

VILNIUS DRAWING SCHOOL 1866–1915

Summary

Académie de Vilna... The title of the mystical Academy of Vilnius appears in numerous books and articles presenting creative biographies of the Litvak artists of the Paris school. The legend of the Academy was undoubtedly created by the artists themselves, which shows the high esteem enjoyed by their first *alma mater*.

“Montparnasse, the capital of Lithuanian art” – this is the title of the memoirs about painter Michel Kikoïne by Arbit Blatas, a Lithuanian expatriate, which refers to the entire conglomerate of Litvaks who had settled in Montparnasse. This was the beginning of *L'École de Paris*.

“At the beginning of this story was Lithuania. It is impossible to forget its landscapes, its light, and its surroundings, which along with all their rituals perfused Kikoïne, just like all of us, Slavic artists (i.e. artists who had come from the then-territory of the Russian Empire – J. Š.), Arbit Blatas wrote. “Lithuania, which is so far away, gave many artists a possibility to realize their talent, be it patriots of Russia, such as Levitan <...>, or France, to whom Paris was the Mecca of painting”.

So, what was this Academy of Vilnius, which nurtured so many remarkable artists? This question is still bothering a great number of researchers of *L'École de Paris*, let alone society at large. Specialists know the answer – it is the largely forgotten Vilnius Drawing School, which was founded by officials of tsarist Russia at the end of 1866. It operated up until the beginning of World War I, and in 1915, its entire inventory was evacuated to the depths of Russia, to Samara.

Unfortunately, the archive of the Vilnius Drawing School did not survive, the related historiography is very scarce, and the information it contains is not always correct. We managed to reconstruct the twists and turns of the founding of the school, the nature of its activity, the peculiarities of art teaching, as well as the names and surnames of its teachers and students by referring to long-term research into the documents held in various collections of the archives of Vilnius, St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Names of persons who studied there in later years were discovered while exploring the biographies of many famous artists and other related historiographic

and iconographic material scattered in the European, American and African continents. Therefore, we should speak about the Vilnius Drawing School as a multinational phenomenon that made a certain impact on art and art management of other countries.

However, the Vilnius Drawing School was established not for the purpose of making its alumni famous all around the world but, above all, for training artists to paint icons in Eastern Orthodox churches, and for another, much more important purpose, which was very clearly described, along with the general aims of educational institutions and the tasks of imperial politics, by the periodical publication *Vestnik Zapadnoy Rosii* (*Newspaper of Western Russia*), which was launched in Vilnius in 1863:

“For the purpose of Russification of the North-Western Region (to which all the efforts of the authorities and society are currently directed), we must promote Russian nationalism, the Russian spirit and the development of the mind in such a manner that it would take superiority over the Polish goals...”

Indeed, as Vilnius University was closed in 1832, professional art education lost its basis in Lithuania. Many graduates of art departments were deported or emigrated to other countries. The situation of the artists who had remained in Lithuania was rather miserable – there were few people who took interest in their work, and no potential patrons. Quite many painters were forced to earn their living by giving private art lessons, and the less talented – by teaching drawing in various gymnasiums. Imperial officials were totally indifferent to the condition of art in the country. Art exhibitions were not organized. Professional Lithuanian art seemed to have retreated from the official art scene. Its existence was basically maintained by three artistic dynasties – the Römers, the Rusieckis and the Sleńdzińskis, – who were flanked by several humbler artists. In the middle of the nineteenth century, with the exception of several private initiatives, Vilnius did not have even an ordinary drawing school. True, for some time the basics of art were taught as part of general education at the Noblemen’s Institute, where teachers of drawing were Kanuty Rusiecki (1800–1860), and after his death – Aleksander Strauss (1834–1896). Private lessons in Vilnius were given by Wincenty Dmochowski (1807–1862) and Andrzej Walinowicz (1792–1853). However, more creative young people went to seek professional knowledge and obtain a diploma abroad, mostly to the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts (Tadeusz Gorecki (1825–

1868), Albert Žamett (1821–1876), Jan Zienkiewicz (1821–1888), Karol Rafalowicz (1831–1861), Bolesław Rusiecki (1824–1913), Józef Marszewski (1827–1883) and others), or to the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Moscow (Michał Elwiro Andriolli (1836–1893), Wincenty Sleńdziński (1837–1909)).

Artists Jan Zienkiewicz, Alfred Römer and Konstanty Brochocki, having assembled in Römer's house on Savičiaus street in Vilnius circa 1954–1955, used to paint together, and this activity was jokingly called the Römer Academy, though, in fact, there was no academy or school, only a single teacher, a single student, and a single “secretary”.

The efforts of the enlightened Lithuanian society of that time to maintain the barely smouldering artistic activity in the country were shattered by the failure of the uprising of 1863. The repressions that started thereafter, and the Russification policy of the tsarist authorities drew a dividing line in nineteenth-century Lithuanian culture, which was followed by several bleakest decades in the history of Lithuania. Determined to quench the thirst for freedom as soon as possible, tsarist officials tried to prove in every way that Lithuania had been part of the Russian lands since ancient times, and sought to destroy any sources testifying to the contrary at all costs, at the same time rapidly promoting the spread of the Russian language and culture.

Thus, culture became one of the major tools of tsarist politics, which was implemented by loyal artists and architects, mainly invited from Russia and often having limited creative abilities.

“Educational institutions must imperceptibly serve for the purpose of moral and, thus, ultimate merging of inhabitants of the Western region with the remaining part of Russia. These are our noble aims, and achieving them is the basic duty of the Vilnius Educational District”, wrote the district supervisor Ivan Kornilov.

In 1864, an icon workshop was founded in Vilnius, but it failed to justify the expectations. The first attempt to establish an official institution of art education in Vilnius in 1865 was not very successful either. This task was entrusted to the little known Russian artist Ivan Petrov. He prepared the curriculum of the drawing school titled “The Rules of the Drawing School in the City of Vilnius”, which was approved by the authorities, and funds were assigned for the founding of the school. However, for unknown reasons Petrov's drawing school was never opened.

Thus, in 1866, the Vilnius Educational District addressed the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts with a request to recommend an artist who could organize a drawing school in Vilnius.

The Academy's rector of that time, Alexander Rezanov, proposed Ivan Trutnev who had recently returned from studies abroad and worked as a teacher of drawing in the Vitebsk gymnasium. The artist had already built himself a good reputation by taking part in the field trips organized by governor Mikhail Muravyov with the aim to capture ancient Russian monuments in the North Western region. In the summer of 1866, Muravyov invited Trutnev to Vilnius and charged him with a task of organizing a drawing school.

