French Newspaper “Le Monde’s” View of Lithuania from 1944 to 1954

Summary. The article discusses what one of France’s most popular daily newspapers, founded in 1944 on the initiative of General De Gaulle for France to have a “prestigious newspaper” oriented towards foreign countries, wrote about Lithuania. The article examines how Lithuania was portrayed by a widely read newspaper of all political positions from the beginning of the Soviet occupation to the beginning of the post-Stalinist period (1944–1953). The content of the publications highlights the information available to the French authorities, intellectuals, and the general public interested in this issue. It provides a better understanding of the French attitude towards Lithuania during this period and helps us to better understand their political actions or lack of them.

Keywords: French press, “Le Monde”, Lithuania, Baltic countries, Stalin era, Lithuanian-French relationship.

In writing this article, I have analyzed the entire content of “Le Monde” from 1944–1954 that mentions Lithuania, deliberately omitting a small part of this content that I considered irrelevant to the topic or repetitive. I chose this paper because of its readership by all political parties and representations abroad. The period I chose began in 1944 when Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union and France regained its freedom from Germany, on which occasion freedom of the press returned and “Le Monde” was founded. I chose the period ending before 1954 because with the death of Stalin in 1953, Lithuania was undergoing a lot of changes, and the French press was also providing a wider range of information about Lithuania from that time on. The article, by analyzing the publications of the French daily “Le Monde”, seeks to reveal what kind of information about Lithuania reached the Western, especially the French, public, diplomats and politicians who made decisions on the issue of its support. It also provides a French interpretation of the events in Lithuania.
during the period in question, which may be useful not only in the study of the relationship between Lithuania and France, but also in the broader context of Western-Baltic relations at the beginning of the Cold War that are little known to historians. The article also shows examples of Soviet propaganda in the West at the time. In the Lithuanian context, this research might be useful for the study of the various groups that acted in favor of Lithuanian independence, such as the Catholic Church, the Lithuanian partisans, or the diaspora.

The text is in chronological order. The study uses an analytical and synthetic approach. In writing this article, I have mainly used “Le Monde’s” archived articles, books on the newspaper and the French media in general to understand the newspaper’s position on Lithuania, its sources and its audience. I then combined this information with the history of Lithuania to understand events from different perspectives. There have been no previous articles on this topic, but there have been some on similar subjects. Historians have written about Lithuania in the media in other countries, in other periods, or in the press publications of the Lithuanian diaspora such as Daiva Dapkučė’s article “Propaganda war in the Lithuanian diaspora press in the Soviet Era” that focuses on what information Lithuanians themselves provided to the Western countries at that time and how they fought against Soviet propaganda. The article reveals the methods of the Lithuanian diaspora in this information war. More specifically, about Lithuania in France, but in different periods Vilma Bukaitė wrote about the French reaction to the ultimatums issued to Lithuania in 1938–1939, and Thierry Laurent described Lithuania from the French perspective during the 90s.

**Founding of “Le Monde” and its position on foreign affairs**

Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1944 after the Nazi occupation (1941–1944). At the same time, France regained its freedom from the Germans. After the liberation of Paris, newspapers were re-established, and new daily newspapers appeared. During this period, General de Gaulle opposed the relaunch of “Le Temps”, the newspaper of reference for the elite. On the other hand, de Gaulle wanted to set up a daily newspaper independent of the government which could take over the building, staff, and equipment of “Le Temps”. This new newspaper needed a director, but it should be pointed out that in the second half of 1944, France had a thriving daily newspaper industry, which made it easy for resistance journalists to get work, while “Le Monde” was a risky business and there was a shortage of journalists who could manage a long-established team. Hubert Beuve-Méry, who had himself worked for “Le Temps”, was probably one of the few journalists available in Paris. This is how “Le Temps” became “Le Monde”.

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H. Beuve-Méry, who assumed the “helm” of the newspaper, despised material consumption and fundamental Americanism. Nevertheless, he abhorred Stalinist totalitarianism more than anything else. As a correspondent in Prague, he had gone on a journalistic tour of the USSR, during which he had covered the true state of the Soviet system. This is probably why H. Beuve-Méry was concerned that “Le Monde” would systematically draw attention to the lack of democracy and freedom in the countries of Eastern Europe and in the Soviet government. To this end, he hired columnists and journalists to follow Soviet policies. One such specialist was the journalist André Pierre, who remained unaffected by Communist propaganda and whose name is the one most frequently seen in articles about Lithuania.

