



ARHĪVI

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MEMORY OF A NATION AND ARCHIVES. LITHUANIAN CASE

Review of the historical contexts, specific interpretation of memory of nations or individuals, and the role of the archivists and the archives are discussed. The practice of commemoration of memorable days in the several past decades and certain projects implemented by the Lithuanian State Archives will be overviewed as well. Other part of the presentation is dedicated to governmental policy on national memory and legislation initiatives drafting the Law on National Historical Memory, discussions on commemoration of remembrance days, formation of the National Memory Board. What should be the role and responsibility of an archivist for preserving our memory?

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Keywords: Lithuanian State Archives, governmental policy on national memory, remembrance days, role and responsibility of archivists.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me start this presentation with some historical perspective, continue with an overview of current archival projects, and provide information on the recent legislative initiatives on historical memory in Lithuania.

Documents most distinctly record and render national memory, signify the establishment of the state or loss of its independence as well as other events fateful for the society. Many of these documents, besides serving the primary purpose, also acquire cultural and historical, i.e. monumental significance.

From the historical perspective of the end of the 20th century, it is assumed that revolutions of 1989–1991 (in the Baltic States, these processes have acquired a commonly used name of “singing revolutions”) altered the map of Europe once again and led to a new assessment of nations’ memory.

During the period of national revival in the Baltic States in the late 1990s, we heard the slogan “Give the people their history back!”. The years that followed raised a lot of issues for discussions, and inevitably an important role in these processes was assigned to research of primary sources of modern history which have been accumulated and preserved in archives. Those primary sources became accessible to researchers, which was impossible previously due to political reasons.

The joint event – the Baltic Way – crowned the national liberation movement of the Baltic States. It was a peaceful rally in all three Baltic States. On 23 August 1989, more than a million people joined hands to create a 600 km long human chain from Tallinn to Vilnius, crossing Riga on its way, and jointly demanded recognition of the secret clauses of one of the Soviet–Nazi secret diplomacy document – Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact.

The Baltic Way brought important changes to the history of the Baltic nations. This was achieved through social unity and through joint commitment and confidence manifested in every individual in pursuing the common goal. This impressive act of non-violent protest and solidarity was a living example of the culture of peace, opening up access to information and leading to acknowledgement of the secret treaty and its hideous consequences for the whole world.

Twenty years after the Baltic Way, the direct link between archives and commemoration of these events has been brought to life: In 2009, the documentary heritage of the Baltic Way was added to UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.

The documentary heritage of the Baltic Way includes the most representative documents of the Baltic Way which are preserved in memory institutions of all Baltic States. A total of 23 unique documents (not only written documents but also audio, video (e.g. TV broadcasts, newsreel “Lietuvos kronika” (Lithuanian Chronicle), and a photo collection from the Lithuanian Central State Archives represent Lithuania’s people in the Baltic Way.

Tautas manifestācija
“Baltijas ceļš”.
Cilvēku ķēde ceļa
posmā Iecava –
Bauska.
1989.gada 23.augusts. Jura Zēberga
foto. LNA LVKFFDA
1. f., 15404-I



Historical memory vs individual memory

The above discussed episode of the Baltic Way suggests that concern about historical memory of the nation should not be restricted to the documentation of state events. Documents are significant not for the information recorded but for their historical context.

Speaking about archives and national memory in contemporary terms, it is essential to dissociate from the “ethnocentric” approach to history. We are fully aware of the fact that the historical memory concept prevailing in Europe does not encourage a separate state to focus on the “local” evaluation of events.

It should be mentioned that the living histories and experiences of individuals, families or communities recorded in a variety of ways should be treated as the smallest parts of collective memory mosaic, and it becomes an essential component of historical perpetuation carried out by archives and other memory institutions. Individual memory forms a part of a larger framework of collective memory and cultural tools, which are used in commemorations and public presentations.

Archives and commemoration of memorable days

It is obvious that archives, in cooperation with their partners, are pretending to take the lead in the commemoration of significant events and memorable days as well as presentation of documentary evidence of historical memory to the public.

