiliejų, 2018-uosius paskelbė Sąjūdžio metais ir 1988–1990 metus išskyrė kaip ypač svarbų Lietuvos istorijos laikotarpį, kai sovietų okupacinėje sistemoje Sąjūdžio Seimas veikė kaip dalinis, bet teisėtas demokratinis tautos atstovas.

Straipsnyje analizuojamas moterų įsitraukimas į Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio iniciatyvines grupes, dalyvavimas Sąjūdžio iniciatyvinėje grupėje ir suvažiavime. Aptariamas Moterų sąjūdis, veikęs kaip Sąjūdžio dalis, miestų iniciatyvinės sąjūdžio grupės. Keliamas Moterų sąjūdžio grupių veiklos ir lyderystės klausimas, aiškinamasi, kaip Moterų sąjūdis bendravo ir bendradarbiavo su Moterų taryba, Sovietų Sąjungos sukurta

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institucija, neturėjusia įtakos moterų įtraukimui į visuomeninę veiklą ar į ideologines propagandines partijos iniciatyvas, neskaitant pavienių atvejų. Moterų tarybų veikla išryškėjo kuriantis Sąjūdžiui ir visus 1989 metus iki Aukščiausiosios Tarybos rinkimų, įvykusių 1990 m. Straipsnio tikslas – atskleisti moterų vaidmenį kuriant Sąjūdį ir Moterų sąjūdžio veiklą specifika, įsitraukimo laipsnį, keltas problemas ir siūlytus sprendimus. Siekiant tikslo analizuota archyvinė medžiaga, esanti Lietuvos valstybės naujojo archyvo Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio fonde, Kauno regioninio valstybės archyvo Kauno sąjūdžio fonde, to meto periodinėje spaudoje, pasitelkti šiais klausimais atlikti moksliniai tyrimai.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** Moterų sąjūdis; Moterų sąjūdžio iniciatyvinės grupės; Moterų taryba; socialinė politika; mitingai; susirinkimai.

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## Introductory remarks

The 20th century was also the century of World War I, World War II and the Cold War. The Lithuanian state and nation lived through them along with 4 periods of occupation (Tsarist Russia, Kaiser's Germany, the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany). There were resistance and dissident opposition fights during the entire period of the Soviet occupation. The armed rebellion was replaced by passive resistance that spread the belief in the idea of restoring the Independent state that had existed in the inter-war period.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe was the period of new opportunities and goals because the Cold War was over, the Berlin Wall fell, and later – the Soviet Union collapsed. During this period, former countries restored and new ones emerged along with reform movements, people's fronts, community-based organisations. At the beginning of summer in 1988 in Lithuania, the initiative Sąjūdis group was launched and included several women.

## Problem solving stage

The activities of the Reform Movement have been studied extensively: the related publications include monographs, studies and separate articles. In his PhD thesis, Kęstutis Bartkevičius (2010) analyses the organisational structure and social aspects of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. This author dedicates one chapter of the thesis for a general overview of women's engagement into different level structures of the Reform Movement throughout the country. Ainė Ramonaitė (2011) analyses the Soviet Lithuanian society stepping into the Reform Movement as well as networking of the creation process of the Reform Movement.

The establishment of Sąjūdis was analysed by Alfred Erich Senn (1992), Bronislovas Genzelis (1999), Česlovas Laurinavičius and Vladas Sirutavičius (2008), Virgilijus Juozas Čepaitis (2007). It is important to mention Gediminas Ilgūnas' (2004) study on the establishment of Sąjūdis and its activities in the Jonava region. It reveals women's participation not only at the regional level, but also in the constituent congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. Kaunas Sąjūdis and its activities were analysed by Kęstutis Bartkevičius (2009); however, the author did not analyse women's activities. Arūnas Gumuliauskas (2013) extensively analyses the activities and structure of the Reform Movement in

Šiauliai. Jurėnienė and Ibiānskienė (2018) analyse the activities of restoring women's organisations. This raises a valid question of the role of women in the Reform Movement.

As it has already been mentioned, none of the studies mention women's initiatives during the establishment of Sajūdis, their activities and representation in the Supreme Council elected in 1990 February. Another important problem to discuss is whether the Women's Sajūdis existed and what its relation to the Reform Movement of Lithuania was.

**Object of the article:** women in reform movement of Lithuania.

**The aim of the article** is to determine the role of women's Sajūdis in the Reform Movement of Lithuania based on the analysis of the movement's documents and then existing press.

**Objectives of the article:**

- 1) To reveal the role of women in the establishment of the Reform Movement of Lithuania and its development;
- 2) To analyse women's Sajūdis and its activities;
- 3) To evaluate the issues raised in women's Sajūdis.

**Research methods:** comparative scientific literature analysis, analysis of primary and secondary data.

The research methods include comparative analysis of scientific literature, document analysis, and semi-structured in-depth interview. The authors prepare a database of the research material using the methodological inductive paradigm in the social studies based on the grounded theory because it is based on the data collected during the study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) rather than previous studies. This can have a negative impact (it can prevent a fresh outlook on even small steps carried out by the researchers). The authors analyse archive sources in the Fund of the Reform Movement of Lithuania of the Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, the Kaunas Reform Movement Fund of the Kaunas Regional State Archives, contemporary periodical press. In addition, the research methods include qualitative research. This method is included because every individual understands and receives information differently; thus, every respondent has a unique experience, and the role of the researcher is to understand that experience (Bitinas et al., 2008, p. 37).

## **Women's activities in Lithuania going into the period of the Reform Movement**

The period of the Soviet Lithuania is complex and has been researched by both Lithuanian and foreign scholars. This article is not focused on family, the resistance problem field of the Reform movement or social changes. This chapter is dedicated to the social readiness for the Reform Movement and the Soviet Lithuanian women's organisations that operated during the Reform Movement of Lithuania too.

As a respondent – member of the Soviet Lithuanian Women's Council until 1990 – claims that women actively participated in the activities of trade unions and women's councils. The activities of both organisations were closely related. The Women's Council operated in every organisation and solved women's issues. According to the respondent, the issues were related to convalescence, distribution of low-supply goods, assigning the

salary of an alcoholic husband to the wife, domestic violence, etc. This example shows that the Women's Council was not a sham organisation. According to the respondent, the organisation faced a problem, i.e., the number of the members was unknown. Women could join based on interests, arising problems or having encouragement to join but without fixed membership. This enabled the Soviet government to manipulate this institution because Women's Councils in organisations were subject to the Regional Women's Council, and the latter – to the National Women's Council. The latter was subject to Soviet Women's Council. Even though the respondent maintains that this organisation was independent, it is evident that there were no such independent organisations in the Soviet Union. Therefore, it depended on the policies of family, culture and leisure as well as labour collective activity organisation carried out by the Communist Party.

When analysing the Soviet political culture, it can be said that women were not valued seriously. The Supreme government did not include women, and one third of the Supreme Council were women; however, this institution did not make any decisions. Women were usually a tool to demonstrate democracy. The institution followed unwritten quotas. Dalia Leinartė who analyses the Soviet Lithuanian Society also supports this. She points out that women's participation in decision-making was suspended by formal quotas in the system. The participation of female deputies in the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR was stable and even: in 1967 – 32.4 per cent, in 1971 – 32.22 per cent, in 1975 – 34 per cent, and in 1980 – 35 per cent (Leinartė, 2021).