For H. Beuve-Méry and his team during the Cold War, freedom had to be combined with solidarity in order to achieve greater social justice. According to the historian Patrick Eveno, who has written a book on this newspaper, between 1947 and 1953,

when the Americans and the French right shouted ‘freedom’, Hubert Beuve-Méry replied ‘and justice?’, and when the Soviets and the Communist Party praised ‘the advantages of socialism’, Hubert Beuve-Méry asked ‘what about freedom?’, so that neither side understood the answer that Le Monde gave to its opponent, because in this war, who was not with one was with the other. According to the historian, in order to carry out this mission of “armed neutrality”, it was necessary to be of impeccable reputation, armed with a desire to provide rich, varied, solidly based information, so that even the most radical of both camps would be forced to read “Le Monde” in order to find out the arguments of his opponent and the facts that had been concealed by the guerrilla press or distorted by the opinion media. Because of the newspaper’s apparent independence, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs also had to multiply notes to its embassies to warn diplomatic staff not to confuse the old “Le Temps” with the new newspaper.

The first attempts by the daily to understand the situation in Lithuania

As early as 1944–1945, the newspaper provided information about Lithuania, but the editorial stance was rarely felt, and even when it was expressed, it was very subtle. At the beginning of 1945, “Le Monde” reported on the favorable opinion of the USA on the Baltic issue, on 31 July it called Sweden’s policy of accepting Baltic refugees “generous”, and on

5 Ibid., 79.
6 Ibid., 68–69.
7 Ibid., 69.
29 August, when describing the visit of Metropolitan Nicholas, Bishop of Moscow, it mentioned that he was received in the “building of the former Lithuanian Legation, which had become dependent on the USSR consulate”10.

The fact that the newspaper struggled to obtain information about Lithuania during this period is also reflected in the sources of the articles. Although aware of Soviet propaganda and not promoting it, “Le Monde” often referred to information from agencies of the Soviet Union. In early autumn 1945, “Le Monde” published a report by “Tass” (the Soviet Union’s telegraph agency) on General Golikov’s statement about the 150,000 Soviet citizens from the Baltic States still in camps in the British and American zones.11 In the report, the General accuses anti-Soviet groups of trying to sabotage the repatriation of Soviet citizens, and calls these groups fascists who have served Germany and whose current propaganda consists of spreading lies and slanders about the USSR. The text published in “Le Monde” allows the reader to question the general’s goodwill, but the editorial board does not comment clearly on what, from today’s perspective, appears to be an attempt to reclaim refugees fleeing the Soviet regime.

Another source of information about Lithuania, which was often used by the newspaper’s editorial staff, was the American press. “Le Monde” regularly published reports on American support for the Baltic States, but by early 1946 it reported that this support was weakening. The article stated that in Washington diplomatic circles there was talk that the United States and Great Britain would soon formally recognise the USSR’s rights to the Baltic States, and that this might lead to the withdrawal of recognition of the diplomatic and consular missions of the three countries in the United States.12 Shortly afterwards, another article appeared on a conversation between James F. Byrnes and Ernest Bevin on the Baltic issue in London. According to “Le Monde”, the US Secretary of State and the British Foreign Secretary planned to discuss the recognition of the Baltic States as Soviet republics, as this issue had already been discussed at length in Moscow, where the Soviets had received official assurances from the US Secretary of State, but because of the unresolved issues concerning the nations of the Baltics and some of their assets, the British wanted to wait.13

At the beginning of 1946, “Le Monde” announces the results of the Soviet Union elections, but does not comment on the extremely high result of 95.38% of the people in Lithuania who voted for the Communist parties.14 In the summer of the same year, an anonymous author with the initials H.P. signed a text about the recently deceased American trade unionist Sidney Hillman. The article highlights the deceased’s Lithuanian origins and his love of communism, although the young Hillman came to America in 1907 without ever having encountered either the independence of Lithuania in 1918 or the Soviet occupation. It is said that “his influence in politics grew, but he earned the enmity of both

11 “150,000 citoyens soviétiques se trouvent encore dans des camps de zones alliées” dit le général Golikov”, Le Monde, 8 September 1945.
12 “La politique alliée à l’égard des États baltes”, Le Monde, 3 January 1946.
parties”, and explains that they saw him as a former Lithuanian revolutionary and condemned him as a Communist. Who the author of the article actually was and what his intentions were is probably impossible to say, but it is worth noting that this article marks the end of “Le Monde’s” misinterpretations or assumptions about Lithuania, with the journalist A. Pierre having taken over the issue.