In the autumn of 1866, still working at the Vitebsk gymnasium and waiting for a substitute teacher of drawing to arrive, Trutnev prepared a new, much wider curriculum of the drawing school.

According to Trutnev's project, the new school had to be comprised of two departments: the crafts and drawing school, and the painting school. With small revisions, the curriculum of the drawing school prepared by Trutnev was printed typographically as an announcement. In the printed curriculum, "the painting school" was replaced by "painting classes", and in the first year, the school itself was called the Vilnius School of Crafts and the Painting Classes.

According to Trutnev's curriculum, the aim of the Crafts and Drawing School was "to give a possibility for all classes of the population to learn the art of drawing to the extent it is necessary in our practical life, and apply it in all household works and crafts", and "to develop people's taste and to introduce, both theoretically and practically, some types of crafts practiced in our homeland, in which mastery depends on the elegance of forms".

It was planned to teach drawing and draughtsmanship "referring to the theory of these art forms and applying it in various artisanal works", and also to give "a general idea about architecture and perspective by drawing attention to the properties and value of materials used in building construction".

The curriculum of the Crafts and Drawing School consisted of "an introduction to drawing and draughtsmanship, drawing geometrical figures from nature, drawing ornaments and flowers, drawing original human and animal figures, making drafts of agricultural implements, machines, carriages and household utensils, building plans, façades and constructions, a concise theory of architecture and perspective, knowledge about materials used for construction and its products, practice or projects of crafts (carpenter's, joiner's,

turner's, blacksmith's and jeweller's artefacts, production of cotton, metal, china, upholstery, glass artefacts and furniture), clay or wax modelling of ornaments etc.”

Persons from all social classes not younger than ten years of age were entitled to attend the Crafts and Drawing School. The annual tuition fee was five roubles, and pupils of people's schools were not required to pay.

The Painting Classes were scheduled to start together with the Crafts and Drawing School. They were open to all art amateurs of both sexes. The curriculum of the Painting Classes included the following subjects: “drawing of geometrical models, drawing of original heads and figures, drawing from nature, copying heads, landscapes, figures etc. in oils, painting heads and figures from nature, the theory of perspective, the history of painting, painting in watercolours, modelling heads and figures from clay and wax”.

The duration of studies in both departments was not specified. The curriculum had a subscription indicating that the Crafts and Drawing School and the Painting Classes were to be established on the premises of a gymnasium, in the courtyard of 41/481 Pilies Street (i.e. the First Boys' Gymnasium which was situated in the closed university). In the early twentieth century, the entrance to the Boys' Gymnasium was from Šv. Jonų Street. Separate classes were held for boys and girls: on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays – for boys, and on the even days of the week – for girls.

If we compare the curricula prepared by Petrov and Trutnev, it is not difficult to notice that Trutnev's aims in building a drawing school were more far-reaching than those of his predecessor, and the range of the teaching subjects was much wider and more thorough. While still living in Vitebsk, Trutnev also took care of the practical aspects related to the founding of the school. He made a list of the basic teaching aids and small equipment, and himself went to St. Petersburg to acquire them. Larger equipment was received from the closed classes for tax collectors, and some smaller items were bought by Trutnev with his own funds.

The funds necessary to establish the school were given by the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District from “6,000 roubles that he had at his disposal for strengthening the means to promote people's education”. Until 1896, the school was funded exclusively by the Ministry of People's Education, which assigned 1,220 roubles each year. A lesser part of these funds covered the headmaster's salary.

The Vilnius Crafts and Drawing School and the Painting Classes were opened on 6 December 1866 on the premises of the above-mentioned gymnasium. As was proclaimed in the curriculum, the school was open to everyone regardless of their nationality, faith, social class and gender. According to historiography, studies in the Vilnius Drawing School were free of charge. However, archival documents reveal that it was only the Crafts and Drawing School that did not have a tuition fee, while the attendees of the Painting Classes had to pay three roubles per half a year. Persons not younger than twelve years of age were accepted.

In the first year, up to 60 students attended the Crafts and Drawing School, and more than 50 were enrolled in the Painting Class, among them 95 male and 22 female students. In 1867, 110 students, and in 1868 – 130 students were accepted. Two years after the Painting Classes were established, three of their alumni entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, and one – in Berlin.

In 1867, as a new school year was approaching, the Crafts and Drawing School and the Painting Class was renamed as the Vilnius People's Drawing School. In the long run, the word "people's" in the title was dropped, but the school remained open to all applicants.

Already in the first years of its existence, the Vilnius Drawing School was very popular. In his report to the Governor General of 20 February 1867, the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District Ivan Kornilov wrote:

"The large number of students of this first drawing and art school in the North Western Region is a convincing proof of both its absolute necessity and the good reputation, which it managed to earn during a short time, being led by artist Trutnev <...>. According to Trutnev, there are gifted students among the attendees, and to develop their talents, a full and diverse array of the best and superior means is needed".

This "full and diverse array of the best and superior means" was obviously not so full, as Trutnev was clearly not satisfied with the available teaching aids and repeatedly addressed the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District asking for his intercession in obtaining new acquisitions. In May 1867, some gypsum models, prints, sketches, drawings, architectural projects for copying, as well as books on the theory of architecture by Palladio, Ciprian and Durand were sent from the Museum of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts as teaching aids to the Vilnius Crafts and Drawing School and Painting Class.

In March 1867, by the efforts of the headmaster of the Moscow Stroganov Technical Drawing School, Trutnev's school received gypsum models of Greek

and Roman-style ornaments, bases and capitals of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's orders, as well as human heads and hands from the Moscow Museum of Fine Crafts in Moscow.

In July of the same year, the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District, urged by Trutnev, addressed the Moscow Painting, Sculpture and Architecture School with a request to send a course in linear drawing compiled by the famous teacher of this school, Yegor Vasilyev, and "a textbook of geometrical linear drawing" by Zarudski.

In the beginning, the teaching course lasted three years. As one of the school's alumni, artist Ivan Vladimirov, remembered, the training began from simple tasks:

"First of all, we drew straight and curvy lines, circles, squares, and acanthus leaves. Later, the tasks were gradually getting more complicated. More difficult forms had to be drawn: a bunch of grapes, a gypsum head, a mask, etc. It was followed by setups consisting of an ornament, a drapery and a bust.. While drawing a drapery together with a gypsum model, students learned to maintain a correct relation of light falling on the model and the dark drapery, and thus convey the lighting effects".

It was not until a student successfully dealt with this kind of task that he or she was allowed to begin to draw a sitter's head. Senior citizens from a shelter most often sat as models for the artists-to-be.