High ranking Soviet officials and officials from the Communist party, known male science and culture representatives needed places; thus, women were usually selected in such a way that one woman would fill several quotas, e.g., a Russian woman, with no higher education, labourer, etc. This helped to fulfil three quotas, i.e., a woman, labourer and representative of ethnic minorities. The material studies reveals that women did not have and could not have had impact on decision making at the highest national level. Irmina Matonytė and Oksana Mejerė note that during the Soviet period, women's political representation looked more like obligation imposed by the patriarchal top wanting to symbolise achievements of gender equality and hide political restriction of open social-political opinions (Matonytė and Mejerė, 2011, p. 109).

There are no studies on how involved women were into the opposition anti-Soviet activities. Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius analyse the Soviet Lithuanian society and point out that the absolute majority of Lithuanian residents did not think that the activities of the opposition had prospects or did not engage with it and were loyal to the regime (2008, p. 39).

However, Genzelis points out that the society was not very passive, i.e., people gathered to discuss important national issues. Various informal movements emerged one after the other in the country (1999, p. 19): “One such group was related to Putin's name.<...> The soul of the group was Irena Kostkevičienė. This group included Jurgis Lebedys, Meilė Lukšienė, Vanda Zaborskaitė, Vytautas Kubilus, Rimantas Vėbra, Juozas Girdzijauskas, Roma Dambrauskaitė-Brogienė, Linas Broga, Aleksandas Žirgulyš, Zita Žemaitytė, doctor Stasė Mičelytė, Ingė Lukšaitė, Gražina and Marcelijus Martinaičiai, Laimonas Noreika,

Aloyzas Stasiulevičius, Jurgis Tornau <...>. During meetings, the member discussed cultural, literary, art issues as well as events in emigration; they discussed about what could be done under the existing political regime conditions”(Genzelis, 1999, p. 22).

The group contained 24 members, 9 of them were women. Educational activities were important as well. From 1985, forums of the Philosophers' Association stood out; they included Krescencijus Stoškus, Bronislovas Genzelis, Romualdas Ozolas, Arvydas Šliogeris, historians Ingė Lukšaitė, Romas Batūra, Alfredas Bumblauskas contributed as well (Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 46).

Based on studies carried out by Šukys and Ivanauskas, Ainė Ramonaitė points out that there were certain non-formalised semi-private circles, for instance, Circles for Putin's Lovers that often gathered in Irena Kostkevičiūtė's home (Ramonaitė, 2011, p. 205). Focusing on the concept of networking as well as the theories of social capital and resource mobilisation, Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė and others analyse the Lithuanian society during the Soviet period, its entrance into 1988, and conclude that, “Paying closer attention to the social fabric of the Soviet period, it becomes clear that along the official networks, i.e., many government-controlled organisations, there was a hidden society that organised itself without the country and disregarding the country. This society managed to bypass the control and constraint of the ideological regime and tried to create its own order” (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011). According to the researcher Ramonaitė, this neo-semiofficial society could be divided into several levels. On the one hand, it consisted of underground networks, on the other hand, it consisted of the alternative legal society, i.e., social mobs and informal movements or subcultures that operated under the cover of legal organisations and formed alternative discourses and non-Soviet identity but that could not be formally suppressed (Ramonaitė, 2011, p. 205).

According to A. Ramonaitė, official networks, i.e., many top-down created and government-controlled organisations existed as well (Ramonaitė, 2011, p. 204). However, these networks also included operating groups of the intelligentsia that formed different discourses from those that the Soviet system offered. Scientific research institutes formed such cores. Ramonaitė calls them the official society (Ramonaitė, 2011, p. 205). These institutes included cores of political reform and national revival. This progressed to an alternative legal society because it included circles of scientists (Ramonaitė, 2011, p. 205).

Institutes had operating cores of political reform and national revival. One of them was the Institute of Agricultural Economics led by Kazimiera Danutė Prunskienė (known for her A. von Humboldt fellowship and dispersion of economic reform ideas in German academic layers) (Ibid., p. 44). Later, the institute became an important centre when establishing the Reform Movement of Lithuania. As the example shows, from the networking standpoint, the official and the alternative legal societies interacted with one another and did not have clear disjuncture because circles of artists and scientists operated in workplaces. Researchers conclude that such intellectual cultural movement occurred throughout the Soviet Union. . Women intellectuals joined it, even though scantily. These movements had direct impact on the nation on its way to restoring Independence.

## Women's participation in the Reform Movement

In order to determine women's participation in Reform Movement, it is important to look at the origin of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. On 23 May 1988, the presidium of the Academy of Sciences created a commission to prepare constitutional changes of the Lithuanian SSR "reform, publicity and democracy spirit" (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 25). Members of the commission included academician Eduardas Vilkas, Prof. Juozas Kuzmickas, Antanas Buračas, Raimondas Rajeckas and Juozas Bulovas. On 2 June 1988, the discussion "Will We Overcome Bureaucracy?" took place in the Hall of Scholars. Jokūbas Minkevičius, Romualdas Ozolas, Kazimiera Danutė Prunskienė, Kazimieras Antanavičius participated. It included a sharp yet spontaneous discussion about the government; however, all this showed that the approach did not aim at reforms "from the top" but rather a change in the regime.

The key of the discussion was Aukšė Aukštikalnienė's encouragement to take away privilege from the government and stop paying them salary, followed by a round of applause. Prunskienė tried to change the atmosphere by claiming the action is not against the government but in support of it. She raised a question of competence of the national delegates: "<...> Let us take women separately. Let us look at who is among those women. I counted 15 units, 15 souls; among them we have technicians, brigadiers, milkers, smiths. Men are officers, functionaries; women are for raising hands. This is our national delegation <...>; several people can represent but to talk about the fact that leaders of the reform are going there... What conceptual strategy from the nation they will bring there? <...> And what do we know about them?" (Liekis, 1998, p. 69). Questions raised and suggestions offered on 2 June were an introduction to the events of 3 June. On this day, a meeting of more than 500 intellectuals took place in the Academy of Science where changes to the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR were supposed to be discussed. It emphasised women's leadership.

The stenographs of the meeting show that Vilkas tried to lead the meeting following the anticipated agenda; however, it caused a wave of dissatisfaction. Aukštikalnienė used the situation and started a speech that Vilkas could not interrupt. Basing her speech on Article 9 of the SSR Constitution, she argued that citizens were obliged to actively participate, discuss national and social issues, improve the national apparatus, increase the role of people's control, strengthen the legal basis of statehood and social life with regard to public opinion, and, based on Article 49, Lithuanian citizens of SSR had a right to join public organisations that administer political culture and independence. Aukštikalnienė raised the following idea of establishing a new organisation and initiative group: "We lay under obligation the goal coordinating initiative group for the initiative group of the public organisation elected today to prepare the statute and specified activity programme of the organisation <...>". Aukštikalnienė also mentioned the following opportunities of publicity for organisational activities: "<...> every Lithuanian citizen of the SSR is prepared to actively support the state of the entire reform policy realisation <...> and, based on Article 48 of the Constitution on implementation of political freedoms <...> provide opportunity for working people and organisations to use the press, television and radio.

It means that all the essential conditions must be created to publish a periodical of this organisation using public funds. Based on this, the platform of this public organisation is to get 30 minutes. This public organisation is to receive permanent public premises <...> (Liekis, 1998, pp. 98–100). Aukštikalnienė not only raised the idea of establishing the reform movement organisation, its initiative group establishment, but also described its goals and showed a legal way how it all should have been implemented using the existing Lithuanian SSR Constitution. As it can be seen from the speech, women were proposing using constitutional rights and take on the establishment of the organisation.

