THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KRAŽIAI MASSACRE IN LITHUANIA AND POLAND¹

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ABSTRACT The Imperial Russian authorities closed the Benedictine convent church in Kražiai in 1893 and put down the Catholic community’s opposition with such brutality that the event came to be known as the Kražiai massacre. Soon after the events in Kražiai, a conflict broke out between Lithuanians and Poles over the division of the symbolic capital associated with the Kražiai massacre, as both sides argued over their respective merits in defending the church. On the eve of the First World War, the Kražiai massacre had become a place of memory for Lithuanians and Poles alike.

This article presents an analysis of how the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre was commemorated in Lithuania and in Poland in 1933. I try to answer the following questions: what prompted the need to commemorate the anniversary of this event, what meanings accompanied the commemoration of the event in Lithuania and Poland, and did the political elites of these countries try to exploit the Kražiai massacre’s anniversary to reduce political tensions between Lithuania and Poland due to the absence of diplomatic relations between these countries at the time.

KEYWORDS: Kražiai massacre, place of memory, collective memory, history policy, Vilnius, Lithuanian nationalism.

In carrying out its Russification policy in Lithuania in the 19th century, the Imperial Russian government developed a network of Orthodox parishes, built Orthodox churches, and simultaneously sought to reduce the number of Catholic churches. In the Diocese of Samogitia, the government closed almost 150 Catholic monasteries and convents, and their closure was often accompanied by the closing of the monastery or convent church as well. Local Catholics opposed the government’s attempts to close their churches in five

¹This project received funding from the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT), agreement No S-MIP-20-7.
Lithuanian parishes (Dūkštas, Šešuoliai, Tytuvėnai, Kęstaičiai and Kražiai). The opposition demonstrated by Catholics to the tsarist government’s goal of closing the Benedictine convent church in Kražiai in 1893 generated the greatest response. The authorities suppressed the opposition of peaceful Catholics by using physical force, and the church’s defenders were put on trial in Vilnius in 1894. Due to the exceptionally brutal suppression of the faithful community’s opposition, this event came to be known as the Kražiai massacre.

It was not just the Lithuanian and Polish press published outside the Russian Empire that documented the event: it was covered broadly by the press all round the world. In their accounts of the events in Kražai, the Polish periodical press accentuated the role of the Poles: it was even claimed that those who died were Poles defending their language and their faith. The explanation that dominated in the Polish press was that Poles and Lithuanians defended the church in unison, under the leadership of the Polish szlachta, while the church’s defenders were portrayed as being loyal to the political tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The attempts of the Polish press to convey the events in Kražiai, while not omitting the participation of Lithuanians, but at least minimising their role, aroused the dissatisfaction of the Lithuanian national movement. In response, the Lithuanian press denied any role of the Poles in the events in Kražiai, and were even angered by Polish activists’ claims on the symbolic capital of the events. When Lithuanians in the United States organised protest rallies, and the Polish press identified these demonstrations as Polish-Lithuanian demonstrations, the Lithuanian press rebuked the Poles for exploiting the spilt blood of innocent Lithuanians. In this way, soon after the events in Kražiai, a conflict erupted between Lithuanians and Poles over the division of the symbolic capital associated with the Kražiai massacre. On the eve of the First World War, the Kražiai massacre had become, for Lithuanians

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and Poles alike, a place of memory, as phrased by Pierre Nora, a cultural symbol arousing collective associations and carrying the power of an image of the collective memory.⁴

A number of historians have drawn attention to the Kražiai massacre. A study dedicated to the event was published in 1933 by a priest in the Kaunas archdiocese, Petras Veblaitis⁵; he intended to write a monograph on the topic, but it was never completed. The historian Leonas Mulevičius planned to prepare an extensive study about the event; however, he too did not have time to realise his intentions. After his death, a collection of sources he had compiled alone about the defence of the Kražiai church was published in 1993.⁶ Articles devoted to the Kražiai massacre have been published by Nerijus Udrėnas,⁷ Przemysław Dąbrowski and Ryšard Gaidis,⁸ and Darius Staliūnas.⁹ In these publications, the Kražiai massacre is viewed as an event that revealed clearly the goals of the Russian Empire’s confessional policy (to make the Lithuanian population Orthodox believers and Russians in an ethnocultural sense), or the significance of the events to the Lithuanian national movement is analysed. Only an article by Dangiras Mačiulis¹⁰ deals with the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory. However, this article is limited to research into the functioning of the image of the Kražiai massacre in the culture of memory of the Republic of Lithuania (1918–1940), with no attempt at explaining how this memory image functioned in the Polish culture of memory at the

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time. We know that the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre was marked in 1933 in places other than just Lithuania and Poland.