A new period of more informed coverage of Lithuania

The first article by A. Pierre on Lithuania expands on earlier announcements in the newspaper about the participation of representatives of the Baltic States at the Peace Conference. He described this participation on 26 August 1946 as an attempt to refute the “suspicions” about the occupation of the Baltic States, whose integration was still not recognised as legitimate by the major democratic powers. Continuing on this theme, he wrote two more articles on the distribution of the budget in the Soviet Union, explaining that the countries that received the largest share, including Lithuania, were “victims of invasion” and “devastated by war”. Continuing this new analysis of the Baltic countries, in early 1947 “Le Monde” published a study of the Baltic countries in “The Economist”, which opens with a comment on the difficulty of entering these countries even for diplomats, but mentions Russification, the persecution of Catholics, the nationalization of property, and the economic crisis.

The change in the tone of the newspaper’s coverage of the Soviet Union’s actions led to an essay on the elections in the USSR, published on 11 February 1947, which is now full of irony. At first glance, the article appears to be a description of a joyous celebration in which the tone was “set by Stalin himself”. It quotes the USSR leader as saying that “this election is not really an election, it is a national celebration. There has never been such a free and democratic election in the world”. The narrative describes the flower-festooned polling stations with a bust of Stalin, but concludes with a sentence that reveals the ironic and harsh attitude of the author, which the reader may have overlooked above, when he says that “there was only one name on the ballot paper that the voter could cross out”.

The newspaper also strengthened its position on the issue of refugees from the Soviet Union by publishing an article on 22 September 1947 entitled “Let’s open the doors to the ‘last million’ refugees”. This article revisits President Roosevelt’s strategy for dealing with the problem of ‘displaced persons’. The lengthy article concludes with the statement that

18  Pierre, André, “Que signifie la présence des Baltes à la conférence de la paix ?”, *Le Monde*, 26 August 1946.
the last million people still in camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy are a stain on our civilisation that must be removed without delay.\footnote{Lehman, Herbert H., “Ouvrons nos portes au dernier million de réfugiés”, Le Monde, 22 September 1947.}

Although there was little information from behind the Iron Wall, “Le Monde” also attempted to write about the resistance of the local population. On 6 December 1947, in the column “Les nouvelles de l’étranger” (“Foreign news”), it wrote about the trial in Poland of seven Polish men accused of treason and espionage at a military court in Warsaw.\footnote{“Nouvelles de l’étranger”, Le Monde, 6 December 1947.} The article says that the trial has revealed the existence of an anti-communist organization created by former Polish minister Poniatowski. It was said to be active in nine Soviet-controlled countries, including Lithuania, and proposed to unite sixteen countries in the fight against Russia.

While the persecution of Catholics in the Soviet Union had been mentioned many times before, both in “Le Monde” and in other newspapers, the situation seemed to have become particularly bad at the beginning of 1948. It was announced that the Pope was transferring some of his powers to his representatives in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Lithuania. It is said that in view of the “seriousness of the religious situation in Eastern Europe”, in those countries he delegated part of his sovereign powers to his representatives, who were empowered to take whatever measures they considered necessary in religious matters, without seeking the Pope’s prior approval. This initiative is considered unprecedented in the history of Catholicism on such a large scale.\footnote{d’Hospital, Jean, “Le Saint-Père délègue une partie de ses pouvoirs à ses représentants en Pologne, Hongrie, Yougoslavie et Lituanie”, Le Monde, 4 February 1948.}

Lithuania’s situation has also created some unusual situations, which have helped it to make it into the “curiosity columns”. In the spring of 1948, “Le Monde”, like many other newspapers, described a bizarre situation in a radio parts factory in America, where workers found out that their new co-worker was the Lithuanian Prime Minister until 1939, Jonas Černius. The article said that with a starting salary of $30 a week, he hoped to improve his situation in the near future. As a result of this story, which reached as far as Paris, it is reported that he was invited to lecture at the College of Minnesota in the political science department.\footnote{“Un premier ministre devient ouvrier”, Le Monde, 12 May 1948.} The information reminded readers of the repression of former Lithuanian leaders who had to survive in exile.