Antanas Buračas who spoke after Aukštikalnienė pointed out that she had raised important and widely discussed issues but that it was first needed to reform the foundation of the Constitution (Liekis, 1998, pp. 98–101). Members of the meeting were not happy with this position. According to Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, the meeting started to become chaotic. Ozolas, Juozaitis and several other activists were about to leave and continue the meeting somewhere at the square. However, warned by Buračas that they cannot argue with academicians, the “rebels” stayed. Then, members started talking from the audience, and the speeches were increasingly sharp. For example, when it was Prunskienė’s turn, she tellingly criticised the concept of company self-supporting proposed by Vilkas and, basing her statements on the example of Estonia, she emphasised the importance of national sovereignty. However, by the end of her speech, Aukštikalnienė directly asked if Prunskienė was ready to agree with the idea that an initiative group should have been established that day. Prunskienė refused to provide a clear answer (Laurinavičius, Sirutavičius, 2008, 75). However, the stenograph of the meeting records that she agreed to participate in the initiative group yet refused to make decisions on its establishment during the meeting because scholars could have usurped the will of the entire nation. She mentioned that this suggestion was realistic (Liekis, 1998, p. 115). The stenographs of the meetings show that women understood the necessity of the reform and were initiators and realists, even though their proposals were not always heard. This happened with Aukštikalnienė’s suggestion to establish the initiative group because most of the researchers of the reform claim now that this idea was raised by Zigmantas Vaišvila. The same idea raised by him during the same meeting was accompanied by a round of applause, and candidates started proposing their own suggestions (Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 76). The truth is that Vaišvila did not know the ideas raised by Aukštikalnienė because he was late to the meeting. This emphasised the public’s stereotypical attitude to gender and its social roles. This could also have been determined by the emotional atmosphere of the meeting.

The initiative group consisted of 36 people including the following 3 women: Ingė Lukšaitė, Meilė Lukšaitė and Kazimiera Prunskienė. Lukšaitė refused to participate in the initiative group leaving 35 members (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 32). Genzelis reveals the reasons why Lukšaitė refused to participate: her motive was that one representative of family (Lukšienė) is not enough and, moreover, she was burdened with household chores (Genzelis, 1999, p. 69). Aukštikalnienė was the first to propose the establishment of an initiative group; however, when suggesting the candidates, her candidacy was rejected by means of voting (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 27). Later, Skučas – one of the organisers of the meeting – said that the first list of Sajūdis was signed by about 180 people out of approx-

imately 500 participants of the event (Ibid., pp. 26–27). However, archive data shows that in total there were 161 supporters of Sajūdis registered on 3 June, 48 of which were women (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 14-18). This comprised 29.8 per cent of all participants. Those people who could not have been easily arrested or punished by the government were elected into the initiative group. The initiative group that included people with a status locally and abroad known for their creative achievements that the government was forced to respect was joined by young, energetic people who had a desire for action and respect (Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 78).

The events of June show that one of the main members, organisers and initiators of the Sajūdis initiative group was Prunskienė. On her initiative, relations with the initiators of reforms in other ally nations were created, the situation was analysed, discussions were raised and steps of the reform in Lithuania were planned. It is essential to evaluate Aukštikalnienė's initiatives before the establishment of the initiative group as well.

However, looking at the roots of the Reform Movement and according to the theory on the Soviet social structure proposed by Ramonaitė, it is obvious that the roots lie in the alternative legal social layer with inclusion of well-known and influential personalities from the official social part.

### **Women in the support groups of the Reform Movement: activities and location**

The Sajūdis support groups in Lithuanian cities and towns were being established in the summer, autumn of 1988, and throughout 1989. This depended on people, local government's initiatives and visits of the initiative group to regions. According to G. Ilgūnas, approx. 200-300 people participated in the Jonava Sajūdis meeting. This was fewer people than expected. The meeting elected the initiative Sajūdis group of 20 members. Six of them were women: Janina Chabarova – deputy director of Jonava production union *Azotas* Cultural and Technical Hall; Violeta Maculevičienė – Jonava Forestry economist; Jūratė Pavilavičienė – chairwoman of Jonava region Construction Organisation Union; Elena Stanevičienė – chairwoman of Jonava region Military and Labour Veterans Council; Gintarė Vaicekavičiūtė – teacher at Jonava 5<sup>th</sup> Secondary School, and Irena Zinkevičiūtė – teacher at Jonava 3<sup>rd</sup> Secondary School (Ilgūnas, 2004, p. 66, p. 70, p. 237, p. 238). Immediately after the election of the initiative group and its announcement in the local press, Pavilavičienė rejected her participation. It is believed that she was pressed by labour leaders. In order to activate the group's activities, it additionally co-opted senior doctor of the region's Sanitary Epidemic Station Nadiežda Družinina, head of the region's Central Hospital Lab Giedrė Šlektienė, and head of the Furniture House, Department of Salary Romualdas Greinis (Ilgūnas, 2004, p. 73).

When analysing the establishment of Šiauliai city Reform Movement, A. Gumuliauskas points out that the Constitutive Conference was used to elect eight members of the future Seimas of the Reform Movement of Lithuania based on the quota assigned by the centre. Only one woman, i.e., schoolteacher A.V. Koskienė, was elected as not only the member of the Seimas of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, but also as a city council member.



During the first meeting of the Council, a decision was made that members of the Seimas of the reform Movement of Lithuania from Šiauliai were to take on this position based on 3-month rotation. However, A.V. Koskienė was in this position from July 1989 until 7 August 1989 and resigned. As the reason for her resignation, she pointed out intolerance of different opinions within the council (differences of political opinions between her and K. Alminas), exhaustion, declining health (Gumuliauskas, 2013, p. 174).

In Kaunas, there were 674 Sajūdis initiative groups registered in 1988-1989. There were 131 female representatives of the groups, and 129 female deputies (Kaunas Regional State Archive, f. 2058, ap. 1, b.14, 15, 16, 17); in both cases, this comprised 19 per cent of all members. The women mostly included heads and teachers of kindergartens and schools.

It can be established that this tendency dominated in entire Lithuania. Having carried out an analysis of the organisational structure of the Lithuanian Reform Movement and a social analysis, K. Barkevičius points out that, “Among all the regional initiative groups, women comprised 26 per cent of all members, and in cities – 15 per cent. <...> After election of the first regional councils of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, the ratio of women and men in them changed slightly, i.e., in cities the number of women increased to 19 per cent, and in regions it decreased to 22 per cent” (Bartkevičius, 2010, p. 149). Bartkevičius raises a question of why there was such a low number of women in the local-level government structures of the Reform Movement of Lithuania and a much higher number of women in the activities of support groups; the researcher concludes, “This inconsistency could be due to the fact that the initiative groups of the Reform Movement were mixed, and women comprised the minority. Late work could condition rejection of a certain number of women to engage into their activities; this was especially characteristic of older married women. It seems that the higher number of women in urban or regional support groups of the Reform Movement of Lithuania could also have been determined by the fact that these structures of the Reform Movement displayed much higher engagement of one family into the Reform Movement, i.e., one group could include a husband and his wife, their children and other relatives. On the other hand, exclusion of female members into the Reform Movement could also have been influenced by the prevailing uncertainty about how long the Reform Movement itself would have been tolerated by the government and repressive structures. For example, in Rokiškis, it was decided not to include the young communist league committee instructor Stankevičiūtė who had wanted to be included since the establishment of the initiative group into the Rokiškis region Reform Movement initiative group because she was ostensibly too young. However, according to sources, she engaged into Rokiškis Reform Movement later when new members joined the initiative group (Bartkevičius, 2010, p. 150).