The main postulates of Trutnev's teaching method were aimed to teach the aspiring artists to convey the precise but actual character of living nature and objects, and in this he departed from the academicist system of art teaching, which was based on artistic thinking developed exclusively by referring to classical examples. A graduate of one of the strongest schools of academicism, during his training abroad Trutnev realized the importance of nature studies for the realistic representation of an image. Observation of live nature and real life taking place in the surroundings helped him digress from lifeless and pompous academicist plots, as much as the circumstances allowed, and become more focused on depicting daily life. This is what he sought to teach his students, combining the academicist precision of representation with direct studies of nature in his teaching method.

Thus, quite much attention in the Vilnius Drawing School was devoted to plein air sessions. This approach may have determined Trutnev's choice of assistants – landscape painters Viktor Rezanov and Paul Römer. Upon the arrival of spring, "the teacher together with his students would often go to the

city's environs, where the future artists had to paint tree trunks, stones, water and landscape motifs under his supervision". At the beginning of a school year, students had to present their drawings from nature, made independently during the holidays, for the record.

Already in the first years of the school's existence, Trutnev distinguished himself as an excellent teacher and a person of broad outlook. While remaining "a true patriot of Russia and an honest Christian", and conscientiously performing the duties entrusted to him, he did not become a tool in the hands of politicians. He did not attempt to impose his views on anyone, and was mainly concerned about the training of professional skills of his students.

As can be seen from Trutnev's curriculum, the painting of icons was not included either in the Crafts and Drawing School or the Painting Classes. Probably that is why the officials of the Vilnius Educational District no longer gave special attention to the needs of the school. When Nikolay Sergiyevsky was appointed the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District, by his order, Trutnev was instructed to prepare a project of an icon workshop in 1870. The task of this workshop was "to study church painting with all its characteristic features, which manifest themselves in the simplicity of depicting the saints, the holiness and austerity of their faces, and the precise execution of their clothing by strictly following the Byzantine examples, which are currently established in these parts". Priority in accepting applicants to the icon workshop was given to the students of the Vilnius Drawing School.

Trutnev's teaching programme for the icon workshop was very brief: "Drawing and painting from a mannequin, gilding and fresco painting, basics of the Byzantine style, history of church art, creating paintings on the topics of sacred history". By Trutnev's order, the icon workshop had to be situated in the same building as the Vilnius Drawing School, but in a separate spacious and light room. In later reports of the Vilnius Drawing School, its activity is no longer mentioned.

The art department of the Drawing School remained Trutnev's greatest concern. As is clear from Trutnev's numerous requests sent to the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, the Painting Classes of the Drawing School continued to use the teaching aids donated by the Academy for almost twenty years. In 1885, Trutnev asked the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts to send new teaching aids for the school: Greek and Roman-style gypsum heads and ornaments, examples of landscape painting in oils and watercolours, and the theory of perspective.

“The school must have at least one small torso and one or two half-size figures, or some relief <...>. Although the school does have two figures (sent by the Academy of Arts), they are so big that they cannot be either properly lighted or moved”, the headmaster wrote.

With an increase in the number of students, the issue of the premises was becoming more urgent. In the same request, Trutnev complained: “The school always has so many students that each year we must refuse some applicants for the lack of space”. This speaks about the school’s growing popularity. Thus, the funds that the Vilnius Drawing School had at its disposal were very limited, and hardly sufficient for daily needs. That is why Trutnev often addressed the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts with a request to send studio works by its alumni, which he used as an auxiliary or exemplary material.

In 1889, for instance, at Trutnev’s request, the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts sent him twenty drawings and six sketches, among which were awarded works by his former students Konstanty Górski and Józef Bałzukiewicz. In this way, Trutnev not only expanded his array of teaching aids, but also collected the more mature works of his former students and planned to open a museum at the school.

From 1871, every three years, and later, every six years the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts held drawing competitions for pupils of secondary schools, gymnasiums and specialized drawing schools, to which works were sent from all over the empire.

Already the first competition revealed that the teaching of drawing in schools was taken most seriously in the educational districts of Vilnius and Warsaw. In the opinion of the special committee set up by the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, this was determined by the presence of the Vilnius and Warsaw Drawing Schools in these districts, which “beneficially influenced other educational institutions by giving them the opportunity and the means for holding serious classes outside their classrooms”, i.e. in the drawing schools themselves³⁷. The Vilnius Drawing School sent works of its sixteen students to this competition. Two students were awarded silver medals for their drawings, and eight received letters of commendation. In 1878, the Vilnius Drawing School was again awarded two silver medals and six letters of commendation, Trutnev was conferred the honorary title of Free Citizen, and the Council of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts sent a letter of thanks to teacher Römer.

However, this acclaim of the Vilnius Drawing School was of little concern to the officials of the Vilnius Educational District, who were more willing to give a medal than to assign funds. The Drawing School constantly lacked both funds and premises. In an attempt to solve the problem of premises, the Vilnius Drawing School was temporarily transferred into the building of the Vilnius Teachers' Institute. However, this transfer apparently did not help, as on 15 June 1882 Trutnev addressed the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District asking to transfer the school back into its old premises⁴⁰, which not only were very small, but also needed repairs.

“On rainy days water runs through the ceiling and flows in streams over the walls, wrecking them, the ceiling, furniture and drawings <...>. Besides, in the drawing room some floor boards have to be replaced, as the floor is shaky as you walk in the room, and along with the floor, the tables and all things on them are also shaky; this circumstance strongly interferes with the normal drawing process”, Trutnev complained in January 1884.

In the summer of the same year, repair works were performed in the building, but the issue of the lack of space remained unsolved.

In 1890, the school was transferred into the premises of the Second Gymnasium, but for unknown reasons returned to the building of the former university a year later. Despite organizational troubles, the teaching process itself took place smoothly. In a report to the supervisor of the Educational District of 1891, Trutnev wrote:

“In general, the students have been making good progress; the majority of them mainly drew gypsum ornaments with excellent achievement, gypsum heads and figures from nature – with very good achievement, and setups of different components from nature – totally satisfactorily”.

As the number of those seeking to attend the Vilnius Drawing School constantly exceeded the available quota, Trutnev was forced to select the applicants. He never refused those “who need to move up to a higher grade of a non-classical secondary school, or who need drawing to be able to enter some school where a drawing exam must be taken”.

In the painting class, artists were trained for icon and technical workshops, and students were prepared for entrance exams to art academies and other specialized institutions. The painting class was open to all art lovers. Each year it was attended by approximately 80 students, sometimes more. The majority were of noble origin, and a smaller part were children of city residents, mainly of Jewish and Russian descent.

