SUMMARY. The article deals with the manifestations of collective memory (representations of the past, where past events are interpreted, conceptualised and used for today’s needs) in Sąjūdžio žinios 1988-1989.

As the Soviet regime made great efforts to reinterpret the past and create a programmed and artificial memory by radically confronting the institutionalised and individual memories, Sąjūdis’ goals included filling the “blank spots” of history, primarily targeting the secret protocols of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact. “The return of history” and “recovered (national) memory” also meant voicing injustices and repressions suffered by the Lithuanians during the Soviet era, such as mass deportations, which, in turn, led to victimhood and “competitive martyrlogy”, as well as creating the image of the Soviet era as that of constant repressions, darkness and sham.

Allusions to the Soviet Union as the (evil) empire (the slaughterhouse of nations) featuring colonial intent and slavery, compared with the Tsarist Empire (the prison of nations) and serfdom, are often used in Sąjūdžio žinios. The phenomenon of reverse-cultural colonisation is observed in the opposition between the periphery (Lithuania) and the Soviet metropolis. The opposition itself is drawn in the form of indifference to the existence of the Lithuanian nation, its exploitation and humiliation.

In the reflections on environmental issues found within Sąjūdžio žinios, the damage to Lithuania’s nature is viewed as yet another thread in the history of the nation’s oppression. Concern for ecology is also concern over the nation’s fate and its future: mass deportations have ended, yet those who survived are now poisoned in their own polluted land, under the menace of the nuclear disaster – ecologic genocide. The Lithuanian nature was said to be in need of purification, just as history and memory were to be recovered and renounced of lies.

History (historical truth) was “brought back” to the streets of the Lithuanian cities and towns by public rallies, as those to mark the anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, attesting to collective memory’s performative nature. Sąjūdžio žinios called on the readers to mark the event, referred to as the offset of the tragic situation the nation has found itself in, while the publication’s rhetoric employed a schematic narrative template of suffering-waiting-revival cycle. The comments on the national calendar (the revision of memorable days) and national attributes in the news bulletin relate to the need for the past that is commonly shared and jointly remembered, as well as commemorative symbolism.

KEYWORDS: collective memory, representations of the past, “blank spots” of history, Sąjūdis, Sąjūdžio žinios.
The changes brought by the revolutionary transformations in the late 1980s gave an impetus to a frequent use of the notion of memory in the Lithuanian public discourse: as the images of the past were framed by the Soviet ideology and propaganda, institutionalised memory had little in common with the individual memories and stories told in private; the notions of live, historical and national (“our own”) memory confronted the official version of the past (alien, “imposed on us”). The rejection of the official Soviet history prompted the creation of the new, “our”, Lithuanian version, again, as in the interwar period. In “looking for the Lithuanians in the Lithuanian history”, memory offered seemingly more reliable alternative of personal experience. Later on, the growing distance from the Soviet period and the topicality of the auto-documentary genre, along with the increasing polemics on publishing memoirs of the former nomenklatura members and the use of “silent resistance” metaphor, prompted reflections on the relation of memory and history: true and falsified, artificial memory and attempts to re-write history in the independent Lithuania in journalism and collections of articles1.

The use of the concept of collective memory (in a wide array of variations – cultural, communicative, social, historical, national, culture of remembrance – and yet united by defining it as a social and cultural construct, the ability to remember, recollect and commemorate collectively) has been on the rise among the Lithuanian academia in recent years. Previously, sociologists pioneered in using the concept of social memory in the Lithuanian identity research (such phenomena as collective remembering and the representations/symbols of the past) and collective trauma analysis2, while the growing awareness of competing memories and grand narratives gave impetus to, among others, the rivalling memory-focused articles3, as well as conferences and issues of their materials4.


spaces and memory places. Whatever is the reason for the spur (the global trend of memory studies – “memory boom” or “memory industry” – and its appropriation for the local realities; the attractiveness of memory studies as a field of interdisciplinary intersections; the convenience of practising rather than theorising, or, some say, using the concept of collective memory that has no negative connotations as a means to replace a variety of terms including myth, stereotype, legend, or adding the concept as a “trendy” substitute to “old school” concepts in various research fields), recently there’s been a number of works with collective memory as a scholarly object.