Reform Movement groups were mixed, and women were the minority. The Reform Movement of Lithuania Kaunas Higher Education Institutions Council was organised by Reform Movement (Sajūdis) of Kaunas Academy of Medicine. Councils of each higher education institution appointed their representatives to Kaunas Higher Education Institutions Council. The Lithuanian Institute of Physical Education delegated Rūta Adomaitienė. Other higher education institutions appointed men. Jonas Ramanauskas reveals that the members of the council were Algirdas Bytautas, Vida Bartkienė, Rūta Vaičiulytė, Petras

Stirbys and others. The following lecturers of higher education institutions that had not been appointed joined the activities of the council: Naginevičienė, Mockienė and eight men (Ramanauskas, 2004, p. 144).

Tautvydas Elijošius analyses the Reform movement in Pakruojis and Šiauliai regions. The author provides a general analysis of the establishment of the Reform Movement in these regions. His work reveals gender-related tendencies in peripheral processes of the Reform Movement emergence. The groups of the Reform Movement were mixed but men comprised the majority of them. The initiative group of Pakruojis Reform Movement department included the following members: Stokaitė, Griškevičius, Zakrauskas, Stravinskas, Nikontas, Šeduikis, Vičaitė and Stancikas (Elijošius, 2019, p. 23).

Reform Movement groups were being established all over the republic; however, not every case was easy. This can be seen in Angelė Kekienė's application to appoint one observer's mandate in the Constitutional Congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania: "I have been working alone in Vilkyškiai district (Šilutė region) even though I have gathered a support group. However, farmers do not know much about Reform Movement (Sąjūdis), and the district government and other leaders are attacking me and do not want to allow me to work" (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 100). The fact that women who had joined Sąjūdis were pressed by the local government to leave their activities is described by Ilgūnas in his book. Therefore, it can be seen that in regions, all efforts were put to prevent women to join Sąjūdis more actively in regions.

## **Women in the Reform Movement congress, Seimas, Seimas Council**

According to Senn, all Lithuania wanted to get into the Hall of Sports where the Congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania took place (1992, p. 141). J. Marcinkevičius and M. Lukšienė's appearance on stage was met with applause; they were chairpersons of the first session (Ibid., p. 143). Most of the Sąjūdis Seimas members, i.e., 169 out of 220, were appointed during city and region conferences. The statistics of the Congress of Sąjūdis is as follows: two thirds of the delegates were men, according to social roots – 299 peasants, 202 workers, 459 employees. According to professions, most of them were scientists and artists, i.e., 283 (Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 168).

The archive data reveals that regions were represented by four, five, rarely six delegates; each of them included one woman that was enlisted as Number 5 on the lists. Širvintos, Kėdainiai, Kaišiadorys, Molėtai, Kapsukas (now Marijampolė), Šakiai, Šiauliai, Alytus, Druskininkai, Varėna regions, Palanga, Kupiškis and Biržai were not represented by any female representative. An exception were five deputies of Prienai region that included two women: second place – Birutė Jonelienė, and fourth place – Teresė Murauskienė (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap.1 b. 2, l. 33-71). It is important to note Pasvalys and Panevėžys region delegations where women, based on the election votes, occupied first places. Panevėžys region – Elena Mezginaitė, and Pasvalys region – Regina Butėnienė (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap.1 b. 2, l. 60-61). Mezginaitė was also the member of Sąjūdis Seimas (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 3, l. 10). The following three delegates participated in the congress: Nijolė Oželytė, Elena

Kubilienė and Aušra Pivorienė under the title of *Lithuanian Women's Delegates* (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 55). Archive documents show that Aušra Pivorienė who participated in the Constitutional Congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania was ready to read a statement titled *Women's Club Statement*. Thus, it can be assumed that the female delegates could not represent all Lithuanian women because the Lithuanian Women's Association already existed, even though there was no Constitutional Congress yet, and there was the Catholic group *Caritas*. Representative of *Caritas* initiative group Albina Pajerskaitė applied to the organisational committee of the Constitutional Congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania asking the representatives of the group Pajerskaitė, Montvilienė and Stanelytė to be allowed to participate in the meeting as guests (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 3, l. 99). Historical sources record that Pivorienė could have represented the women's Sajūdis group because she was a member (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 129).

During the Constitutional Congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, the general Sajūdis programme, statute and resolutions were discussed. Several of the resolutions were dedicated to family and woman. Resolution No. 12 "On the Role of Mother and Family". It points out the following: "In order to revive the role of Mother in the society, to strengthen family foundations, it is essential to create conditions for mothers to raise children on their own until the age determined by the wide public discussion on this question <...>. It is to be treated that a mother raising children carries out important public service. The Lithuanian families of SSR who have 3 children shall be acknowledged as large families" (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 21, l. 20). Point 1 of the resolution on the immediate tasks of Sajūdis in the area of social moral renewal states the following: "Sajūdis announces the institution of family based on social well-being and takes on initiative to study the family problem and its immediate resolution" (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 21, l. 44). Chapter 4 of the general programme of the Reform Movement of Lithuania "Social Justice" states that, "It is essential to strengthen family which is the main cell of the society. Sajūdis supports such custody practice that would guarantee that the increase in the number of children would not have a negative effect on the family's standard of life and education of the child's personality. Raising and educating children must be validated as a paid job. To create conditions for pre-schoolers to be raised in families. To legally define parents' responsibility for education of their minor children (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 21, l. 52).

The content of the adopted resolutions complies with Pivorienė's statement that was not presented during the congress: "Family as a small social group that carries out the functions of continuation of humanity, education of the young generation, transfer of culture and other functions has not disappeared. No one has created a more favourable environment for a child to grow up <...> Let us not be indifferent to the conditions that people grow up under as these people will take care of ecology, economy and other issues after us. <...> Thus, it is necessary to create conditions for families to raise and educate children independently taking on all responsibilities. It is necessary to compensate families according to their effort and the number of children with regard to the demographic situation" (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 116, 118).

Delegate of Pasvalys initiative group Rasa Rastauskienė was also ready to speak; however, she did not get time, and the text of her speech remained in the case files of Sąjūdis. It is important to mention that she wanted to raise the question of Lithuanian military service: “We have arrived with mothers’ letters and requests to fight for their soldiers and military officers sons’ service in Lithuanian units in Lithuania. We think that this is one of the most important, just or even the most difficult points of the programme (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 139).

The delegates of the congress elected Seimas of 220 members, 202 out of which were men, and 18 were women: Laima Abraitytė, Nijolė Angelė Baužytė, Ona Jurina Gricienė, Vitalija Teresė Jonušienė, Halina Kobeckaitė, Aldona Veronika Koskienė, M. Lukšienė, E. Mezginaitė, Giedrė Mickūnaitė, Nijolė Misiūnienė, B. Nedzinskienė, Zita Paulauskaitė, K. D. Prunskienė, Irena Ratkienė, Irena Šimanauskienė, Zita Šličytė, Danutė Vabalaitė, and Vanda Zaborskaitė. Women comprised 8.18 per cent of all Seimas members.

Seimas members elected the Council. Some of the Seimas members including Bulavas, Lukšienė and Marcinkevičius stated that they preferred not to be elected due to various reasons (Senn, 1992, p. 152). Most of the votes went to the following: R. Ozolas – 193 votes, K. D. Prunskienė – 192 votes, V. Landsbergis – 187 votes (Čepaitis, 2007, pp. 144–145). Senn notes that the only elected woman was Prunskienė (Senn, 1992, p. 153).

Even though the intelligentsia with higher education created the Reform Movement of Lithuania, women comprised the minority in the congress, and only one was elected to the Council. When reviewing the resolutions of the congress, the cause for such result becomes evident, i.e., the determined woman’s place and role in the society. The woman goes back to family, and the long history of women’s emancipation disappears.