In total, according to Trutnev, during twenty-five years, approximately 1,500 students attended the Vilnius Drawing School. 118 of them completed the full course and were given school certificates. More than fifty joined the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts. Many students graduated from the Teaching Courses at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and began to work as teachers in various cities of the empire. Others were employed by various workshops of icon painting, lithography, engraving, sculpture and draughtsmanship, as well as photographic studios. One can only imagine that during all years of the school's activity, there may have been almost twice as many students. The names of many of them remain unknown.

Seeking to improve the teaching conditions in the school, in 1892, Trutnev decided to restructure it.

“The drawing school is a non-statutory teaching institution without any rights, and that is why I asked Mr. Supervisor for his mediation at the ministry in restructuring the Vilnius Drawing School, enlarging its premises, expanding the curriculum, and increasing the funds for its maintenance”, Trutnev explained the necessity for reorganization.

“In general, one of two aims sought by the school, which is the training of young people for an artist's career, is being pursued. Meanwhile, the other aim – to prepare draughtsmen for the production process – so far has not given significant results”, he wrote in a report to the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts.

At the earliest possibility, the Crafts and Drawing Department was separated from the Vilnius Drawing School and turned into the independent Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship. The preconditions for this separation were created by a patron found by Trutnev, a member of the Vilnius City Executive Board, banker Józef Montwiłł. The Vilnius Drawing School remained in the old premises of the First Boys' Gymnasium, and the Crafts and Drawing Department, restructured into the free Sunday Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship, moved into the so-called Montvila House.

With approval from the Vilnius Educational District and the support of the Vilnius City Executive Board, the classes were registered in Trutnev's name and started on 5 December 1893. Somewhat earlier, Trutnev made an agreement with Montwiłł, by which the artist obliged himself “to equip a free drawing class for twenty people in one room of the assigned premises, meant for craftspeople recommended by Montwiłł, and provide them with all the necessary teaching aids, such as original models, drafts etc., and in another room, to set up a class of fine drawing and an exhibition”.

All organizational expenses pertaining to lighting, heating and cleaning had to be covered by Trutnev. Montwiłł committed himself to allowing Trutnev to use the entire first floor of his new building free of charge for ten years.

The free Sunday Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship were established in the newly built wing of the Organization for the Support of Crafts (“Vilnius Crafts Fair”) founded by Montwiłł in 1893, in the courtyard of the Land Bank (today, 6 Gedimino Ave.). They occupied two large halls and one room on the first floor of the wing turned to the street with its narrow end (4 Gedimino Ave.). When the second floor was added to the building, two more rooms were assigned for the class. This building housed not only the Drawing School and art exhibitions, but also traditional crafts fairs called “bazaars”. Thus, the building was informally called “The Bazaar”.

Since the very beginning, the classes were very popular, and competition was quite high, thus Trutnev asked the Supervisors’ Council to enlarge the quota and add extra classes. On 8 April 1894, his request was granted: it was allowed to increase the number of attendees to fifty, and add one-and-a-half-hour classes twice a week in the evenings on other days of the week. Hence, the definition “Sunday” could no longer be applied. Despite the artisanal nature of the classes, they attracted a large number of art lovers, though their art-teaching programme was much simpler than that of the Vilnius Drawing School.

The free Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship operated under this title until 1904, when on Montwiłł’s initiative they were reorganized into a new teaching institution officially called “The Drawing Classes established by Montwiłł”. In Lithuanian historiography, other names took root – “Montwiłł’s Drawing Classes”, or “Montwiłł’s Drawing School”.

Trutnev was the head of these classes almost until his death. On 4 April 1912, a former student of Trutnev’s, painter Józef Bałzukiewicz was appointed the head of the classes. Artist Stanisław Jarocki taught painting there. A student of the Vilnius Drawing School and the Classes, Eugenia Przyalgowska, recalls that Jarocki was much liked among the students:

“He imparted us his knowledge with such sincerity and was so friendly with us that everyone was ready to give their life for him <...>. On all Sundays and festive days, a group of painting students would gather at school or in Jarocki’s studio, and Jarocki painted with us portraits of old and young people”.

Due to the fact that some classes at the Vilnius Drawing School and the Free Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship overlapped and, in particular, because they were led by the same person, Trutnev, in historiography the attendees of the Classes were quite often identified with the students of the Vilnius Drawing School. Beside Eugenia Przyalgowska, the Free Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship or, more precisely, already the Drawing Classes established by Montwill, were attended by Bolesław Bałzukiewicz, Juozas Zikaras (he simultaneously attended the Vilnius Drawing School), Jacques Lipschitz, painter and printmaker Lasar Segall.

As the Crafts Department was separated, the Vilnius Drawing School could accept more students who wanted to learn the basics of fine arts and, at the same time, improve the teaching of art subjects.

On 16 December 1896, Trutnev addressed the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District asking for permission to open higher courses at the Vilnius Drawing School from January 1897. This request was related to the fact that since the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts was reorganized and a new statute was adopted (1894), terms of admittance also changed.

According to the new statute (the gypsum class, which had been obligatory for all newly admitted students, was abolished), the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts acquired the status of a higher school, and the applicants had to take an exam of drawing from nature. Therefore, the majority of the alumni of the Vilnius Drawing School practically had no chance to enter this higher art school, which was one of a kind in the Russian Empire. That is why Trutnev began to think about opening a class of drawing from nature and sketches in the Vilnius Drawing School.

On 15 June 1896, thanks to his personal connections, he managed to obtain a non-recurring subsidy of 1,000 roubles from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts “to organize a course in gypsum-figurative drawing and drawing from nature and sketches”. However, the Vilnius Educational District did not give permission to open higher courses on the grounds that the subsidy from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts was non-recurring, and suggested that Trutnev should organize temporary additional courses for the alumni of the Vilnius Drawing School. On 7 February 1897, this issue was also discussed by the Supervisor’s Council of the Vilnius Educational District, which advised Trutnev to establish private higher courses and requested him to compile a curriculum for such courses and to ask for a permanent subsidy from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts.

Having obtained a regular financial support from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts through his influential connections, Trutnev could implement a new project of the Vilnius Drawing School, which was prepared as early as 1892.

The duration of studies at the Vilnius Drawing School was extended to four years. The first three years, called “normal” by the artist, were obligatory for all students. In the first year, five hours a week were devoted to drawing. In the chronological order, students were taught drawing simple regular figures and their combinations, drawing irregular figures, drawing a contour ornament, drawing an ornament with shading, and drawing geometrical figures. Besides, one hour a week was assigned to draughtsmanship.