The widely used notion of memory denotes a variety of things that nonetheless share a topical common denominator – the ways in which people construct a sense of the past, connoting the representation of the past and making it into a shared cultural knowledge in “vehicles of memory” such as books, films or commemorations. Collective memory is understood and approached within this paper not as a recollection of a past event, but its interpretation, conceptualisation and the use for today’s needs, as all of us have access to the past via the categories and schemata, or “collective representations”, of our own culture. It is used to preserve the dignity of the group with which one identifies and for making straight and whole collective story as in the case of the national memories (which may also mean that the truths which we might find as dispassionate observers must yield to the

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10 A. Confino. Ibid.

Truth we need to make this collective story\(^{12}\) and to construct patterns for self-
interpretation legitimised by the past\(^{13}\).

The interest in memory in the public discourse is thought to have come from,
among other things, the so called “memory crisis” caused by the collapse of the
communist bloc: a huge interest in history, most often identified with the past
or “recovered memories”, desire and attempts to fill the “blank spots” of history,
externalise injustice and suffering, etc. The latter seems to be true about Sąjūdis
(the Reform Movement of Lithuania) period, when one of the main tasks for the
intellectuals was to make the previously hidden, ignored and falsified historical
events public, as the Soviet regime made great efforts to reinterpret the past by
creating its simple, consistent and unquestionable construct, totally supress and
modify memories and interpretations of past\(^{14}\), which was followed by the forma-
tion of programmed, artificial memory that was to guarantee the reproduction of
loyal citizens of the system\(^{15}\).

The revolutionary period of liberation and democratisation which started in
1988 was the onset of radical transformation of the old social fabric\(^{16}\). In the summer of 1988, the communist regime in Lithuania started losing ideological control
over the public discourse\(^{17}\), which resulted in a shift in narratives and meta-nar-
ratives. The memories on the individual level, the episodes of the past suppressed
before, political and social attitudes made visible in only semi-private environment
(or hidden transcripts, held by the oppressed, related to critique of power), have
become the subject of discussions and the axis of identity construction, challenging
the infallibility of political and social attitudes (or public transcripts, supported by
the dominators)\(^{18}\).

This article focuses on the choices and the nature of representations of the past
in Sąjūdžio žinios (Sąjūdis News) from 1988 to 1989. Sąjūdžio žinios was the first
and the only, for some time, publication of the Reform Movement: the Sąjūdis

\(^{12}\) Timothy Snyder. Memory of sovereignty and sovereignty over memory: Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine,

\(^{13}\) Dietrich Harth. The Invention of Cultural Memory // Media and Cultural Memory. Berlin, 2008, p. 91.

\(^{14}\) Rasa Čepaitienė. Sovietmečio atmintis – tarp atmetimo ir nostalgijos // Lituanistica. 2007, t. 53, nr. 4(72),
p. 39.

\(^{15}\) Gintautas Mažeikis. Propaganda ir simbolinis mąstymas. VDU, Kaunas, 2010, p. 68, 75.

\(^{16}\) Daiva Citvarienė. Ideologiniai viešojo diskurso konstruktai ir atminties politika posovietinėje Lietuvoje //

\(^{17}\) Arūnas Streikus. Ideologinė cenzūra Lietuvoje 1956-1989 m. // Genocidas ir rezistencija, 2004, nr. 1(15),
p. 63–64.

\(^{18}\) See Rasa Balockaitė’s use of James C. Scott’s theory in: Rasa Balockaitė. Diskursyvių galios santykių
struktūros, jų istorinis determinizmas bei diskurso ribų kaita Lietuvoje 1990–2002 m. // Filosofija. Sociolo-
gija. LMA, 2005, nr. 2, p. 7–8, 12.
Initiative Group decided that it was necessary to publish a newsletter – “a forum as a means of mass information” against “a wave of reactionary opposition” to the movement. The news bulletin was originally issued irregularly, supported by donations, distributed free by sending out 1,000 copies throughout Lithuania; the copies were also posted and read on bulletin boards (as it was common for Sąjūdis press overall). Readers were urged to pass the copies (handwritten copies were also in circulation) of the publication when finished with them.

The manifestations of collective memory in the publication are analysed with respect to several respects:

- The mobilising rhetoric of filling the “blank spots” of history used by Sąjūdis, employing the terms of “recovered memory” and “returning history”, where both of these relate to the image of nation victim endowed with a particular historical experience.
- The schemata of drawing parallels between the Soviet occupation and colonisation, the USSR and the Russian Empire, kolkhoz system and serfdom and, by using insights of post-colonialism, the metropolis and the periphery, the civilised us and the barbarian other.
- The way environmental issues intertwined with the national sentiments and the vision of the nation’s fate as the landscape/the nature embodies shared identity symbols and their emotional reading, continuity of traditions and the memory a group wants to sustain.
- The rhetoric of memory concerning commemorative practices: national calendar (marking the anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, the intended revision of memorable days) and national attributes.