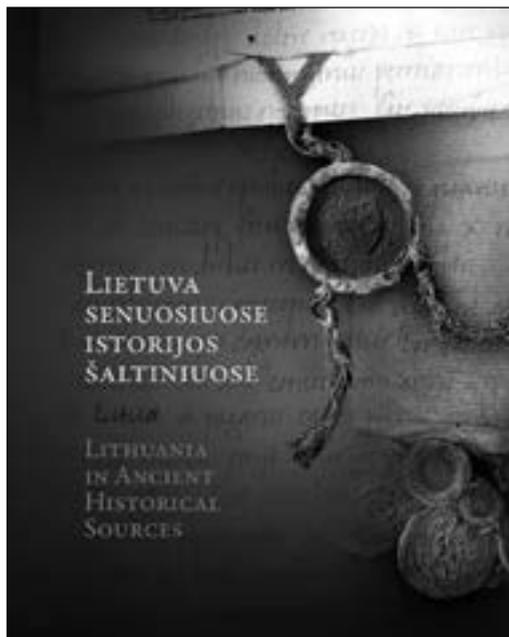
Joint international exhibitions of archival documents and other similar events of the recent years serve as traditional examples of such exposure to the public. In 2009, Lithuania celebrated the Millennium, one of the projects of the programme was the biggest ever exhibition of archival documents “Lithuania in Ancient Historical Sources”. The central showpiece of this exhibition was Annals of Quedlinburg with the first recording of Lithuania’s name – “Litua”. This exhibition contained about 200 unique documents gathered in one place from 9 countries and 26 institutions.

Another example of traditional archival events – bilateral exchange exhibitions dedicated to commemorative important events. In September 2015, exhibition “Srebrenica Inferno” prepared by the Archives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was introduced in Lithuania attracting great attention among Lithuanians. Each year colleagues from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina organise an event abroad to tell a documented story about the horrors of genocide when Serb troops, in just a few days, killed more than 8 thousand Bosniaks of Srebrenica. This year Lithuanian archives present poster exhibition “Struggle for Freedom. History of Losses“, dedicated to 14 June, this day in the Baltic States is commemorated as the Day of Mourning and Hope. In 1941, the Stalinist-Communist regime launched massive deportations to Siberia. This exhibition was a small fraction of all remembrance events in Lithuania.

Once again retuning back to the Baltic Way, just two years ago, when the 25th anniversary was celebrated, not only several traditional international/regional exhibitions were organised, but what is more important, new social projects were initiated sharing private memory and archives on the Internet – Facebook and other social networks.

In 2018, Lithuania is going to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Restoration of the Modern Lithuanian State – the preparatory work for commemoration of this day is already in process, and archives have been assigned an important an interactive task concerning this event.

Poster for millenium exhibition of archival documents “Lithuania in Ancient Historical Sources” in 2009.



Poster of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Archives:
“Srebrenica Inferno” in Lithuania, 2015

Which memorable days to commemorate and how to commemorate them?

During the recent decades after Lithuania regained its independence, new traditions were formed for commemoration.

It is commonly recognised that the legal basis of a state's existence is formed by the legal acts of the country. Such documents bear a constitutional significance and are regarded as symbols of statehood. I will take the risk to say that Lithuania is a unique European state, since it celebrates as many as three state (independence) days. However, just one original document confirming the declaration of state is preserved in our state archives. Due to various historical circumstances, but mainly because of the loss of independence and displacement of archives, Lithuania does not possess all constitutional documents of the primary importance, some of them are stored in the archives of neighbouring states or even lost.

July 6 – the Statehood Day – dedicated to commemorate the coronation of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Mindaugas in 1253 as the first and only King of Lithuania.

There are no records in the Lithuanian archives with direct indication to this day, and historians have been engaged into research of the archives of Germany, Vatican, and Poland.

February 16 – the Day of Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania. The Act of Independence adopted by the Council of Lithuania on 16 February 1918, proclaiming the restoration of an independent State of Lithuania, governed by democratic principles, and the capital Vilnius. The Act was signed by all twenty representatives, chaired by Dr. Jonas Basanavičius. Two copies of the Act were signed: the original and the duplicate. The original was entrusted to Dr. Basanavičius for safeguard and protection. The original has been never published or used in any public source of information. No one knows how the document itself looked, what size it was. After Dr. Basanavičius' death his personal archives of books and manuscripts, which are kept in the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Institute in Vilnius, have been investigated for the document numerous times, but the Act has never been found. The duplicate was used in day-to-day business and was stored in the President's archives until 15 June 1940, the day when Lithuania lost its independence. Then the document

disappeared. Neither the original nor the duplicate has been located; historians, archivists, and adventurers continue to hunt for them.