## Women’s Sąjūdis

Up to today, the question of whether the aforementioned women’s organisations were support groups or separate organisations that supported the Reform movement and helped the initiative group of the Reform movement of Lithuania to draft the Reform Movement programme parts as social and cultural. Both forms can be observed.

Jurėnienė and Ibiaskienė (2018) point out that some publications call the Lithuanian Women’s Sąjūdis the Lithuanian SSR Women’s group, Women’s group for the (support of) the Reform Movement of Lithuania or under a name of Sąjūdis women (Jurėnienė and Ibiaskienė, 2018, p. 103). The authors claim that the Lithuanian Women’s Sąjūdis was a part of the Reform Movement of Lithuania as were other initiative Sąjūdis groups in the republic. The press of the Reform Movement of Lithuania of that time supports this assumption. Čepaitis analyses the alternative system of information created by the initiative group, names all the Reform Movement papers published in 1988 and points out that the Women’s Reform Movement had a paper titled *Moterų Balsas* (En. Women’s Voice) (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 273).

*Women’s Voice* announced itself as the Lithuanian women’s publication (Fig. 1).

According to Čepaitis, Women’s Reform Movement published a newspaper Women’s Voice in 1988–1989 (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 273). However, the documents in the Fund of the

Reform Movement of Lithuania of the Lithuanian State Modern Archives show that the paper was published in 1989.



Fig. 1. Women's Voice

Source: Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 5.

The newspaper had 5 issues. Margarita Marcinkevičienė points out, “<...> the work stops after the 5<sup>th</sup> issue; as the blockade starts, there is no strength left to look for paper” (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 2, b. 22, l. 25). As the archive material shows, the newspaper was published in 1989 only, and the economic blockade of the Soviet Union took place in 1990; therefore, it can be assumed that the commission of the Reform Movement of Lithuania for protection of women, children and family's rights had plans to continue issuing this publication.

The following women were compilers of the publication: Audronė Auškeliėnė, Virginija Kondratienė, Nijolė Oželytė, Liudvika Pociūnienė (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 6). The composition of the editorial board changed. The editor of the 5<sup>th</sup> issue was Auškeliėnė, and it was prepared by Auškeliėnė, Kondratienė, Marcinkevičienė, Trimonienė (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 6). The composition of the compilers changed.

Along with the aforementioned reason why the issuing of the newspaper ended, it was also thought that another reason was the financing of it. The first issues included a bank account for the readers.

This reasonably raises the question of whether this was the only Women's Reform Movement that operated under the Reform Movement of Lithuania.

V. Čepaitis analyses the political situation in Lithuania in 1988-1990 and states that there was a Lithuanian Mothers' Movement that in March 1989, together with the Reform Movement of Lithuania and the Women's Union *Saulėtekis* (En. Sunrise) wrote a letter to the Supreme Council of the USSR, the Ministry of Defence and the Baltic Military District and demanded that Lithuanian young men carry out military service in the territory of Lithuania (Čepaitis, 2007, p. 288). A question of whether this was a separate organisation or just another title of the same organisation arises. The application of the Mothers' Movement to the Lithuanian parents was published in *Motery Balsas* (En. Women's Voice) on 7 March 1989. The application included a concern about children's

future, the fate of survival of the family and the nation, and expressed an idea that children should have been raised in the parents' homes (The Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l.3).

On 23 February 1989, the Women's Reform Movement prepared a statement to the presidium of the Supreme Council of the LSSR and the Council of Ministers of the LSSR that was signed by approximately 3 000 people. It was planned to submit it during the 12 March meeting. The statement included a demand for women to receive satisfactory conditions to raise their children at home, and the following measures were provided:

1. To validate childcare as work for the country. The period needed to take care of a child until the child is 8 years of age is to be included in work experience from 1 January 1990 (from 1992 – until 12 years of age).
2. To pay 50 roubles in addition to mother's or father's salary from 1 July for taking care of every child when the child does not attend kindergarten until the child is 8 years of age (money for children, and from 1992 – until 12 years of age).
3. To pay that amount of money to a mother who takes care of a disabled child.
4. To increase material and moral support for families who raise child. (The Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425 l.4).

These requirements reflected the opinion of the active part of the society. It was a strong driving force that had impact on the governmental decision-making. At the beginning of 1989, a resolution on increasing support for families was adopted by the socialist Lithuanian government. This resolution aimed at partially paid childcare holidays at home, the holidays were extended until the child turned 1.5 years of age, and unpaid holidays were set until the child turned 3 years of age. It determined to preserve the working experience if a woman raised a child until the child turned 8 years of age (Stankūnienė et al., 2001, p. 44).

Even though the Soviet policy of family support still existed in Lithuania, a new type of policy was being formed.

The mothers' movement focused on large families. On 23 February, the social group of the Reform Movement of Lithuania and the mothers' movement group made the decision to establish a mutual clothing exchange group for large families and young schoolchildren (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 5).

Archive sources document that the Women's Sajūdis group comprised of the following seven people: Elena Kubilienė, Aušra Pivorienė, Lilijana Miškinienė, Marija Vrubliauskienė, Irena Kriauzaitė, Danutė Munkienė, Elvyra Šutavičienė (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 129). There is no clear data on how many women were included in this group because, according to Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, Sajūdis did not have a fixed, clear membership so it is difficult to determine the number, especially because the structure of Sajūdis was quite inconsistent as well. Some published sources (such as Šiauliai city and region lists of Sajūdis member groups) include more detailed information about the number of group members; however, they do not mention the period for which a certain group existed or how its composition changed (Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, 2008, p. 115). It remains unknown whether this was the main core of the Women's Sajūdis because when calling for the meeting "Peace for Azerbaijan and Armenia" on 24 January 1990, the following women from the Reform Movement of Lithuania had an application

to the Lithuanian women: Dagilienė – Vilnius Reform Movement of Lithuania Women – Žiliova (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 107, l. 68).

The analysis of the contemporary press shows that the Women's Movement operated along with the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis). The Women's Movement was established before the Reform congress of 1988. As it is pointed out in the newspaper *Women's Voice* (Moterų balas), "In 1988, women rose together with the rising nation. They established a group before the Reform congress; the group includes women of different interests and professions and with a goal to revive women's social life. The Revival Union organisational group announced their declaration in No. 14 of *The Revival*" (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425 l.1). The declaration included a Women's Movement programme even though it was called a "problem circle". The following problems were distinguished: women's rights in the society, actual position, family revival, childcare in kindergartens and schools (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425 l.1). The main focus was the social area, i.e., improvement of the family situation and childcare conditions (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425 l.1). The 1990 publication "Family, Woman, Society" published by the commission for women, children and family's rights protection of the Reform Movement of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law includes an article by M. Marcinkevičienė titled "The Reform Movement of Lithuania and the Women's Movement" where the author claims, "Since the first days of the movement, women were working and establishing various groups. The Women's Reform Group *Sunrise* was established in Vilnius University, and other activities of women in other institutions and organisations were observed. A Women's Reform Movement initiative group was established in *Sunrise*, the *Knowledge* hall of the headquarters of the Reform Movement (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 2, b. 22, l. 25).