Lithuanian-Polish relations in the interwar years in the 20th century were marked by antagonism: there were no diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Poland in the spring of 1938. The reason for this dispute was the question which state Vilnius rightfully belonged to. The Lithuanians considered the city, then part of Poland, as their capital, and sought to reclaim it. Lithuanians and Poles, their diplomatic relations non-existent, both considered the Kražiai massacre as their place of memory, and marked the 40th anniversary of the defence of the Kražiai church in 1933. Places of memory whose symbolic capital is simultaneously claimed by several national communities can serve both to bring them closer and to deepen conflicts between them: this depends on whether there is an agreed division of symbolic capital. In 1923, the 30th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre passed almost unnoticed, while the 40th anniversary was marked extensively. In this article, I try to answer the following questions: what prompted the need to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the event (if the earlier anniversary was almost forgotten), what meanings accompanied the commemoration of the event in Lithuania and Poland, who initiated its commemoration in both countries, and did the political elites of these countries try to exploit the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre in order to reduce political tensions between Lithuania and Poland?

The organisation of the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre in Lithuania and Poland in 1933 unfolded in parallel, while the ideas and initiatives of the organisers in one country influenced the ideas of the organisers in the other: an idea in one country would be echoed or followed in the other. Thus, the decision was made to review the evolution of the commemoration campaigns by following the chronological order of events. The main sources for this research were the periodical press in Lithuania and Poland, and archival material, primarily documents of the Lithuanian Union for the Liberation of Vilnius, the first organisation to become actively engaged in the event’s commemoration.
Commemorative initiatives

The image of the Kražiai massacre was not particularly popular in interwar Poland, and was often remembered only as an illustration in narratives about the religious and national persecution experienced by Poles following the demise of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, when part of the Polish nation ended up under Prussian or Russian rule. Kražiai was usually mentioned only along with other places that symbolised the martyrdom of the Polish nation and its heroism in defending its religious and national identity. The story of the defence of the Kražiai church was recalled mostly as an example for comparison when describing the tsarist government’s use of physical force to close Uniate churches in the Podlasie region, and the persecution of Polish Catholic school pupils in Prussia. One gets the impression that the interwar Polish memory about the defence of the church in Kražiai was fading away, as memories of the event were being overshadowed by other heroic narratives about the challenges faced by the Polish nation. However, this image remained important to Poles of the generation that witnessed (if not directly) the Kražiai massacre, and the ideal of fostering the restoration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Also, it was important to those who approved of Józef Piłsudski’s vision of a federal Polish state. The Straż Kresowa organisation, founded in 1918, was meant to help implement this vision of statehood. Its task was to link the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Second Polish Republic. In addition to the other goals it pursued, this association highlighted what both Poles and Lithuanians considered their shared places of memory, so it is no surprise that a story was published in its weekly Ziemia Wileńska newspaper in 1920 by the Polish writer and public activist Helena Romer about the defence of the Kražiai church. In this story, the author put to her readers

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13 H. Romer, ‘Było to w Krożach’, in: Ziemia Wileńska, 11 January, No 2 (1920); 18 January, No 3 (1920); 1 February, No 5 (1920); 8 February, No 6 (1920).
the idea that perfect concord existed between the Poles and the
Lithuanians defending the Kražiai church, and that both nations
then lived for the shared goal of restoring the Polish-Lithuanian
Commonwealth, and that this idyll had only later been crushed
by the Lithuanian national movement, with its separatist ideas
of seeing a Lithuanian national state. The Straż Kresowa weekly
presented the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory that could
remind Poles and Lithuanians of their joint struggle in the past,
and in this way again unite both nations.