Reaction of pro-Soviet groups to the newspaper’s position on the USSR

This increased support for Soviet annexed countries caused dissatisfaction among pro-Soviet organizations. In October 1948, the Franco-USSR Association sent them a letter of dissatisfaction with the criticism of the Soviet Union, which the editor of the newspaper himself published.\footnote{“La leçon de morale de M. Spaak”, Le Monde, 6 October 1948.} The Association reproached the editorial board for the article entitled

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25 d’Hospital, Jean, “Le Saint-Père délègue une partie de ses pouvoirs à ses représentants en Pologne, Hongrie, Yougoslavie et Lituanie”, Le Monde, 4 February 1948.
27 “La leçon de morale de M. Spaak”, Le Monde, 6 October 1948.
}
“A lesson in international morality from Mr Spaak” 28. The Association claims that it is unfair to consider that the USSR is a “war profiteer” when it is only “recovered territories that were wrested from it thirty years ago”; it objects to the USSR being regarded as an imperialist when “the U.S.S.R. can never be an imperialist”. It says that the Soviet Union is not allowing any “warmongering on its own territory, because it does not know any class interested in enriching itself with the fabulous profits of a new war”. It also accuses the newspaper of implying a “denial of any spirit of international cooperation”, although “the USSR is submitting a series of proposals from the Soviet Government insisting on the implementation of the decisions taken jointly at Yalta and Potsdam”, and points out the proposals of “the eight foreign ministers who met in Warsaw in July”.

In response to the accusations, the editor says that “Le Monde” did not use the pejorative term “war profiteers”, as accused, and does not dispute that the USSR’s losses were very high. In his opinion, it is also undeniable that the USSR has partly compensated for them since 1939 by annexing territories in the west and east, which are estimated to have a total area of more than 400,000 square kilometres and a total population of around 24 million people. With regard to the territories taken and regained thirty years ago, the editor lists the countries acquired after the war, including Lithuania, and specifies that these are new annexations, without awaiting the conclusion of the agreements envisaged at Potsdam. On the term “imperialists”, the editor recognises that Marxists want to attribute the term ‘imperialism’ to the capitalist countries at all costs, and therefore, in order to please them, he “agrees” to call them “expansionists”. As for the accusation of refusing international cooperation, he once again asks rhetorically whether the USSR participates in the several international organisations set up after the war, whether it is a member of the Bretton-Woods Agreements, and whether it permits large-scale cultural exchanges. On the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements, he argues that it would be easy (but too time-consuming) to prove that the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements were violated by both the USSR and its Western partners... but “it is important to note that the Warsaw Conference took place in June, not July”. The editor concludes by adding that it is not true that “Le Monde” has a “systematic hostility” towards the USSR, but that it is only trying to inform its readers as objectively as possible about the country’s internal and external policies. However, it is not his fault “if this policy contradicts on many points the statements we read above in the letter from the Franco-USSR Association”. By publishing the Association’s letter and the sarcastic reply, the newspaper strongly emphasises its position and expresses both its courage and its contempt for its opponents.

Different types of attempts to inform readers about Lithuania using available sources

The proliferation of quality political analyses in the newspaper raises the question of journalists’ sources, which is answered by the expert A. Pierre himself in an article on

agrarian collectivization\textsuperscript{29}. The article begins by reminding readers that, since the three Baltic republics were incorporated into the USSR, it has been impossible to obtain accurate and objective information about these countries. He goes on to explain that the Baltic countries are a no-go zone for diplomats and journalists, so one has to either make do with refugees who, out of passion, distort their very valuable testimonies, or listen to very suspicious Soviet sources and ask oneself about the number of Russians in the Communist organizations of the Baltic republics, assuming that it is they who are undoubtedly playing the most active role, with the experience gained in the other republics of the USSR, and teaching the local Communists how to “liquidate” the Kulak class for good.

In the years 1949–1950, “Le Monde” continued to report regularly on the support for the Baltic States in America and the persecution of Catholics. It is reported that the Lithuanian embassy in Washington submitted a memorandum to the United Nations\textsuperscript{30} stating that the Soviet government had deported one hundred thousand Lithuanians during the first half of 1948, and that Dean Acheson’s, the Secretary of State, replied\textsuperscript{31} that the matter would be referred to the appropriate authorities and that he was pleased to receive a memorandum expressing the gratitude of these countries for the policy of the United States towards them. As a consequence of these events, American Republican senator Harold Stassen’s “counter-revolutionary” programme\textsuperscript{32} was published, in which, out of the seven points, two concerned Lithuania directly. One calls for the independence of Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and the other for the release of political prisoners held in the USSR. On the subject of Catholic persecution, the paper reports that only one of the twenty-one former Catholic monasteries in Lithuania has remained open\textsuperscript{33}, and recalls that, according to the Pontifical Yearbook, thirty-four senior Catholic prelates from countries behind the Iron Curtain, including six Lithuanians, are currently in jail, in exile, or otherwise hindered from exercising their ministries\textsuperscript{34}.