The second year was more complicated. Draughtsmanship was taught two hours a week, and watercolour painting (1 hour), sculpture (2 hours), theory of perspective (1 hour) and history of art (1 hour) were added. The four-hour drawing course consisted of drawing single geometrical figures, groups of geometrical figures, plain low-relief gypsum ornaments, complex gypsum ornaments, and gypsum parts of the human body. In the second year, particularly much attention was devoted to tonal solutions by using various means of shading.

In the third year, the scope of the curriculum remained the same, but one hour of oil painting was added. The drawing course was much more complicated: students were taught to draw gypsum parts of the human body, and later, gypsum heads from various angles, from the easiest to the most complex.

Students who completed three “normal” courses were accepted into the fourth, special course. Others could also attend this course, but in that case they had to take a drawing exam. The duration of studies in this course was not limited. Students were taught drawing from nature (three hours a week), oil painting, watercolour, sculpture (clay and wax modelling), printmaking (engraving and lithography), technical and architectural draughtsmanship, painting on textile, wood and porcelain. Among the theoretical disciplines, beside linear perspective, sciography and art theory, anatomy was taught in a special course.

Classes were held daily. Students had to pay an annual tuition fee of five roubles. By a decision of the Teachers Council, students from poor families could be exempt from the fee. Those wishing to practice teaching, having paid a fee of ten roubles, could take an exam for the right to become a teacher of drawing. Thanks to this reform, students of Trutnev’s school could receive more professional training, and more graduates were admitted to study in the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and other art schools.

In the early twentieth century, the methods of art teaching in the Vilnius Drawing School became more advanced. As can be seen from the curriculum included in the report of the Vilnius Drawing School of 1907, already in the first year, in addition to the drawing of geometrical figures, ornaments and separate gypsum parts of the body, drawing of household utensils and parts of the body from nature was obligatory. In the second year, drawing a human head from nature and still-life oil painting were added. Third-year students had to draw gypsum figures, a half-size figure of a sitter, and a human head from nature, and in the fourth year, drawing and painting of a nude sitter and, most importantly, expressive drawing was introduced.

Drawing from memory was also obligatory in all courses. Quite much attention was given to copying. The former student Eugenia Przywałowska recalls the beginning of her studies at the Vilnius Drawing School:

“Trutnev was really charming <...>. In the morning classes, he gave me to copy his own watercolours and landscapes (various beautiful views of Kaluga, as well as the banks and environs of the Neris in Vilnius). In his opinion, before [starting to work with] oils, first one had to paint watercolours. When he himself painted, instead of washing his paintbrush in water, he sucked on it and spit it out, so that the tones would always be clean”.

The above quote fragmentarily but vividly illustrates the way of working at the Vilnius Drawing School. In addition to practical classes, there were theoretical lessons as well – anatomy and art history, and senior students were also taught a course in perspective. Starting from the school year of 1906/07, the disciplines of the teaching methods of drawing, draughtsmanship and calligraphy were included in the curriculum. They were obligatory only to those who aspired to obtain a teacher’s diploma.

As can be seen from the curricula of the Vilnius Drawing School, the teaching of art disciplines was so arranged that after four years of studies, students acquired an excellent command of the basics of drawing and draughtsmanship, and those who wished could easily enter higher art schools. This fact could probably explain the popularity of the school.

In the early twentieth century, there was an influx of students from other cities of the governorate. However, the tsarist administration was not in a hurry to acknowledge Trutnev’s merits. After the death of the long-term headmaster, on 5 February 1912, his close friend Alexander Zhirkevich addressed the Vilnius Educational District, asking to add the names of Ivan Kornilov and Ivan Trutnev

to the name of the school⁶⁴. Yet, he received a reply that “for the entire period of its existence, the above-mentioned school humbly served its purpose and did not achieve such progress nor yield such results as to become an institution worthy of commemorating Ivan Kornilov”.

It was not until 1915, when a new supervisor was placed in charge of the Educational District, that the Vilnius Drawing School was renamed as the Ivan Kornilov and Ivan Trutnev Drawing School. However, in the same year the school was closed, and the new name remained on paper only.

Trutnev was not the only teacher in the school. In 1874, when the number of students in the Painting Classes significantly grew, he invited an academic landscape painter Viktor Rezanov, and in 1876, painter Paul Römer, to assist him. These two teachers worked in the Vilnius Drawing School for some time, and may have had a certain impact on their students.

In Rezanov’s work, the influence of the Düsseldorf school of landscape painting was particularly distinct. He created realistic landscapes, mostly depicting lushly growing trees and small human figures at their foot, thus emphasizing the greatness of nature, and also painted views of cities and their environs. In 1890, the Vilnius Drawing School bought several landscape sketches by Rezanov as teaching aids.

Römer mainly created realistic genre paintings and, more rarely, portraits. For a very short period (1877–1892), a “highly gifted” former student of Trutnev’s, as he himself described him, Adrian Krupacki, already a graduate of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, taught drawing at the school, and in the school year of 1895/96, another alumnus, a promising teacher and landscape painter Fyodor Parchomenko worked as “a supervisor and teaching assistant”.

At the very end of the nineteenth century, another former student of Trutnev’s, a Vilnius-based painter Józef Bałzukiewicz (1866–1915), began to work as a teacher. He taught at the Free Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship. From 1903–1909, another alumnus of the school, Vassily Vagin, also taught in these classes.

From 1902 to 1906, Lev Burhardt (1850–1906) worked as a teacher at the Vilnius Drawing School. A graduate of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, he lived in Lithuania from 1889. Unlike several above-mentioned teachers, and like Bałzukiewicz, he was a visible participant in the artistic scene of Vilnius of the early twentieth century. He was also an active member of the Vilnius Art Circle, and was elected to its committee in 1903. A landscape painter, he took part not only in the exhibitions of the Art Circle and its “Wednesday meetings”, but also in exhibitions in St. Petersburg.

In 1906, Burhardt's paintings were displayed in Vilnius, and in 1907, a solo exhibition of his paintings was held in St. Petersburg. Unfortunately, the attempts to locate his works in museums or private collections have been unsuccessful. Neither are there any comments about his activity in the Drawing School. Thus, his merits as a teacher, like those of many other teachers of this school, cannot be discussed in more detail.

This also concerns the painter and teacher Sergey Kuznetsov, who worked in Vilnius in the early twentieth century. His biographical data are scarce, and only the titles of his works are known. It is also known that he worked at the Vilnius Drawing School as a deputy headmaster until 1 July 1912, and painted genre compositions and landscapes with views of Vilnius, showing them in the exhibitions of the Vilnius Art Circle. Besides, he presented some tableaux vivants in the meetings of this circle in 1903. Indirect testimonies of his teaching work are a lecture "On the Meaning of Drawing" given at a meeting of the Art Circle, his participation in the Congress of Teachers of Graphic Arts and Crafts of the Vilnius Educational District held in Vilnius in 1910, and student Przyalgowska's memoirs.