“RETURNING HISTORY” AND “RECOVERED MEMORY”: MOBILISING RHETORIC

The collapse of the old regime, which radically confronted institutionalised and individual memory, was accompanied by zealous search for “authentic”, previously suppressed memory, aspirations to “recover” (true, one’s own, our) history, which

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21 Although one may question the search for “authentic” memory in scholarly research, as does, for instance Jeffrey K. Olick, claiming that “there’s no pristine memory. nor is there a primal “event” against which memories can be judged”: Jeffrey K. Olick. Introduction // States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection (Politics, History, and Culture). Duke University Press, 2003, p. 9. On the other hand,
primarily meant filling in the “blank spots” of history. The main features of Sąjūdis’ activities and rhetoric in its early stage included a new interpretation of history – filing the “blank spots” of history – which was the most effective part of mobilising rhetoric at the time. One of Sąjūdis’ first goals announced in Sąjūdžio žinios was to bring back “the Lithuanian nation its history, which has been ignored and falsified for decades; to require the disclosure of the most important historical documents concerning the nation.” History in the publication is not viewed as only or rather official, ideological, objective (as a goal) science, which one could contrast as a lifeless product with the ever-lived, magical and affective memory: we need to recover our history “not only as research and publications about past events in our lives, but as a feeling and understanding that we have always been here”. The call for changing the methods of analysing historical texts, as previously “the texts served as an illustration of a preconceived predicament, and not as a source of knowledge”, is yet paired with a reminder that history ensures true possibility for the nation to exist in the future.

The native land – Lithuania – has been given by “the fate, history or God”, hence after “recovering our national memory and bringing back history”, which “used to be a servant of its master – politics”, “we should restore the state that has not been created by vandals”. The return of history brings back the Lithuanians the dimension of time, means that the nation gets back its sacred past, national martyrology, and also paves the way for the victimhood: “there are no great or small nations, there are miserable ones only, just like us, one of the oldest Indo-European nations”. The terms Stalinism, perestroika and stagnation are alien, authentic memory in Lithuania’s case may be referred to, as “unique social memory, little affected by standard models of socialist ideology and propaganda, the authenticity of memory should be seen as connected to the historical memory of Lithuanian nation”: in Prijaukintos kasdienybės, 1945-1970: biografiniai Lietuvos moterų interviu, ed. Dalia Marcinkevičienė, Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2007.

31 Kabelių persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio iniciatyvinės grupės kreipimasis // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 08 26, p. 117.
while “our ones” include the tragedy and rebirth of the nation\(^\text{32}\): after all, “we are
the nation, which had been oppressed for 230 years and has again found itself in
the situation of manifold crisis after 20 years of freedom”\(^\text{33}\). It seems that Sąjūdis-
period transformations determined rather one-sided general view of the post-war
period: constant fight with the regime, repressions and terror, connoting Orwellian
paradigms of totalitarianism, when little space is left for individual and collective
memories that do not support the image\(^\text{34}\). “To the Lithuanians, the second world
war did not end in the spring of 1945. First deportations, repressions, then – mel-
ioration, forced industrialisation, falsification of history, destruction of cultural
monuments, deprecation of the language, and finally alcoholism, poisoned food,
water and radiation – and the war still goes on”\(^\text{35}\). During the years of regaining
independence, the Soviet times were given the name of the lost and void (futile)
time, something that should be rejected in the creation of the new society, while
the collective memory concentrated on the events of loss and recovery of independ-
ence\(^\text{36}\). There’s so much “fear, darkness and failures of getting even in our outworn,
grey, silicate and kolkhoz Lithuania“\(^\text{37}\), that the ugliness of “squalid Soviet reality” is
only rescued by rare public appearances of the national flag and its colours\(^\text{38}\), while
the lost generations’ (the one that grew in the stagnation period) mirror of the soul
used to be the words of a rock band: “we’re the children of concrete / born among
walls, raised among walls / walls is what we believe in“\(^\text{39}\).