March 11 – Day of Re-establishment of Lithuania's Independence. On 11 March 1990, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Act on the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania which proclaimed the end of the period of occupation by a foreign government and the beginning of a new era of statehood. The above mentioned document – the Act on the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania – is preserved in our state archives.

History and memory – the Soviet case

National memory is inevitably a process, not a thing. Documents – like other cultural artefacts – gain their significance and value through the assessment carried out by researchers.

Perpetuation of the memory of the victims of the Soviet period is worth special mentioning, as the archives have played an important role in the process of collecting and evaluating information about the persons who suffered from the Soviet regime. Through private letters and photos from deportation and imprisonment places history gets personal, and vice versa, the clear division between public and private, between personal and collective history disappears.

During Nazi and Soviet occupations, the losses (deportations, executions, including almost 200 000 Holocaust victims and forced emigration) of the population of Lithuania amounted up to 1 million people or 30 percent of the total number of the country's population. For more that 20 years, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania have been carrying out investigation with reference to the documents issued by the Archives and developing the database of the victims. At present, the database contains more than 200 000 records (names).

Lithuanian Special Archives preserve a unique collection of documents of the Lithuanian anti-Soviet partisan movement of 1944–1953, including the Declaration of Liberation Movement of Lithuania. Symbolically, it was announced on 16 February 1949. The Declaration acknowledged the partisan leadership as the supreme legal power in Lithuania, with the purpose to restore an independent and democratic Republic of Lithuania.

The current building of the Lithuanian Special Archives shared with the Museum of Genocide Victims boasts unique historical background. The



Building of Lithuanian Special Archives and Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, Lithuania. Photo from official website of Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania

building itself is a historical monument – it used to be the KGB headquarters. The basement walls of the building immortalised the names of the victims as they contain inscriptions of the names of the persons who were imprisoned and killed here.

Few years ago, visitors of the website “TripAdvisor” voted the Museum of Genocide Victims as the second most-visited place in Vilnius. It is worth mentioning that the events organised by the Lithuanian Special Archives also attract a lot of visitors.

Legal regulation of memorable days

Under the current Law on Memorable Days there 60 memorable days in Lithuania. Besides that, every year the Parliament announces a special commemorative year.

For example, year 2015 was declared by Parliament and UNESCO as a Year for Commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Michał Kleofas

Ogiński, who was a well-known composer in Europe, highly regarded for his polonaises. The request, submitted to the UNESCO by three countries – Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland – is a remarkable example of close international cooperation in order to preserve a shared cultural heritage, and shows how a common history can be explored in the spirit of mutual understanding and conciliation.

This year nationally is declared as the year of Kazys Grinius (President, Prime Minister, Member of the Constituent Assembly, doctor and publicist) celebrating his 150th birth anniversary. But these commemorations are just an example of the large number of events in our small country.

However, the number of memorable days and the organisation of the official commemorations from year to year still looks somewhat chaotic.

Several stages of Lithuanian governmental policy on national memory and commemoration could be distinguished:

The first stage (1988–1999) saw ardent parliamentary discussions about commemoration and historical studies of various events, legislation concerning official days of commemoration (the Holocaust, Soviet deportations, etc). There was, however, no systematic, lasting, and explicit governmental programme towards the governance of the past. Events were decided in case by case manner.

The second stage (1999–2012) could be described as a period of certain systematisation and institutionalisation of the governance of the past. A range of state cultural policy legislation was initiated, developed, and approved. The celebration of the Millenium of Lithuania, in 2009, was an important milestone in the evolution of the memory-oriented mentality of governance.

The last stage – discussions about the new Law on National Historical Memory (2012–2016?). In spring 2012, the Lithuanian Parliament adopted a plan of the means to “foster historical memory”. Several members of the Seimas (Parliament) belonging to different political groups registered the Draft Law on National Historical Memory.

This document includes the list of state holidays and stipulates the procedure of commemoration of anniversaries of events of historical significance. The Draft Law also defines the object of historical memory of the nation, as well as the formation and implementation of the state policy aimed at remembrance of our historical heritage.