The most marked imprint on the activity of the Vilnius Drawing School, beside its founder, was left by the teacher of drawing, painting and art history, Ivan Rybakov (1870–1942). He already belonged to a different generation of artists and teachers. At the end of 1899, he started to work in Vilnius as an assistant to Trutnev. Rybakov taught at the classes for boys and was a favourite among students.

The young Rybakov's approach to teaching is illustrated by his presentation "The Latest Teaching Aids" given at the Congress of Teachers of Graphic Arts and Crafts of the Vilnius Educational District, in which he introduced the newest trends in the methods of teaching drawing of that time, indicating two main objects of the plein-air method – nature and real life, and analyzed the teaching aids and their selection in great detail. Judging from the material of the presentation, we can get an impression that progressive teaching methods were used in the Vilnius Drawing School, and in senior years much time was devoted to drawing and painting from nature.

Rybakov attached great importance to theoretical knowledge – probably it was not without his initiative that a course in art history was taught at the Vilnius Drawing School. The artist's educational activity was not limited to school only – he also saw it necessary to acquaint Vilnius society with the most remarkable developments in Western art. Being an active member of the Vilnius Art Circle, in one of its artistic events he gave a lecture "Contemporary Art. Impressionism. Decadentism", and

later, in 1914, when he no longer worked at school, he introduced Pre-Raphaelite and Impressionist art, as well as newly trendy Japanese art to his listeners.

In this way, the range of interests of young artists was expanded, and they were encouraged to take notice of other stylistic trends than those prevailing at school. It was undoubtedly an important factor in fostering the creativity of the students. There is no doubt that Rybakov made a huge impact on the young people studying at the school and urged them to choose other direction of further art studies as was usual in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the career path of the students of the Vilnius Drawing School led almost exclusively to the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts. Rybakov oriented his students to Paris.

Right after Trutnev's death, Rybakov was appointed the headmaster of the Vilnius Drawing School. However, he held this position for less than a month only. It is obvious that tsarist officials were not very fond of this "person of a suspicious inclination". For the officials of the Russian Empire, a "suspicious inclination" in art was probably not as dangerous as the artist's "suspicious" world outlook.

Already the loyal Trutnev failed to implement their policy of "Russification of culture", opening the door to representatives of all nationalities. Rybakov did not conceal his sympathies with local inhabitants and showed his approval of manifestations of Lithuanian national revival and supported it; being a deputy chairman of the Vilnius Art Society, he allowed publishing exhibition catalogues, posters and other publications in several languages.

Thus, Rybakov was removed from office as unfit to lead the school. In the words of the supervisor of the Vilnius Educational District, Alexander Ostroukhov, "under his leadership, the Drawing School experienced a visible decline, which manifested itself in the worsening of academic records and a complete loss of discipline among the students".

Later, all these reproaches were written down and sent in a report to the Minister of Education of Russia, and on 1 March 1912, the Vilnius Drawing School already had a new headmaster – a former teacher of drawing, draughtsmanship and calligraphy of the Vilnius Non-Classical Secondary School and the Vilnius Teachers' Training Institute, Sergey Yuzhanin. This resulted in a conflict situation in the school, and quite many students quit together with Rybakov. A scandal arose, and officials complained that almost all the teachers had to be replaced. Some of the students who followed Rybakov and quit, later returned to the school, others moved on to continue their studies in other countries, and those

who were most devoted to their teacher joined the Post-Secondary Art School, newly established at the Vilnius Art Society in 1913, which is often mentioned in historiography as the Rybakov School.

Despite the initial negative predisposition, the new headmaster **Sergey Yuzhanin** gradually won his students' trust. When Sergey Kuznetsov resigned as the deputy headmaster, from September 1912 Yuzhanin invited the young painter **Nikolay Sergejev-Korobov**, a fresh graduate from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, to work as his deputy. Upon the latter's arrival, the renewed Vilnius Drawing School became popular again, and some students who had left together with Rybakov resumed their studies.

The team of Yuzhanin and Sergejev-Korobov managed to bring the Vilnius Drawing School back on its feet. To have a better idea of the school's image of that time, we can turn to Przyalgowska's memoirs once again:

"Sergejev-Korobov was on a par with Cracowian professors. Every day he stayed with us all the time. In the morning we would paint a nude model, and in the evening we would draw a nude in charcoal. Students of the Munich Academy <...>, from Warsaw <...>, and from the Cracow Academy began to enrol in his classes <...>. Yuzhanin did not spare money and bought expensive draperies for setups and still-lives. If not for the approaching war, Yuzhanin and Sergejev would have turned this drawing school into a proper Academy of Art".

The spirit of the academy must have been hovering in the school even earlier, as this title remained in the memory of its most famous alumni, emigrants to France, and is still used by their biographers. It was not without a reason that the Vilnius Drawing School received such acclaim.

The basis for that acclaim was built patiently and professionally by Trutnev and Rybakov already before Yuzhanin. The long-term academic experience, as well as new stylistic trends and pleinair studies that finally reached Vilnius thanks to Rybakov created serious preconditions for that.

Indeed, Yuzhanin was ready to reform the school and asked the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts to increase the subsidy. However, the outbreak of World War I prevented the new headmaster from implementing his plans. Additional funding was not assigned, and due to the general turmoil and mobilization, the number of students sharply fell in 1914. In May 1915, teaching was stopped in the Vilnius Drawing School, and by a decision of the Vilnius Educational District of July 20, along with other teaching institutions, it was evacuated to Samara.

The evacuation was relative, as the entire school inventory was left in Vilnius, and Sergejev-Korobov left for St. Petersburg. It is doubtful that at least some part of the students left together with Yuzhanin. The funding was also stopped. True, despite his health condition, Yuzhanin put much effort into having the school's activity in Samara resumed. On 21 December 1915, "having lost his apartment and his entire belongings, and being admitted to the Moscow surgical clinic", he once again addressed the heads of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts asking for a subsidy for the year 1916. It is unlikely that the subsidy was granted, as no traces of existence of this school were discovered in Samara, though the artist himself lived and worked in this city until his death.

Thus, along with the "evacuation" of the Vilnius Drawing School, its long, more than forty-eight-year existence came to an end.