Women were heads of separate Reform Movement initiative groups. Batušytė applied to the Reform Movement of Lithuania secretariat on behalf of Trakai region Grigiškės Sąjūdis support group to invite two members, and the application was approved (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 1, l. 93). A Women's Reform Movement initiative group operated in Kaunas as well (Kaunas Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 6., l. 209). Kaunas city Reform Movement of Lithuania group documents have recorded that female members of the initiative group would like to cooperate with the Reform Movement women's group (Kaunas Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 15, l. 71) or join the activities of city's Women's Reform Movement (Kaunas Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 15, l. 145). In 1989, there was a Reform Movement of Lithuania, Women's group (Kaunas Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 37, l. 14). It can be assumed that not only Kaunas Region, but also Kaunas city has a women's group of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. It is unknown how many women there were in regional initiative groups due to the aforementioned reason. However, separate documents help to create a view that women were a majority. As it has been mentioned, women's groups of the Reform Movement of Lithuania operated in the major cities of Lithuania.

The Women's Reform Movement existed under the Reform Movement of Lithuania. This is confirmed by the newspaper *Women's Voice* and archive documents. In addition, the question of the Women's Movement structure, whether it existed, remains unanswered because of the absence of the membership in the Reform Movement. Currently, Bartkevičius' statements that women acted only in the lowest layer of the Reform Movement, i.e., initiative groups, have been extended by Gumuliauskas and Ilgūnas' research on the Reform Movement in the peripheral regions of Lithuania showing that women were elected to councils of the Movement in cities. Even though there were not many of them, the fact was that they not only helped men, but also participated in decision-making. Mothers' Movement operated as well. The archive sources and contemporary press do not show whether this is one movement with different titles. However, according to the programmes, meetings, adopted resolutions and other public statements, it can be assumed that the titles emphasised the activities a group focused on.

### Questions raised by women in the Reform Movement of Lithuania

The issues raised by the Women's Movement were reflected in the programme of the Reform Movement of Lithuania.

In 1988, the declaration announced by the group of the Women's Movement were named in Audronė Auškelienė's article "Tautos šaknys – šeimoje" (En. The Roots of the Nation Lie in Family). The article states, "Psychologists and educators have proved that a child cannot be torn away from the mother until at least 3 years of age, especially in early childhood because even the slightest case of separation with the mother <...> causes trauma to personality, and the foundations of it are forming for the first 3 years of life" (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l.1). Provisions of household or gender economy were also formed; they are analysed only scientifically in the 21st century. The initiators of the Women's Movement proposed looking at the problem deeper. They wanted the new Constitution to include an article that would state, "Motherhood is every woman's right that is protected by the law and that the country provides help for in every way. Raising children at home is legally considered as a job for the sake of the nation and the state" (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l.1). As the way the article is formulated shows, women wanted raising children to be defined as serious work for the society and the state rather than childcare holidays.

In addition, women also proposed installing a pre-school education infrastructure that only now – in the 20s of the 21st century – is making its way, i.e., cooperative or individual kindergartens. Auškelienė says, "Families will be able to cooperate and raise their children. Some mothers will be able to take care of their and their friend's or neighbour's children" (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l.1). Financial sources were also anticipated in order to implement this programme, "It would be reasonable to calculate how much the state spends on one child's support in kindergarten (including the kindergarten construction and maintenance costs, inventory costs, etc.) and enable a mother to choose where she would like to raise her child, i.e., in the kindergarten or at home. The money should respectively be transferred to either the kindergarten or the



mother (of course, families of affected by alcoholism or drug use should be discussed separately)” (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l.1).

As Vlada Stankūnienė, Vilma Eidukienė, Boguslavas Gruzevskis, Raminta Janciulytė and others claim, under the conditions of national revival and movement for nationality, discussions on various social issues determined absolute denial of the Soviet past.

However, the laws that determined the family policy and that they were being changed at the time were not analysed. In their article titled *Dabartinės Lietuvos šeimos teisės modelio kūrimas tautinio atgimimo ir pirmaisiais nepriklausomybės atkūrimo metais (1988–1992)* (En. Development of Contemporary Lithuanian Family Law Model during National Revival and the First Years of the Restoration of Independence (1988-1992)), Stasys Vėlyvis and Henrikas Šadžius mention resolutions adopted by the Supreme Council of the LSSR and prove that the family law was being reformed and complemented with regard to the changing society's needs at the beginning of 1988. The authors state, “This [adopting laws] was the first step in order to increase family support by the country and the society for families raising children. Even though this step was not big (limited by existing financial possibilities), it created hope that the family would receive more substantial support in the future; it also showed that this area was finally focused on” (Vėlyvis and Šadžius, 2005, p. 25). What laws were adopted? In order to improve labour laws of the LSSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Council made a decision on 27 January 1988 to make amendments to the 1 June 1972 labour code. In total, there were 12 amendments and additions made to the code; they include the following: Article 59 – Partial working time; Article 194 – Prohibition to assign pregnant women and women with children under 2 years of age to work during the night, work overtime, work on holidays and send them on secondments; Article 195 – Limitation of overtime and secondments for women who have children aged 2-8; Article 196 – Transfer of women to a job requiring less effort if they have children up to 1.5 years of age; Article 203 – Guarantees upon employment and prohibition to fire pregnant women and women who have children up to 1.5 years of age, etc. (Vėlyvis and Šadžius, 2005, p. 25).

Another important decision was made by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the LSSR on 6 October 1988 on suggestions to increase state and social support for families

It was noted in the decision that taking care of family, timely resolution of its problems are very important social and political tasks in speeding up the reform processes and improving residents' well-being. The decision anticipated to oblige the LSSR Council of Ministers, Labour and Social Care Ministry, Ministry of Health, the Permanent Women's Labour, Household, Motherhood and Child Protection Commission of the Supreme Council together with the Lithuanian National Women's Council and USSR Lenin's Children's Fund Management Board of the Lithuanian National Department to analyse possibilities to increase state and social support for families. Much attention was to be paid to improving labour and flat conditions for mothers with young children, their benefits, development of household and other services for them, improving healthcare, improve material well-being and other measures of support (Vėlyvis and Šadžius, 2005, pp. 25–26).

As the adopted and published documents show, the national government focused mostly on mothers with young children and improvement of household conditions for young families.

Women and mother's movements emphasised other burning family-related problems. The object of these discussions was childcare in nurseries, the role of women in the society and family. Antifeminist opinions emerged along with nostalgia for patriarchal family. Popular opinions included women returning home as protectors of family, refusal to educate children in pre-school institutions, prohibition of abortions, etc. (Stankūnienė, 2001, p. 46).

1988 and 1989 emphasised the role of women's councils. Their representatives participated not only in discussions of women's organisations, but also government meetings. On 7 March 1989, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania invited not only the members of women's councils for the International Women's Day, but also the representatives of newly created and restored women's organisations to meet high ranking leaders of this party and the government. The members of the meeting analysed family problems, discussed too low government benefits paid to mothers and women's jobs (Jurėnienė and Ibianskienė, 2018, p. 100).

Next day, 8 March, in Kalnų parkas (The park of mountains) in Vilnius, there was a meeting of the Reform Movement of Lithuania to support Movement's candidates. It focused on Lithuanian soldiers serving in the USSR military. Teodora Každailienė delivered a speech. She claimed that: "this 8 March is unusual not only for me, but also for many women in socialist countries. Women today do not accept flowers, they do not want gifts or greetings; instead, they gather their determination and courage, and go to the streets to express the pain and grief accumulated throughout decades to the government of their country. The same happened among Vilnius women without prior agreement. And now women that you see on the left brought the names of their sons killed in the Soviet army yet named as those who committed suicide. Do you notice how many of our sons commit suicide?" (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 66, l. 31-32). Ona Eigirdienė read her son's letter from his service. Prunskienė who started this meeting claimed: "Today is the International Women's Day; this celebration is somewhat outdated and we do not have much to find joy in our actual lives because many of us, women, are burdened by heavy problems, roles of the housewife; however, this Women's Day is special. The revival of Lithuania is the revival of the Lithuanian woman. Look around and see how many old and mouldy corners there are in our society. Men alone will not manage to handle all this, they will miss a lot because of their grand masculine goals. Therefore, let us focus on serious and specific work (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 66, l. 22). When introducing Jūratė Kupliauskienė to the members of the meeting, Juozaitis mentioned that during the last session of the Supreme Council she had encouraged deputies to approve the Declaration on sovereignty (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 66, l. 31).