In early 1951, “Le Monde”, in a report on the USSR elections, only described them as “of no political interest”, in which “Communist and non-partisan bloc candidates were elected with more than 90\% of the vote everywhere.”\textsuperscript{35} A month later, however, a more detailed analysis was presented by A. Pierre under the title “Russification continues in the Baltic republics. The opposition was wiped off the face of the earth in the last elections.”\textsuperscript{36} The article explains that in the Baltic countries, which are important strategic outposts for the defence of the USSR, periodic political purges are taking place in the leading cadres of

\textsuperscript{29} Pierre, André, “La collectivisation agraire n’a réellement commencé Qu’en 1948”, \textit{Le Monde}, 21 April 1949.

\textsuperscript{30} “Cent mille lituaniens déportés en six mois”, \textit{Le Monde}, 4 November 1949.

\textsuperscript{31} “Washington se préoccupe de la situation des États baltes”, \textit{Le Monde}, 16 August 1950.

\textsuperscript{32} A.F.P., “Plusieurs Sénateurs Républicains s’élèvent contre le plan de paix en Corée”, \textit{Le Monde}, 17 January 1951.

\textsuperscript{33} “I. - Lattaque vient de l’Est”, \textit{Le Monde}, 12 November 1949.


\textsuperscript{35} “Les élections dans diverses républiques fédérées”, \textit{Le Monde}, 20 February 1951.

\textsuperscript{36} “La russification se poursuit dans les républiques Baltes. L’opposition a été anéantie aux dernières élections”, \textit{Le Monde}, 27 March 1951.
the Communist Party and the government, as well as in literary and artistic circles. The author notes that the list of personalities honored on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the incorporation of the three Baltic republics into the USSR includes Justas Paleckis, who “seriously proved his loyalty to Moscow and on 13 March received the highest award of the USSR, the Order of Lenin, from the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Nikolai Shvernik.” Other Lithuanians received similar awards for “merits in the fields of industry, agriculture, science and art”. They were awarded to Mečislovas Gedvilas, Chairman of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers, and Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party. The article explains that the successive purges of party and government leaders, along with the gradual Russification of the three republics, reduced the opposition in Lithuania from 1.95% to 0.09%.

After the elections, the newspaper continued to report regularly on important events and information related to Lithuania. It published an article by the journalist François Honti explaining the functioning of the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, reported on new restrictions on the entry of foreign diplomats into the USSR, pointing out that such restrictions were already in force in Lithuania. “Le Monde” also announced that three Lithuanian bishops had been banned from practising and informed about a recent conference organized by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania to “improve the education of social sciences in Lithuania”. It reported that the speaker at that conference spoke of the duty “to eliminate the remnants of nationalism and bourgeois influence as soon as possible” and stated that this influence is the reason why some students are not sufficiently imbued with the spirit of the Communist Party and that these classes do not sufficiently expose the Anglo-American warmongers and their Lithuanian bourgeois nationalist henchmen.

In 1952, the newspaper published a few articles on the issue of repression and refugees. The newspaper discussed the issue of displaced persons in the United States, 64 000 of whom were from the Baltic States. The article concluded that “all these refugees, from whichever country they came, found in the United States people of the same origin as themselves, and adapted themselves well. In almost four years, only three people have had to be deported for security reasons”. The newspaper also quoted a speech by the representative of the Baltic National Committee in Bonn, in which he explained that the Soviet authorities killed or deported one and a half million Baltic citizens, i.e. a quarter of the Baltic population. The speech also mentioned that there is now almost no local resistance or opportunity to leave. As the situation in Lithuania, already bad, worsened, American Republicans began to accuse the Democratic government of “abandoning friendly nations such as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Czechoslovakia” and promised that, under

40 “La lutte contre le nationalisme et la religion en Lituanie”, Le Monde, 14 February 1952.
42 “1 500 000 Baltes auraient été déportés”, Le Monde, 19 June 1952.
Republican leadership, the United States government would renege on all the commitments made in secret agreements, such as the Yalta Agreements, which had helped the Communists to enslave certain nations. Another article critical of the Soviet Union by A. Pierre, entitled “The USSR’s economic power in 1955 will not be dangerous for the free world”, appeared in September 1952. A. Pierre points out that a careful study of the plan presented at the Communist Congress of 1951–1955 shows that special emphasis is placed on the development of the Baltic States. He gives several examples, including the construction of the Kaunas power station and the development of the port of Klaipėda. The article concludes that this special concern of the Moscow government for the Baltic republics is evidence of the desire to turn these three countries, which have been heavily Russified since 1945, into firm instruments of USSR domination of the whole Baltic region and that the USSR intends to turn the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland into a huge Russian lake to ensure its security against the West and to intimidate Sweden.