Victimhood leaves no room for guilt and the corresponding moral imperative:
“all of us-those who survived and who perished, “enemies” and “defenders” – were
victims. The victims of destroying men and nations”\(^\text{40}\). This paved way for the so
called “competitive martyrology”, also known as the theory of “double genocide"
or the symmetry between the Nazi and the Communist crimes. The pain and the
horrors of the Jewish nation were weighed against the adversities and misery suf-
f ered by the Lithuanians: “aren’t the Lithuanians too often called baltaraištis (white-
armbander) (or fascist, Jew-killer, nationalist)? This has been internationalised

\(^{34}\) Michal Kopeček. In search of „National Memory”: the Politics of History, Nostalgia and the Historiography
of Communism in the Czech Republic and East Central Europe // Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism
\(^{35}\) Brigita Balikienė. Nepasaktyta kalba Santakos parke // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 08 08, p. 73.
\(^{36}\) Rasa Čepaitienė. Min. veik., p. 39.
\(^{40}\) Aidas Vabuolas. Paskalbės su Ferdinandu Kupšiu: Smurto ir mirties imperija // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 09 08,
p. 141.
through the history of the USSR (...) and nobody has counted or let count how many Lithuanians saved the Jews, prisoners of war or the Russian children (...). Jew-killers should not even be called nationalists – trash does not belong to any nation, they would have been condemned by the nation itself”41. Comparisons go as to death on the Laptev Sea and death in a gas chamber, or Hitler’s racial ideology and plans of expelling the Baltic peoples to another side of the Ural Mountains and mass deportations and murders by Stalin – “all of the ways led to the death of the nation. (...) Both Himmler and Molotov agreed: small nations have no historical perspective. (...) When two predators fight for prey, the bloody feast of the winner becomes fatally decisive to the victim”42. The reference to the Laptev Sea alludes to the memoirs of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė on exile to Siberia, published in the spring and summer of 1988: the account on the horrors suffered by the deportees – via both the documentation of the events and the emotional impact the down-to-earth narration had – opened wider the doors for discussing the topic of exile, and the nation’s fate (tragedy, sufferings, humiliation) along. Although not given the title by Grinkevičiūtė herself, the memoirs published posthumously were entitled “Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea”, and the publishers’ choice to include “Lithuanians” in the title might be viewed as an encouragement to view the text as a statement of a shared national experience of oppression, elicited a particular kind of reading and contributed to the larger narrative of independence of the time43.

In parallel to this rhetoric, Sąjūdžio žinios were also publishing passages from The Lithuanian Archive. The Years of Bolshevism on the elections in 1940. The excerpts echo the Jew-Bolshevik-communist motives: “The number of true Bolshevist agent-communist party members was (...) very small (...). Moreover, 75 percent of the Communist party members constituted the Jews”44, marginalised in the following passage: “representatives were among the audience in the parterre of the State Theatre. Just look at the audience: political prisoners, “enkavedists” [NKVD officials], Jews, several workers…”45

Allusions to the USSR as the empire (the evil empire) featuring colonial intent and slavery, compared with the Tsarist Empire and serfdom, are often used in Sąjūdžio žinios. 19th century Lithuanian National Revival “took off with recovery of history” as it had become clear that “the nation without memory has no future”, and yet now the “disadvantaged nation” realised that it had been “deprived of history” again and somebody “finds it convenient to treat it as a child”\(^\text{46}\). “Awakening consciousness” and “recovered history” prompted drawing parallels between the situation in the 19th and the 20th centuries: as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the Baltic states had become colonial plunder\(^\text{47}\), the kolkhoz [collective farm] serfdom was introduced into the Lithuanian villages\(^\text{48}\), while Russia – prison of nations under the tsarist regime – had become slaughterhouse of nations under Stalin\(^\text{49}\). Lithuania is thus referred to as /compared with a colonial periphery, a region, and the Northwest Territory.

Traditionally, in post-colonialism, the opposition between the periphery and the metropolis means supremacy of the latter, however, in the post-Soviet context, the Baltic States perceive themselves as European and the Soviet metropolis as uncivilized, barbarian (as in the earlier mentioned quote: “we need to establish a state that has not been created by vandals”) and “Oriental”\(^\text{50}\). Here, orientalisation means that the colonised are seen as passive, ahistorical, feminine, or barbaric, and in the case of the Baltic and Central European states – “reverse-cultural colonisation” – the colonising Soviets were often seen as Asiatics\(^\text{51}\). Hence, the events of August 23, 1939, are seen as “Asiatic sadism and cold European madness” holding hands\(^\text{52}\). The opposition itself between the metropolis and the periphery (me/ the other), as well as the feeling of difference and exploitation in the relations, is kept: here, Moscow is “indifferent to the existence of the Lithuanian nation, which has been suffering so much” and hence its anti-ecological behaviour and “colonial policies” may lead to a situation where “the nation has no place to live”\(^\text{53}\). “The

\(^{46}\) B. Balikienė. Ibid, p. 71.
\(^{47}\) Laisvę pavergtoms tautoms // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1989 08 21, p. 356.
monsters of the Centre have created the Northwester Territory” with Lithuania included, as if it was not a sovereign republic, expressing their will and power to command and turning the “beautiful land (“Lithuania’s all over resort”, Russians claim) into a desert”54.