Kaunas women not only discussed problems relevant to women and families, but also celebrated the 8<sup>th</sup> of March. Their posters included various slogans that reflected their attitude towards the government, work, household and the woman herself. The slogans were full of determination to reform and self-reform: "Moteris taip pat žmogus" (En. Woman is a Human Being Too), "Valdžia klūpo prieš spekuliantus" (En. The Government Kneels in Front of Speculators), "Buitis mūsų pražūtis" (En. Household is Our Death), "Už laisvą laiką, už sveiką vaiką, už tyrą orą, už mūsų dorą" (En. For Free Time, for Healthy Child,

for Fresh Air, for Our Honour), “Valdžios pažadai – šakėm ant vandens rašyti!” (En. The Government Write their Promises with Forks on Water!), “Moteriai mokytojai – komfortą kaip prekybos – valdybos darbuotojoms” (En. Comfort for a Female Teacher like Comfort for Sales-Office Workers), “Atsiimkit degtinę iš mūsų namų” (En. Take Your Vodka from Our Homes), “Medicinos personalo atlyginimas žemiau skurdo ribos” (En. Medical Personnel’s Salary Below Poverty Level), “Nenoriu į darželį” (En. I Do Not Want Kindergarten), “Ar vasarą vėl maudysimės srutose” (En. Will We Swim in Sewage Water in the Summer Again?), “Ačiū partijai už teisę vargt statybų baruose, asfaltuoti gatves ir skverus, tampyt cementą maišuose” (En. Thanks to the Party for the Right to Slave in Construction Bars, Pave Streets and Squares, Drag Bags Full of Cement), “Mainau lygias teises į normalų gyvenimą” (En. I Will Trade Equal Rights for a Normal Life), “Išlaisvinti moterį nuo „laisvės”!” (En. To Free the Woman from “Freedom”!) “Išlaisvink moterį nuo buitinių pančių” (En. Free the Woman from the Household Chains), “Leisk mūsų vyrams būti vyrais, šeimos maitintojais” (En. Let Our Men Be Men, Breadwinners), “Tarybinė moteris pakelia viską” (En. The Soviet Woman Bears Everything), “Kiekviena dirbanti moteris savo vaikui skiria 14 min. per parą” (En. Every Working Woman Has 14 Minutes for Her Child per Day), “Jūsų kandidatai žada Lietuvą Maskvoje, o Sąjūdis –Lietuvoje” (En. Your Candidates Promise Lithuania in Moscow, and The Movement – in Lithuania), “Per kovo 8-ją ir posmai ir eilės, kiekvieną dieną – prekybinės eilės” (En. On the 8th of March – Poems and Verses, Every Day – Long Queues), “Socialinio aprūpinimo ministre, kodėl 35rb.×2=35rb.?” (En. Minister of Social Security, why is 35 roubles × 2 = 35 roubles?) (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 66, l. 46, 47). The posters highlight women workers and the role of woman-mother. Both groups include their expectations and goals.

The celebratory atmosphere of 8 March had repercussions in the Women’s Reform Movement press. In her article *Už šventinių nuotraukų* (En. Behind Festive Photos), Vida Sankuvienė raises and analyses the following two portraits of women: woman-activist, employee, and woman-mother. The author juxtaposes both social roles focusing on the woman-mother. She says, “What photos of the celebratory stands. Women are dressed up, happy, smiling, with medals on their chests. However, a different photo emerges in front of our eyes, i.e., a woman surrounded by a group of children. You look into her eyes, her hands on her knees, her loving children, and you understand that this photo is different from the previous ones” (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 6). This reveals the prevailing social role of the woman as worker, labourer, and leader together with the non-emphasised role of the woman as mother. This was natural because the society was modern with prevailing traditional social roles in family and emancipated woman. The society began agitating for enhancement of the social role of the woman as mother and opposition to the woman active socially and in the labour market. The public accentuated the patriarchal model of the family but with a stronger role of the woman as family protector. This was an emotionally strong argument; however, it was not based on any arguments when planning to reform the state economy under free market conditions; it was not based on the Central and Western European experience as well.

This had an effect on the society. On 12 March, the Lithuanian Women's Sąjūdis organised the meeting "Let Us Protect the Woman-Mother". Member of the Council of the Reform Movement of Lithuania Prunskienė claimed that women needed a separate meeting in order to have a word instead of just saying something randomly once in a while when men decided to let them talk. She applied to the participants of the meeting: "Among you there are wives, friends, mothers of men of different positions. Help them to look at their work from the side, help the young people who fight against dragons to see their own growing dragon-like claws, break them off" (Prunskienė, 1988, p. 1).

Prunskienė focused everyone's attention on men's goals in public, especially young ones who wanted to achieve their ambitions. This revealed not only the attitude of genders, but also generations towards the changes, as well as the different attitude towards women's position in the society.

An 8-point resolution was adopted during the meeting. The first point stated that competent organisations had to prepare an action plan titled *In Family*. It was to include complex measures that ensure normal living conditions for families with children; in addition, it was to include measures to promote harmony in families that would help prepare young people for family life (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 4). This point was implemented because the national programme *Lithuanian Residents in 1911-2005* was prepared. Other points of the resolution emphasised the necessity to improve the position of women in rural areas, questions of financial support for families, children being given healthy food, and invited to establish groups to protect women in military (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 4).

Based on the 22 March 1988 order by the Presidium of the Supreme Council "On Increasing State and Social Support for Families with Children", working women having at least one year of working experience and studying women who had to stop working without regard to working experience should have received partially paid holidays for childcare until the child was 1.5 years of age, and additional holidays without pay – until the child was 3 years of age since 1 July 1989. Working women having at least one year of working experience and studying women who had to stop working were to get 50 roubles a month until the child was 1 year of age, and during the period of 1 to 1.5 years – 35 roubles.

In addition, it was anticipated to maintain uninterrupted working experience for mothers who raised children at home until the child was 8 years of age (Vėlyvis and Šadžius, 2005, pp. 25–26).

This order reflected not only the society's expectations, but also the resolutions on family and women adopted during the meeting of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. This shows that at the time, Lithuania was facing a two-fold situation. The Soviet Lithuanian government had factual power, and the Movement had nominal power. However, the latter had major support from the society; therefore, the Soviet government tolerated the activities of the Reform Movement and coordinated their policies with the resolutions adopted by the Reform Movement as far as the power of the republic was concerned. The order of the adopted and proposed laws as well as social initiatives show that Ramonaitė's research reveals a fully operating networking of the Soviet Lithuanian society.

Thus, all active women's organisational activities had repercussions not only in the society, but also in Soviet Lithuanian institutions responsible for family policy and social well-being.

