

## Projects and Limits of Memory Engineering: A Case of Lithuanian Partisan War

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**Abstract :** The memory of the Lithuanian partisan war (1944-1953) underwent extremely dramatic transformations. During this war, the image of the resistance and a partisan was one of the key elements of Lithuanian identity. Its importance is evidenced by the extremely large legacy of songs about partisans, no other topic has collected so much folklore in Lithuania. In the Soviet years, this resistance was practically forced to be forgotten. Terror and Soviet laws have forced people to stop talking about the events, even in the family circle. In addition, the Soviets created their own propaganda story, reinterpreting the Lithuanian partisan war, presenting partisans as bandits who brutally tortured and murdered locals. But even in the Soviet years, the memory could neither be completely suppressed, nor completely transformed into wishful shape. The analysis of fiction and cinema shows that the traumatic memory of real events rushed to the surface, thus transforming the very propagandistic narrative. After the restoration of the Republic of Lithuania in 1990, the Lithuanian partisan war was gradually returned to the central place of Lithuanian history. After 2014 the nationalist heroic narrative about Lithuanian partisans became the central narrative of modern Lithuanian history. Nevertheless, interviews I conducted in Lithuanian villages reveal that the memory of local communities and families preserves quite different experiences that do not fit into neither the Soviet narrative nor the heroic one. Such experiences include, for example, partisan violence against local families. This paper is about the efforts of two political ideologies (the Soviet and the Lithuanian patriotic) to use the history of the Lithuanian partisans for their own needs, and the attempts of small communities (mostly families) to resist these efforts. The research reveals that family memory, even when opposed to aggressive state memory policies, can preserve counter-narratives by exploiting unexpected objects beyond the control of the state, such as nature and wildlife. Basically, the paper analyses the limits of the instrumentalization of memory, even by extremely aggressive political regimes.

**Keywords :** collective memory, post-memory, violence, military conflict, family memory

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