The initiators claim in the Explanatory Note that “the unanimous perception of the common historical past is an objective element of the existence of a nation”. According to them, the Draft Law was initiated due to a lack of clear approach to the preservation of historical memory which should be defined by the law.

The principles of the definition of memorable days are also introduced in this Law. The idea is to commemorate the anniversaries of memorable state events starting with their 20th anniversary and up to their 100th anniversary every 10 years, while after their 100th anniversary the commemoration period would be every 25 years. The anniversaries of prominent people who have earned nation-wide respect should be celebrated every 25 years, and after their 100th anniversary – every 50 years.

The Draft also proposes the formation of the National Memory Board. The members of the Board *ex officio* should be persons (9) in the following positions: Chancellor of the Seimas, Chancellor of the Office of the President, Chancellor of the Office of the Prime Minister, Chairperson of the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO, Head of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Chief Archivist of Lithuania, Director General of Lithuanian Radio and Television, Chairperson of the Council for the Protection of Ethnic Culture, and Chairperson of the Council of Ethnic Communities.

Other 22 representatives to the Board are delegated for the term of five years by science and study institutions (such as the Academy of Sciences of Lithuania, the Lithuanian University Rectors’ Conference) and non-governmental organisations and associations (Lithuanian Independence Act signatories club, Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees organisations, the Movement of Lithuania, Lithuanian Municipal Association, Lithuanian Museum Association, Association of Artists, Lithuanian Writers’ Union, the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference, the Catholic Academy of Sciences, Lithuanian Youth Organisations Council, patriotic youth rally “Pro Patria”).

This legislation initiative raised many debates between historians and politicians.

During recent years, the third draft (version) of the Law has been registered. In April 2015, during the plenary reading, this version of the Law was rejected once again and returned to the initiators of improvements. It is worth to underline that since 2012 when the first draft was registered, some suggestions to extend the scope and list of commemorated memorial days were reported.

I personally believe that in the modern society there is no risk that a single and narrow version of the history would be formed, which would be compulsory in the country.

It was presumed in the draft law that the National Memory Board, which ruminates and forms the directions of historical remembrance, will be composed also of the representatives from the various communities. Nevertheless, all the time the way of cooperation of the Board and non-governmental institutions should be stated.

As regards the final decision it should be motioned that the draft is still pending. In autumn 2016 we will have new parliamentary elections and this question will be discussed (or not) by the new elected Parliament.

The role of an archivist in the commemoration

Caring for archives has become a national responsibility, managed by a national archival system. Modern approach to archival science is not only based on the concept of provenance, but recognizes the historicity of an archive.

We all realise that archives are not the gift of one generation of archivists to another. According to Professor Eric Ketelaar, archivists should be vigilant and ensure that appropriation of archives by a particular group or for a particular cause would not endanger the integrity of the archives and the rights of other users, at present and in the future. Archivists are the stewards maintaining, protecting, and enabling access to the documents on behalf of our societies.

Assigning meanings and values to archives is a political act, an act of memory politics. The archivist cannot pretend to be outside the politics of national memory.

Thank you for your attention!

Ramojs Kraujelis

VALSTS ATMIŅA UN ARHĪVI. LIETUVAS PIEREDZE

Raksts ir Lietuvas galvenā arhivista Lietuvas arhīvu dienesta vadītāja Ramoja Kraujeļa ziņojums Starptautiskajā Arhīvu padomes kongresā.

No 2016. gada 5. līdz 10. septembrim Seulā Dienvidkorejā notika Starptautiskās Arhīvu padomes kongress, kas ir nozīmīgākais starptautiskās arhīvu un dokumentu pārvaldības kopienas notikums visā pasaulē. Kongresa tēma bija “Arhīvi, harmonija, draudzība kultūras daudzveidības, taisnīguma un sadarbības nodrošināšanai globalizētajā pasaulē” (*Archives, Harmony and Friendship: ensuring cultural sensitivity, justice and cooperation in a globalised world*). Šis kongress bija iezīmīgs ar vērienu un globālo ietekmi. Tajā piedalījās 2049 dalībnieki no 114 valstīm, tika nolasīti 256 ziņojumi, ko bija sagatavojuši 58 valstu *pārstāvji, notika semināri, plakātu sesijas (poster sessions)*, diskusijas, Starptautiskās arhīvu padomes darba grupu sanāksmes. Kongresa laikā bija apskatāma Dienvidkorejas arhīvu dokumentu izstāde, kā arī publiskā arhīvu sektora un arhīvu tehnoloģiju un industrijas ekspozīcija nozares izstādes ietvaros. Ieskatu korejiešu kultūras un sadzīves tradīcijās varēja gūt plašajā korejiešu kultūras pieredzes zonā.