The coloniser looks down on the local people, expecting to make them feel inferior, backward in all respects and holding on to erroneous worldview55: “the Muscovites often see Lithuania as a Russian province, like Ryazan area, and this kind of imperial attitude (…) is morally humiliating”56. Lithuania is like a farm-hand building, where serfs no longer know how to work and are under the supervision of oprichniks, blamed by the Kremlin for being “impudent dependents in the great manor of Oblomov”. Granted “aborigines, waiving their hoes, were able to free themselves from the colonial yoke”, the Lithuanians should remind the world of how much it sacrificed for independence in silence57. Once the nation was able to revive after 100 years of slavery, even though Empress Yekaterina, “prompted by Voltaire to undermine the morale of the local people”, initiated a massive drinking bout among the Lithuanians and their traditions were trampled down58. Now, the Lithuanians want their “children and grandchildren never again be slaves and serfs”, and would instead feel free Lithuanians in free Lithuania59. After an unsuccessful visit to the Great-Russian imperialists “asking Moscow for independence armed with 1.8 million signatures in favour”, restoring independence remains Lithuania’s main goal, although the national minorities, which would not like the separation from the metropolis, need to be explained that “in independent Lithuania, there will be no national genocide (…) nor will there be pogroms and deportations”60. Furthermore, the government’s decision to require halting the construction of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant’s (INPP) 3rd block is another milestone in combating the colonial politics of Soviet monopolies61.

58 Vidmantas Valiušaitis. Pagalvokime // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 08 08, p. 73.
During its early stage of activities, the Lithuanian Green Movement voiced concern over the side effects and consequences of the rapid Soviet industrialisation, and did not express any open political confrontation. Later, the image of the Lithuanian nature devastated by the Soviet industrialisation was related to reviving national sentiments, and the greens started working together with the Lithuanian Reform Movement. In the Sąjūdis period, environmental issues were related with the national questions by opposing the USSR (industrialisation, and destruction of Lithuanian landscape) and Lithuania (the nature), in the case of some nationalists getting close to something like a “blood and soil” ideology which identified the Baltic nations with the land.

Ecological bicycle trip around Lithuania “is not simply the society’s environmental education, it’s also (...) Sąjūdis “war march” across Lithuania” that has started “with great injustice that we have all suffered and still are (...) losing our national symbols, continuity of traditions, economic and political sovereignty, surviving exile to Siberia, living under the burden of losses every day”\(^{65}\), as posted by Sąjūdžio žinios on the ecological bicycle trip entitled “Lithuania – My Home” in the summer of 1988. The trip’s tasks and undertakings included explaining the importance of environmental issues, conveying information on Sąjūdis’ goals, gathering signatures on a petition to halt the construction of the nuclear power plant’s 3d block and a letter to Andrei Gromyko explaining the reasons of Artūras Sakaļauskas tragedy, spotlighting the moral decline in the Soviet army. As befits a “war march”, national attributes were on display (for instance, the previously banned tricolour flag and the Pillars of Gediminas), and in the quote above, the damage to Lithuania’s nature is just another thread in the history of the country’s oppression, whereas concern for ecology is also concern over the nation’s fate and its future: it is not enough to “exist in the sense of physiologic vegetation. Every viable, strong and spiritually healthy nation should survive. (...) “To survive, or to self-destruct?” This is not vain rhetoric. The current development of the country’s industry (...) is close to turning Lithuania into a camp of slow death”\(^{66}\). Although surviving the


\(^{63}\) Ten pat, p. 32.


\(^{66}\) Algimantas Patašius. Žalieji toli (!) eis // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 09 02, p. 130.
Siberian camps, the Lithuanians are now on the verge of living on their own native land, “given by history”\(^{67}\), that is a camp of its own – here, the nation may die slow death on the “suffocating, poisoned and dingy” land\(^{68}\). It is now not the people, the nation, but also the land itself that is under the threat of annihilation, as if surviving through deportations and exile was not enough – Lithuania may completely disappear off the map. The abbreviation meaning nuclear plant (AE in Lithuanian) was often written with a cross symbol (AE), read as an allusion to the abbreviation for “rest in peace” (AA in Lithuanian)\(^{69}\), with almost apocalyptical menace of death – the planned 3\(^{rd}\) bloc was referred to as “the kindling for the nuclear hell designed to exterminate the Baltic nations”\(^{70}\).