At the beginning of 1953, “Le Monde” published a “Pravda” report declaring that “Lithuanian bourgeois and nationalist Jews have been discovered in Lithuania, engaged in espionage and sabotage activities in the interests of American imperialism”. The article was entitled “The hunt for “spies” and “saboteurs” continues” and contained both accusations in quotation marks, illustrating the newspaper’s usual critical tone towards Soviet propaganda, and on 18 February it mentioned the Lithuanians in exile who had celebrated Independence Day two days earlier and pointed out that several demonstrations of sympathy had taken place on that occasion. The newspaper said that the French Committee for a Free Europe had sent a special message to occupied Lithuania via French radio.

A sense of change with the death of Stalin

On 7 March 1953, Stalin’s death was announced in a press release signed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, the USSR Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. This information was published in two days after the dictator’s death and signified the end of the Stalinist era and the beginning of a new era of hope in the countries of the Soviet bloc. Three months after Stalin’s death, “Le Monde” published a “Radio Moscow” report on the Lithuanian Communist Party, which criticized itself and spoke of “the need to respect the aspirations of minorities in the Soviet Union”. From this we suggest that a new, less repressive era was beginning in the Soviet Union.

46 “Les lituaniens exilés ont célébré leur fête nationale”, Le Monde, 18 February 1953.
The fact that the most brutal, Stalinist epoch was over was confirmed by the growing number of articles about Lavrentiy Beria, the second in line after Stalin. “Le Monde”, referring to the “purge” of L. Beria’s friends in the Soviet bloc, wonders whether the same fate has not also befallen a number of other ministers of the interior, including the Lithuanian Minister of the Interior, Piotr Kondakov, which is confirmed a few months later, when it is stated that he has been replaced by another minister whose name has not been mentioned.

The year ends with another “Radio Moscow” report, giving reference to the celebration of Christmas in the Roman Catholic churches of the USSR and satellite countries. A large attendance in many churches in Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine is reported. Neither this announcement nor this event signifies a new friendship between Communism and Catholicism but reflects some relief after the difficult period of Stalinism.

Conclusions

This article discloses how Lithuania was portrayed in “Le Monde” in 1944–1954. It is clear that the newspaper’s editorial board was against the occupation of Lithuania. They gradually worked to cover this difficult subject in more detail, even though they knew that traditional journalistic methods were not available to them when dealing with countries behind the Iron Curtain. At the beginning of the French liberation, the newspaper tried to use American and Soviet sources, so it was not always accurate or complete, but the situation improved considerably when the subject was taken over by Sovietologists. The articles from this period also reflect the more general information available abroad on the consequences of Stalinist totalitarianism and show that, despite the propaganda and information blockage, some information still managed to reach Western society, and that foreign journalists were trying to grasp and were able to convey a sense of the changes in the Soviet Union.

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**Literature**


**Akvilė KABAŠINSKAITĖ**

**LIETUVOS VAIZDINYS PRANCŪZIŠKAME LAIKRAŠTYJE „LE MONDE“ 1944–1953 M.**

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kas apie Lietuvą buvo rašoma viename populiariausių Prancūzijos dienraščių, įkurta 1944 m. generolo Charleso de Gaulle’io iniciatyva, siekiant, kad Prancūzija turėtų prestižinį laikraštį, orientuotą į užsienio šalis. Straipsnyje nagrinėjama, kaip nuo sovietų okupacijos pradžios iki postalinio laikotarpio pradžios (1944–1954 m.) Lietuva buvo vaizduojama visų politinių pozicijų skaitomame nepriklausomame laikraštyje. Publikacijų turinys išryškina, kokia informacija buvo prieinama Prancūzijos valdžios institucijoms, intelektualams ir visuomenei. Tai leidžia geriau suvokti prancūzų požiūrį į Lietuvą šiuo laikotarpiu ir jų politinius veiksnius arba jų nebuvimą.

**Raktažodžiai:** Prancūzijos spauda, Lietuva, Baltijos šalys, stalinizmas, „Le Monde“, Prancūzijos ir Li- etuvos santykiai.