According to historiography, the Vilnius Drawing School had approximately four thousand students. This number can only be tentative, as the surviving student lists are not full. Their registers (or, more precisely, drafts of registers) before 1887 were transferred to the archives of the State Tretyakov Gallery together with Trutnev's other personal documents. Other archives contain only documents of random years with inscriptions testifying to other students, and some names of students can be learned from their biographies. So far we have succeeded in establishing more than 700 names of the students of the Vilnius Drawing School. Some of them are not familiar, as not all the alumni chose an artist's career, and not all of them became famous. Some alumni seem to have tried to make art and participated in exhibitions, but examples of their work did not survive. Others left Lithuania and were lost in the wide expanses of Russia or the Soviet Union, while others became world-famous artists or art teachers.

Despite its ideological basis and a rather strange function that the school was supposed to serve, since the opening it caused a great deal of interest among the residents of Vilnius. Already in 1867, the prominent artists of that time, Edward Jan Römer and Rafał Slizień local landlords and Russian officials enrolled their children in the school. The liberal structure of the school allowed representatives of all social classes to attend, and thus the school attracted both the poorer residents of Vilnius who wanted to master the craft, and wealthier citizens who had an artistic streak (Lev Antokolsky). In the course of time, the school became more popular and began to receive students from more remote cities and towns of Lithuania or Poland (Boris Schatz, Moses Maimon), particularly from the territory of today's Belarus (Lev Alperovich, Yehudo Epstein, Pavel Yuzhik, Yazep

Drazdovich) or Ukraine (Emanuel Mané-Katz, Simon Glatzer, Karol Dominik Witkowski), as in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Vilnius Drawing School was the only institution of its kind in the entire North-Western Region of the Russian Empire⁸⁹. It was not until 1897 that the first art school – the Yudel (Yehudo) Pen Drawing School – was opened in Belarus.

The Vilnius Drawing School had particularly many Jewish students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as in 1882, the Pale of Settlement for the Jews was even more restricted and Russian higher schools became inaccessible to them. Thus, Pinchus Krémègne, Chaïm Soutine, Kikoïne, Shraga Faibish Zarkin, Robert Genin and many others arrived in Vilnius to study. Together with them, Lithuanian artists who later became famous, Vladas Didžiokas, Vytautas Kairiūkštis, Juozas Zikaras, Rapolas Jakimavičius, Zofia Romer and Ludomir Sleńdziński attended the Vilnius Drawing School. Later, the school's alumni became scattered all around the world and improved their skills in great art academies or famous private schools in St. Petersburg (Wincenty Lukaszewicz, Bolesław Tomaszewicz, Zenon Lęski, Benedykt Kubicki, Lev Antokolsky, Lev Alperovich, Juozas Zikaras, Ludomir Sleńdziński, Vladas Didžiokas and others), Berlin (Jacques Bunimowitsch, Joseph Budko, Ben Zion Zukerman, Issai Kulvianski), Vienna (Bunimowitsch, Epstein, Lazar Krestin), Munich (Tadas Daugirdas, Edward Mateusz Römer, Stanisław Bohusz-Sięstrzeńcewicz, Kubicki, Zofia Romer, Robert Genin, Vilius Jomantas), Cracow (Witkowski, Bolesław Bujko, Bolesław Balzukiewicz, Franciszek Jasiewicz, Adam Międzibłocki, Eugenia Przyalgowska, Rapolas Jakimavičius), and Paris (Nahum Aronson, Boris Schatz, Moses Leibovski, Bujko, Zofia Romer, Genin, Ber Zalkind, Ben Zion Zukerman, Michel Kikoïne, Emanuel Mané-Katz and others).

Some alumni, having acquired higher education, joined the Lithuanian art scene (Daugirdas, Edward Mateusz Römer, Balzukiewicz, Antokolsky, Juozapas Kamarauskas, Bronisław Jamontt, Vladas Didžiokas, Vytautas Kairiūkštis, Rapolas Jakimavičius, Juozas Zikaras, Ber Zalkind), while others moved to Russia (Moses Maimon, Boris Vladimirov, Moses (Mikhail) Levin), Belarus (Alperovich, Lęski, Tomaszewicz, Drazdovich), Poland (Ludomir Janowski, Lukaszewicz, Gorski, Stanisław Bohusz-Sięstrzeńcewicz, Sleńdziński), France (Jacques Messenblum, Mikhail Kodkin, Bujko, Kikoïne, Krémègne, Soutine, Glatzer), Germany (Bunimowitsch, Genin), Israel (Schatz, Budko, Zukerman, Mané-Katz, Abel Pann, Zarkin, Kulvianski), USA (Boris Kremer (Cramer), Aronson, Nikolay Cikovsky, William Schwartz), and South Africa (Epstein).

Though the initial motive for establishing a drawing school in Vilnius was the need to decorate the newly furnished Eastern Orthodox churches and to promote Russian culture in Lithuania, a school of this type was necessary for the modernisation of the country as one of many newly established educational institutions, mostly regional schools and gymnasiums, in which the subject of drawing was also introduced. It was one of the first specialised schools in imperial Vilnius, and founding schools of higher education was not in the plans of authorities at that time.

The Vilnius Drawing School operated by democratic principles, and was open to everyone willing to learn drawing regardless of their social status and gender. Besides the offspring of local nobles, to whom drawing, as well as music, was a cultured pastime, daughters of government officials who considered it prestigious, and those to whom art was a calling, the school was also necessary for the children of the city's residents and the liberated lower classes, as the demand for education was growing along with industrial and urban development.

With the founding of the Vilnius Drawing School, the increasing demand for craftsmen and the improvement of their skills was taken into account. Thus two departments were established at the school – the School of Crafts and the Painting Classes, which were intended to meet different needs.

At the end of the nineteenth century, with rapid modernisation of society and the appearance of new fields of activity for urban residents, the improvement of professional skills became more urgent and the need for highly skilled workers grew. Thanks to the relentless efforts of Ivan Trutnev, and with the help of interested private sponsors, the teaching of crafts at the Vilnius Drawing School was completely separated from teaching purely for artistic purposes by founding a private teaching institution – the Free Sunday Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship. These classes were not subject to the requirement to hire exclusively Russian teachers, loyal to the authorities, which was obligatory for public schools. Former alumni of the Vilnius Drawing School were also employed there.