As in the social pathology analogy, also used by, for instance, Antanas Maceina, a prominent independent interwar Lithuania’s and post-war (in emigration) thinker, whose metaphor of pathological state of the body included highlighting economic problems (when an organism has “a wound made by invisible bacteria”)\(^{71}\), the horrors of the Lithuanian industry and ravaged nature are compared to “tetanus convulsions” that will end in “our body suffocating along with our soul”\(^{72}\). The organismic model of the society – appealing especially in the ages marked by tumultuous change and harsh conflicts – implies that “foreign” influences entering the system from outside are alien to its nature and threaten its integrity, are contaminating and dangerous\(^{73}\). Thus, “while looking at our devastated and still havocked land, we know what it is like, when the other is the host here”, the nation is unable to exercise influence over the processes in the country\(^{74}\). The image of the nation – it is suffering, yet this is exactly why it has been blessed, made exceptional: “we were and still are one of the nations with the most tragic fate in the history of Europe”, evidenced by “ecologic genocide” and “constant threat of Lithuanian Chernobyl”\(^{75}\).

\(^{69}\) As in, for instance, Sąjūdžio Žinios, 1988 09 13, 1988 09 14, 1988 09 20.
\(^{71}\) antanas Maceina. Raštai, t. 2. Vilnius, 1992, p. 11, 16.
\(^{72}\) Gintaras Songaila. Sąjūdis prieš stabligę // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 08 02, p. 63.
\(^{74}\) Irena Ignatavičienė. Į dienos šviesą // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 10 06, p. 173.
politics one’s reminded of when listening to soviet officials, leaders and speaking about the facility in Ignalina “76.

The readers were urged to ponder the issue of “the man’s spiritual ecology” 77, “add moral tone to environmental issues” 78, as it was not only pollutants and waste to clean out: in a sick body (the nature), the spirit (the nation) cannot thrive, it needs to purify. Lies needed to be renounced, freedom and historical truth (as in one of the slogans used during the bicycle trip: “No black spots in ecology and no blank spots in history” 79) had to be recovered, the landscape was to get back its spiritual-symbolic meaning (instead of being a sovietised concept of soulless “landshaft”) as the nature was to be confirmed as the locus of the Lithuanian identity80.

THE PAST EMBEDDED IN COMMEMORATIVE CALENDAR AND EMBODIED IN NATIONAL ATTRIBUTES

Both collective and individual memories pertain to the practices of institutions that preserve images of the past, such as museums, archives, schools, etc. Yet there exists an unconscious relation with architecture, nature, images remembered and language, which, along with controversial interpretations and historical monuments that are not subject to explanation, make every state’s efforts to supervise the imagined past and maintain political regime of its repeatability not entirely successful81. According to Sąjūdžio žinios, history should be invited back to where it used to be: city streets and squares, museums and cemeteries, schools and churches, “as the Lithuanians have the right and the duty to recover the pages torn away from the history, (…) make deleted names return”82. History (truth, historical truth) was brought back to the streets by way of, among others, public rallies, as those to mark the anniversary of the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov pact83. Collective memory

83 There are claims that the secret pact is „the central axis of Lithuanian cultural memory“, the foundation of the grand narrative about the Republic of Lithuania restituted on March 11, 1990, in: A. Nikžentaitis,
is of performative nature, and is in coherence with aspirations to once again relive and repeat a past event: commemorations give particular events a sacred or exemplary quality, making them “historic” as well as historical, they tell a story, present a “grand narrative”, they also reconstruct history or “re-collect” or “re-member” it assembling fragments of the past into new patterns. Sąjūdis urged not to be “indifferent to this highly important date in the history of Central-Eastern Europe and the whole world” by marching on the streets of Vilnius with symbols marked for grieving on August 23 – the “day of our despair.” It was also announced that a memorial service was to be held in Vilnius, and, throughout Lithuania, there should be no entertainments in the evening: it can be spent discussing historical events and human destinies, sharing thoughts and feelings.