Kongresa ziņojumi, semināri un diskusijas aptvēra šādas galvenās tēmas. **Dokumentu pārvaldība digitālajā ērā** – kā nodrošināt (kas digitālajā vidē ir vēl sarežģītāk nekā analogajā) elektronisko dokumentu drošību, pieejamību, autentiskumu un to integritātes saglabāšanu neatkarīgi no politiskajiem, sociālajiem vai biznesa kontekstiem, kuros tie izveidoti, pārvaldīti un izmantoti? Kā pārvarēt pretrunu starp sabiedrības nepieciešamību pēc lielāka informācijas daudzuma tiešsaistē un pieaugošajiem kiberuzbrukumu draudiem un stingrāka personas datu aizsardzības regulējuma? Kāda ir arhīvu loma digitālajā ērā?

Sadarbība visplašākajā nozīmē – starp arhīviem, arhīvu kopienām, atmiņas institūcijām u.c.

Dokumentu un arhīvu izmantošana vēsturiskā taisnīguma atjaunošanā, tiesību aizstāvībā un samierināšanās procesos – arhīvu loma cilvēktiesību aizskārumu, diskriminācijas, noziegumu pret cilvēci, militāro konfliktu, kriminālo noziegumu dokumentēšanā un pierādīšanā, taisnīguma atjaunošanā un izlīguma panākšanā. Taisnīgums un vēsturiskais izlīgums ir atkarīgs no brīvas pieejas

ticamiem dokumentiem, tāpat kā uzticamiem un caurspīdīgiem mehānismiem to radīšanā, glabāšanā un izmantošanā.

Harmonija un draudzība globālajā arhīvu pasaulē – digitālajā pasaulē informācija ir pieejama, neņemot vērā politiskās robežas. Kāda ir arhīvu nākotne globālās komercijas, starptautisku regulējumu un pārrobežu institūciju pasaulē? Kā pārvarēt atšķirīgo normatīvo regulējumu informācijas pieejamības ierobežojumiem dažādās valstīs?

Daudzveidība un harmonija starp arhīvu kultūrām un sabiedrībām – arhīvu atbildība visu sabiedrību veidojošo kopienu vēsturisko liecību saglabāšanā un to identitātes nodrošināšanā. Vai valsts arhīviem ir jārūpējas par pamatiedzīvotāju, nacionālo minoritāšu, imigrantu kopienu arhīviem?

Arhīvi un dokumentu pārvaldība Dienvidkorejā.

Starptautiskās Arhīvu padomes paveiktais 2012.–2016. gadā – padomes veidoto nozaru, ekspertu un darba grupu prezentācijas.

Kongresā ar ziņojumu “Valsts atmiņa un arhīvi. Lietuvas pieredze” uzstājās arī Lietuvas galvenais arhivists Lietuvas arhīvu dienesta vadītājs Ramojs Kraujelis.

Savā ziņojumā viņš sniedza ieskatu Lietuvas un Lietuvas arhīvu pieredzē valstij nozīmīgo vēsturisko datumu un notikumu pieminēšanā, valsts atmiņas veidošanā. Pēdējās desmitgadēs Lietuvas arhīvi ir realizējuši vairākus nozīmīgus projektus, kas veltīti lietuviešu nācijai iezīmīgiem notikumiem, kas tika atspoguļoti ziņojumā. Ziņojumā aplūkota arī Lietuvas politika nācijas kolektīvās atmiņas veidošanā, likumdošanas iniciatīvas svētku un atceres dienu noteikšanā, sabiedriskajā telpā notikušās diskusijas par sociālo atmiņu un nācijas identitāti. Ziņojumu caurvija jautājums par arhīvistu lomu un atbildību dokumentārā mantojuma saglabāšanā un valsts atmiņas saglabāšanā.

Atslēgvārdi: Lietuvas valsts arhīvi, valsts politika nācijas (sociālās) atmiņas veidošanā, atceres dienas, arhīvistu loma un atbildība.

Iesniegts 2016. gada 7. decembrī