As Ivan Trutnev was the head of both the Drawing School and the Classes of Technical Drawing, which are conveniently called by the name of their sponsor Józef Montwill, their activity, despite their geographic location in the city, was often intertwined. In addition to technical drawing and draughtsmanship, special courses in painting and sculpture were taught at Montwill's Classes, which were attended by several artists who later became famous. Some of them attended both

schools. In the early twentieth century, when other art-related schools appeared in Vilnius (the Drawing Classes of the Mark Antokolsky Society for Industrial Art and the Art College under the Vilnius Art Society), several artists-to-be also studied there. Incidentally, international authors writing about the artists who studied in Vilnius, often do not have a clear idea where exactly they studied and what was going on in Vilnius at that time, and confine themselves to abstract references, such as “the Vilnius art school”, “a higher art school in Vilnius” or the already mentioned “Académie de Vilna”. As a result, artists who did not attend the Vilnius Drawing School, among them Lasar Segall, Jacques Lipchitz, Piotr Hermanowicz and others, are sometimes attributed to the school’s alumni.

When the School of Crafts was detached from the Painting Classes and subsidies from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts were procured, the teaching of art was considerably enhanced. Curricula of artistic education were much improved, and new additional subjects were introduced. Students were also taught a course in art history, which acquainted them not only with the classics, but also with the newer trends in European art. In this respect, a word of praise should be said about the teacher Ivan Rybakov. Thus, in addition to the understanding of classical art, students also became familiar with new stylistic developments. Many of the alumni who later continued their studies in the great centres of art integrated them in their work both in Lithuania and abroad.

The financial situation of the Vilnius Drawing School showed that the local administration was only interested in art as much as it could serve politics. The setting up of the “coalition” Committee of the Permanent Art Exhibition Society in 1876 was intended to show the concern of the tsarist authorities for the country’s artistic culture. Lithuanian intellectuals agreed to compromises hoping that taking part in exhibitions would help them to prove to society that they existed and could participate in the Vilnius cultural scene with full rights. Though it took another two decades to start organising public exhibitions of works by Lithuanian artists, the groundwork was laid.

The art exhibitions organised on Trutnev’s initiative at the Vilnius Drawing School, and later in the classrooms of the Classes of Technical Drawing and Draughtsmanship, and his efforts to found a museum were the artist’s sincere attempt to breathe new life into the stagnating art scene of Vilnius. Society was able to get to know the achievements of young people in art studies, and for the students themselves it was an important incentive for improvement. It is not by accident that

a large number of the school's alumni took part in all kinds of exhibitions held in the late nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century, were active members of the Vilnius Art Society, and even though they lived in other countries, they continued to send their works to exhibitions in Lithuania.

The Vilnius Drawing School became popular in the entire North-Western Krai. It attracted students not only from the provincial towns of Lithuania, but also from the farther corners of the Russian Empire – Belarus, Ukraine and Poland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it had become a dream school for many gifted young people of Jewish descent. If we look at the lists of the school's alumni, though incomplete, we can see that they constituted a significant part. On the one hand, Jews were predominant among those practicing crafts in cities and towns, and in the late nineteenth century, they constituted 44.4 per cent of the entire population of Vilnius. On the other, the Vilnius Drawing School for a long time was the only school of this kind in the entire North-Western Krai and, undoubtedly, the closest centre for art studies, particularly bearing in mind the borders of the Pale of Settlement established by Catherine II.

In the biographies of some artists who attended the Vilnius Drawing School, Aronson and Soutine specifically, statements by their authors about the school's pervasive anti-Semitism appeared a couple of times¹. It would probably be wrong to assert that the moods of anti-Semitism were stronger in the school than they were in the Russian Empire at that time. There must have been less of it, if at all. It is not a secret that Trutnev was a very strict teacher, and this strictness could not have depended on nationality. Aleksandr Zhirkevich was Trutnev's student at the Vilnius School of Exact Sciences. This is how he remembered his teacher:

“Ivan Petrovich had a reputation among us for most recklessly pulling his students by the ears and, to tell you the truth, nobody pulled them so painfully as he. <...> He had a nasty habit of giving his students flicks on the head with his bony fingers, for which he was later reprimanded by the school's authorities”². It is quite likely that Trutnev might have used similar methods on disobedient students of the Drawing School. Certainly, Jews, whose families experienced various prohibitions, persecutions and pogroms, were more sensitive to any kind

¹ Naum Aronson: *About my childhood. Portraits of my family, My Home*. Introduction: Nam Aronson by Musya Glants, *Experiment Centrifuge: Memoirs, Letters and other Documents from the Era of Russian Modernism*, Los Angeles: Institute of Modern Russian Culture, Vol. I, 1995; E. Szittyá, *Soutine et son temps*, Paris, 1955, p. 20.

² *Настоящий друг русских классиков. И. Репин, Л. Толстой, И. Айвазовский и другие современники в дневниках и письмах Александра Жиркевича*, сост. Н. Жиркевич-Подлесских, М. Щербакова, Москва: ООО «ИИА «Пресс-Меню», 2017, p. 147.

of punishment and may have attributed each case of their teacher's dissatisfaction to anti-Semitism.

On the other hand, Jewish students, both natives of Vilnius and arrivals from elsewhere, were not attached to Lithuania and, despite the poor material conditions of many of them, were more daring to pursue their dream. Having learned the basics of art at the Drawing School, they left to study in the great centres of art, be it Saint Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, Munich or Paris, each according to their means and priorities. Only several of them – Lev Antokolsky, Moses Leibowski, Ber Zalkind and Ben Zion Zukerman – returned to continue their artistic career in Lithuania. A large group of the artists of the Vilnius Drawing School formed the nucleus of the Paris school in the first decades of the twentieth century, and their fame also helped to commemorate the at first sight modest provincial art school.

Not less significantly, quite a few Jewish artists, as well as the large majority of alumni of the Drawing School of other nationalities, combined creative work with teaching. Above all, it was a possibility to earn some extra income. But besides, one could see how the authoritative teachers of the Drawing School contributed to making the profession of art teacher more attractive. Many private art studios and schools, which operated for a longer or shorter time, were opened in various corners of Europe. Bulgaria and Israel in particular should be grateful to Boris Schatz for the establishment of the first art schools in these countries, as well as the first teachers of the *Bezalel* School, Joseph Budko and Abel Pann. In Lithuania, Vytautas Kairiūkštis, Vladas Didžiokas, Bolesław Balzukiewicz, Ludomir Sleńdziński and other teachers and professors of the Kaunas Art School and the Art Faculty of Stephen Báthory University in Vilnius were most seriously engaged in art pedagogy.

The Vilnius Drawing School gradually became the hub of artistic life not only for Russians, but also for the city's residents of all nationalities, training the understanding of art of ordinary citizens and providing adequate education for thousands of craftspeople-to-be. Hundreds of art teachers-to-be, and, most importantly, almost a hundred professional artists who were later scattered all around the world, learned the basics of art and the skills of classical drawing in this school. It was thanks to their high professionalism that their first modest art school was later referred to as an art academy.