As a result of the pact, the nation is on the verge of dying, and the way of life imposed on the Lithuanians leads to spiritual, ecologic and economic death. The rhetoric seems to be once again using a certain schematic narrative template (structures that emerge out of the repeated use of a standard set of specific narratives in history instruction, the popular media, etc.) – the one that portrays the nation suffering, trampled for many years by foreign powers and yet at last reviving.

Such a template of suffering-waiting-revival cycle was employed in an excerpt of a text dating 49 years back, when Vilnius returned to Lithuania, used when discussing the need to bring back the national flag. The national flag, along with the old heraldry symbols, “which we had to forget during both tsarist Russia and Stalin era”, should be returned to the Lithuanian nation as “the true symbols of its historical development and statehood.” Collective memory represents the past embodied in commemorative symbolism and historical evidence: history makes the past an object of analysis and is a system of “referential symbols” representing known facts about past events and their sequence, while commemoration makes it an object of commitment and is a system of “condensation symbols” expressing

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85 Rugpjūčio 23 – mūsų nevilties... // 1988 08 11, p. 79–80.


88 Rezoliucija apie Sąjūdžio veiklą // 1988 12 06, p. 228.


90 Prieš 49 metus // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 10 14, p. 179.

the moral sentiments these events inspire\textsuperscript{92}. Thus “Silver Vytis\textsuperscript{93} froze in a historical stride; the national flag is referred to as “sacred”, born “out of mossy peasant’s hut and national ribbons woven with the tears of old mother”, while the signs of the “unfading Žalgiris victory have engraved in our consciousness as great as duke Gediminas was”\textsuperscript{94}. Images of Lithuanian nature, landscape as said above, in Sąjūdis rhetoric were related to the national feelings; similarly, this was reflected in the relation of these images to national attributes. “There’s so little green colour of our unique nature left during the times, when environmental problems were only a matter of the people’s representatives hunting in our reservations. Sunny yellow has not only diminished, it faded away…Yet look at the abundance of red colour…”\textsuperscript{95}

The notion of collective memory implies a past that is both commonly shared and jointly remembered: society affects not only what and who we remember, but also when we remember it – by creating its calendar of holidays and memorial days\textsuperscript{96}. National calendar, which would “include nationally significant moments and would give their brief description”, such as February 16\textsuperscript{97} and June 14\textsuperscript{98}, it is said in Sąjūdis, would allow to “puzzle out the historiographical chaos, revive and establish historical truths and facts in our consciousness, bring light to our people’s noble deeds, ideas and lives”\textsuperscript{99}. June 14, “the day of sorrow and anguish, should be listed among the memorable days. With this day, all of the greatest injustices started”, and the Lithuanians would thus follow in the footsteps of the Latvians, “who have recently announced their Lyguo holidays a day off. Why don’t we do the same? We would celebrate Rasos\textsuperscript{100} highly enthusiastically and elated”\textsuperscript{101}.  


\textsuperscript{93} Vytis – Lithuanian coat of arms. Depicts a mounted soldier with raised sword on a red field and dates back to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

\textsuperscript{94} Artūras Andriušaitis. Tautos vėliavą – į mokyklą // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 09 02, p. 127.

\textsuperscript{95} Antanas Buračas. Suverenumo tarybų Lietuvai! // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 09 02, p. 128.


\textsuperscript{97} The Day of Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania: Lithuania’s Act of Independence was signed on 16 February 1918.

\textsuperscript{98} The Day of Mourning and Hope: 14 June 1941 marked the beginning of the first mass deportations to remote regions of the Soviet Union.


\textsuperscript{100} Dew Holiday or Joninės, St. John’s Day.

\textsuperscript{101} Sąjūdžio iniciatyvinės grupės narių susitikimas su LKP CK sekretoriumi L. Šepečiu // Sąjūdžio žinios, 1988 06 28, p. 13.
IN CONCLUSION

Summing up what has been said in this case study of Sąjūdžio žinios 1988-1989, the offset of liberation and collapse of the old regime in Lithuania was accompanied by the aspirations of filling the “blank spots” of history or “returning history”, as well as “recovering memory”. Here, both history and memory served the purpose of historical justice and to prove the nation’s right to exist, history is also an equivalent of fate or evidence of the nation’s unique past. It is not history and memory that were opposed, yet “true”, “our own”, Lithuanian history and memory confronted the “falsified”, imposed, and alien Soviet memory. The Soviet times (fear, darkness, and dismalness) were repudiated, portrayed as a period of constant suffering and repression. The concept paved way for the image of nation-victim and the theory of “double genocide”.