On 26 May, women's representatives establishing informal movements were invited to the Supreme Council for an open and necessary discussion on women's rights and protection of motherhood. Since the Constitution of the Republic was being prepared, it was necessary to hear the opinions of female representatives of operating women's organisations Caritas, Mothers and Women's Movements, Women's Union, Lithuanian Green Representatives; it was also necessary for them to get to know the work of commissions responsible for motherhood and women's protection as well as operating laws. The press shows that the representatives were from Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda and Panevėžys. It can be assumed that these cities had operating departments of the aforementioned women's organisations or independent organisations. Having evaluated the negative practices of forming commissions, a suggestion was raised to take the parliament road, i.e., to form a female commission that would work under the presidium of the Supreme Council and that would have the right to provide the Presidium with suggestions, projects for law-making (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 1, b. 425, l. 8). There are no historical sources that would confirm whether such commission under the Supreme Council was formed; however, this initiative was implemented by the Lithuanian Women's Reform Movement group that operated under the Reform Movement of Lithuania. The initiative women's groups operating under the Reform Movement were called the commission for the Reform Movement of Lithuania "To Protect Women, Children and Family's Rights". It was confirmed by a 01/08/1989 resolution by the Supreme Council. It followed the activity directions approved by the Supreme Council secretariat. The commission held meetings often, there was much work, i.e., issues of soldiers, mothers' worries, problems of large families, orphans, foster homes and effort to solve them (Lithuanian State Modern Archives, f. 10, ap. 2, b. 22, l. 25).

In the family development area of the programme *Lithuanian Residents in 1991-2005*, new conceptual ideas were proposed, and the family support policies were regarded in a broader sense. The following three sections were dedicated for family-related problems: "Birth Rate and Family", "Women's Work and Household Conditions", "Social Care and Service of the Elderly and the Disabled" (Stankūnienė, 2001, p. 45). The programme formulated the main principle for support for families who were raising young children, i.e., to create conditions for parents to choose how to coordinate parenthood (motherhood/fatherhood) and work. The programme raised an idea on the necessity to create conditions for parents to be able to choose whether to raise young children at home only or enrol them into the new type of pre-school institutions (Stankūnienė, 2001, p. 45). However, after announcing Independence in 1990, the programme was not implemented and was forgotten because the policies of the government were even more influenced by active public opinion that was also the driving force in making decisions. It had impact on the populist features of the family support system with pronounced paternalistic attitudes (Stankūnienė, 2001, p. 45).

Another burning problem was related to the situation of young men serving in the Soviet Union. Nijolė Oželytė claimed that one of the main issues of the Women's Movement under the Reform Movement of Lithuania was the issue of military service in the USSR. During an interview she stated that she had gone to Moscow to meet Raisa Gorbacheva and discuss this issue (Jurėnienė's interview, 06/2022).

In September, the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR passed a resolution on the military service of Lithuanian citizens of the SSR. On the initiative of the Sąjūdis Kaunas Council, they established a commission for youth's military service questions (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 37, l. 13). 13 representatives of public organisations were invited to join it; among them was the representative of the Women's Council Gražina Pavilionienė, *Caritas* representative Teresė Regina Narvaišienė, representative of the Workers Union Vanda Gerasimavičienė (Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 2058, ap. 1, b. 37, l. 7). All of the activities of women's councils during this period show their aim to occupy a certain position among the public organisations and have impact on decision making.

## Discussions

The activities of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, its organisational structure have been extensively analysed since 2013. The Women's Movement and women's initiatives in the reform Movement have received little attention in the Lithuanian historiography. This article fills the white stain of history. It analyses the origins of the Women's Movement, and it is concluded that the Lithuanian Women's Movement operated under the Reform Movement of Lithuania. Its origins lie not in the initiative group of the Women's Movement that was established in the core of the movement organisation, as Oželytė states. The roots of the Women's Movement were the *Sunrise* initiative group meeting at Vilnius University and the beginning of its activities. Such initiative groups of the Women's Movement existed in Vilnius and Kaunas, yet all of them were part of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. The newspaper Women's Voice published in 1989 as press of the Reform Movement of Lithuania confirms this. Another relevant question that remains unanswered is related to the Mothers' Movement. The collected archive material and contemporary press as well as the interview of a participant of the Women's Movement do not allow determining whether this was another movement that operated as a part of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. This leads to the assumption that the Mothers' Movement was a part of the Reform Movement of Lithuania because it raised questions related to family, large family, soldiers serving in the USSR and other questions. Moreover, the article reveals the laws and discussions in 1988-1989 by the Supreme Council that correlated with the ideas raised by the Women's Movement and resolutions adopted during meetings. Resolutions adopted by both Women's and Mothers' Movements as well as the Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers related to family, women's labour and other issues showed that there were many problems to be solved; however, the solutions were not always based on analysis or scholars' insights. The article evaluates women's initiatives when establishing the movement, which was not implemented. This article reveals the fact that the active

part of the Lithuanian society did not see women as a democratic, emancipated persona with prospects in the future state. The woman's place in the state under development was in family creating a conservative family policy. This brought the woman back the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with traditional social roles, forgetting the woman's emancipation and her input into the entire history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania.

## Conclusions

Summing up the document analysis, during the formation of the Reform Movement of Lithuania, women's efforts were often disregarded. Aukštikalnienė was the first to raise the idea to establish an initiative group; however, this went unnoticed, and the group was established after it was suggested by Vaišvila. Aukštikalnienė herself was not elected to the initiative group. When Sąjūdis support groups started to be established in regions, the majority in them were women, but men dominated in the leadership of the groups. One of the reasons for this type of representation in the organisational structure of the movement was the power position principles inherited from the Soviet period that state that politics is a dirty game and men are the ones to play it. Another reason was the prevailing traditional roles of gender in families because women were responsible for taking care of the children and the entire private space. This became even more pronounced. This is even clearer when looking at lists of delegates to the first Sąjūdis congress where men dominated, and most of the regional delegations did not include women at all. During the congress, women did not receive an opportunity to read their speeches (Pivorienė, Rastauskienė). The Sąjūdis Seimas elected during the congress included only 18 women out of 220 members (8.18 per cent), and Seimas Council included only one woman out of 35 members – Prunskienė. This comprised 2.87 per cent of all members. In this way, walking down the road of the restoration of Independence, the society became democratic; however, it revealed “masculinisation” tendencies. Women's role in decision making in the movement was based on one leader Prunskienė's authority in the society and among the leaders of the movement.

The initiative groups of the Women's Movement existed in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda and Panevėžys. The roots of the Women's Movement lie in the activities of the initiative group *Sunrise* in Vilnius University, even though other initiative groups of the Women's Movement were forming. All of them were constituents of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. This is evident by resolutions of the meetings, meetings with representatives of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, Council of Ministers, Permanent Commission of Women's Labour and Household, Motherhood and Child Protection of the Supreme Council, Lithuanian State Women's Council. All of the meetings were used to discuss the most important issues of families with children younger than 2 years, pregnant women's labour and protection measures and issues, issues of large families, work quality of pre-school institutions, young people's military service and other issues. The Women's Movement issued the newspaper *Women's Voice*.

At the beginning of 1988, the Supreme Council of the LSSR adopted resolutions that were used to reform and complement the family law. On 22 March 1989, the Presidium

of the Supreme Council issued an order to change the duration of childcare holidays and payments for women. The law anticipated that starting from 1 July 1989, working mothers with at least one year of work experience and studying women who had to stop working without regard to their work experience were to receive partially paid childcare holidays until the child turned 1.5 years of age, and additional unpaid holidays until the child turned 3 years of age. In addition, it was anticipated to maintain continuous work experience for mothers who were raising children at home until the children turned eight. These resolutions of the Supreme Council complied with the resolutions adopted during the congress of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. However, stepping into the restoration of Independence of Lithuania and free economic market, the proposal for mothers to raise children until they turned eight was not based on any calculations or social experience of other democratic, market economy countries.

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