The awakening of the nation prompted drawing parallels between the 19th century Lithuanian National Revival and the situation of those days – both were said to begin with “recovering history” and understanding the importance of (national) memory. Comparisons included the oppression in the USSR and the Tsarist Russia, the Soviet kolkhoz system and serfdom, the division of Central and Eastern Europe into the Soviet and the German spheres of interest in 1939 and the 18th century partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Traditional supremacy of the coloniser over the colonised was constructed reversely: the Soviets seen as barbarians and the Asiatics, while the Lithuanians as the European. The opposition of the metropolis and the periphery was based on postulating exploitive relation: humiliating imperial attitude towards Lithuania as a Russian province and Moscow’s will to turn the land into a desert (environmental issues).

In the rhetoric of the publication, employing such terms as “ecologic genocide”, “the camp of slow death”, the images of the Lithuanian nature devastated by the Soviet industrialisation were related to the images of the nation’s suffering, the damage to the environment seen as just another thread in the history of oppression (loss of sovereignty – deportations – discontinuity of traditions – the threat of annihilation as a result of nuclear explosion). Metaphors of organicism pathology (an ill body, attacked by “foreign” influences, hence endangered) supported the opposition between mindful us/insensate them. The landscape was seen as deprived of its spiritual-symbolic meaning, functioning more as a memory of destruction. The calls for “the man’s spiritual ecology” linked the need to clean out pollutants and waste with the nation’s need for purification: renouncing lies and establishing historical truth.

The manifested need to create a national calendar marks collective memory’s performative nature, the aim to once again relive a past event by canonising it and establishing it as today’s moral sentiment as well as imperative. The rhetoric
of commemorating the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (symbolising the beginning of injustices as a result of which the Lithuanians languished spiritually, ecologically and economically) used the schematic narrative template that portrayed the nation protractedly suffering, trampled by foreign powers and yet reviving. The aim to bring the national attributes (the national flag) to public spaces reflects collective memory's ability to represent past embodied in historical facts and the symbolism of commemoration, repeating the urge to “recover history” – unique nation's experience pointing to the aspirations and tradition of sovereignty.

Laima Venclauskienė

KOLEKTYVINĖ ATMINTIS: PRAEITIES REPREZENTACIJŲ PASIRINKTYS IR POBŪDIS SĄJŪDŽIO ŽINIOSE 1988–1989 METAIS


Sovietinis režimas labai stengėsi iš naujo interpretuoti praeitį ir suformuoti dirbtinę atmintį, kad radikaliai suprastintų institucionalizotą ir individualiąjį atmintį. Todėl vienas iš Sąjūdžio tikslų buvo užpildyti baltašias istorijos dėmes, pirmiausia paviešinant slaptuosius Molotovo-Ribbentropo paktos protokolus. „Istorijos susigržinimas“ ir „atgauta (tautinė) atmintis“ reiškė tautos patirtų kančių (kaip antai, tremties prisiminimų) eksponavimą ir pabrėžimą, kas, savo ruožtu, lėmė vienodavimą ir „konkursojantį martirologiją“, taip pat sovietmečio, kaip nuolatinio teroro, priespaudos ir melo, įvaizdžio formavimą.

„Sąjūdžio žiniose“ gausu sovietų sąjungos kaip (blogio) imperijos (tautų skerdyklos), kuriai būdingi kolonijiniai kėslai ir vergystė, gretinimo su carine imperija (tautų kalėjimu) ir baudžiavine santvarka. Galime pastebėti atvirkštinės kultūrinės kolonizacijos išraiškas kolonijos (Lietuva) ir sovietinės metropolijos opozicijoje. Suprastinimas kaip toks išlaikomas ir nusakomas per svetimo ir(ar) išnaudotojiškumo santykį, žeminantį imperinį požiūrį ir abejingumą tautos likimui.


Istorija (istorinis teisingumas) buvo sugrąžinta į Lietuvos miestų gatves per masinius renginius, o ekologinės problemas glaudžiai siejamos su tautos lemtingu ir ateitim: nors tremimai baigėsi, išgyvenusieji yra nuodijami nuniokotojo jų pačių žemėje, virš kurios pakibusi atominės katastrofos – ekologinio genocido – grėsmė. Lietuvos gamta, teigta, turi būti išvalyta nuo teršalų, kaip kad „susigržinama“ istorija ir atmintis privalėjo būti apvalytos nuo melo.

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RAKTĄŽODŽIAI: kolektyvinė atmintis, praeities reprezentacijos, baltosios istorijos dėmės, Sąjūdis, „Sąjūdžio žinios“.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