Let us recall that in the story of the defence of the Kražiai
church, Vilnius was the city in which the church’s defenders were
put on trial in 1894. During this court case, Polish public activists
in Vilnius organised broad support for the defenders of the church
who were on trial, and this display of concern had the effect of
consolidating the Polish community in Vilnius. That is why in
1933 the older generation of Vilnius inhabitants that had been
involved in organising support for the defenders of the church
felt that they had been among the defenders in Kražiai, and thus
considered the Kražiai massacre their place of memory as well.
It is not surprising then that the approaching anniversary of the
Kražiai massacre was being remembered.

In January 1933, the board of the Society for the Protection
of Vilnius (Koło Miłośników Wilna) held a discussion about what
historic anniversaries should be celebrated in Vilnius. During
these discussions, it was agreed that anniversaries of important
dates in the lives of Stephen Bathory and Leon Sapieha should
be commemorated, along with the 70th anniversary of the 1863
uprising: on this occasion, many memorial plaques were to be
unveiled on the city’s churches in memory of specific rebels.
The decision was also made to mark the 40th anniversary of the
Kražiai massacre by unveiling a memorial plaque in the grand
conference hall of the Vilnius voivodeship, which was where the
trial of the defenders of the Kražiai church had taken place. A
brochure featuring popular content was to be published as well,
which would discuss the significance of the Kražiai massacre.¹⁴

The Committee for the Commemoration of Great Anniversaries in Vilnius soon began to implement the recommendations offered during this discussion. At a meeting of the committee held on 18 May 1933, it was announced that a plaque memorialising the Kražiai massacre was already being made.\textsuperscript{15}

In July 1933, Vilnius Radio audiences heard a narrative about the defence of the Kražiai church prepared by the Polonist Władysław Arcimowicz to mark the occasion of the Kražiai massacre.\textsuperscript{16} From that summer, articles about the commemoration of the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre started to appear in the Polish press. In these articles, it was claimed that the Kražiai church was defended in unison by Poles and Lithuanians fighting to defend their Catholic faith and their ideal of a union, the aspiration to restore the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, while those defending the church had continued the struggle of the 1863 rebels. The articles mentioned that before the mid-19th century, Kražiai had been an important centre for education in Samogitia (Žemaitija), highlighting it as a bastion of Polish culture.\textsuperscript{17} This reminder was meant to act as evidence of the presence of Poles in Kražiai, and their participation in the defence of the church. Arcimowicz asserted that in Poland, the story of the Kražiai massacre was always recalled with the same respect as other struggles for independence; however, memories of the event were said to be even more significant for residents of Vilnius, as it ‘reminded [them of] those recent times when Poles and Lithuanians, Vilnius and Kaunas, fought alongside each other for their common rights’.\textsuperscript{18}


A meeting of the Committee for the Commemoration of Great Anniversaries in Vilnius was held in the Vilnius voivodeship on 22 August 1933, when those who gathered discussed what important anniversaries should be marked in the city. They decided to organise commemorative events for the 400th anniversary of the birth of Stephen Bathory, the 300th anniversary of the death of Leon Sapieha, and the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre. Zygmunt Nagrodzki, who was named in the press as a representative of the ‘Kražiai section’, presented a possible programme for marking the Kražiai massacre. He was a trader in Vilnius during the events in Kražiai, and one of the activists in Polish society who organised support in the city for the prosecuted defenders of the church. The meeting’s participants accepted the recommended programme, whose main feature was the ceremonial unveiling of a memorial plaque in the premises where the trial of the Kražiai church’s defenders had taken place, planned for November. Fast-forwarding slightly, note that due to technical difficulties, this ceremony was held in December.

On the eve of the First World War, the Kražiai massacre had already become a place of memory for Lithuanians, which is why the massacre’s 40th anniversary would most likely be marked, even if the 30th anniversary was hardly noticed. The first calls regarding the approaching 40th anniversary came from Polish-controlled Vilnius, which for Lithuanians acted as an extra prompt to remember and mark the event. In mid-July 1933, the editorial board of the Rytas Catholic newspaper wrote about the necessity of marking the 40th anniversary of the events in Kražiai, reminding readers that the Poles were preparing a ceremonial commemoration, and stressed that therefore the Lithuanians had to go to an even greater effort to honour the memory of those who fell at Kražiai. This reminder appeared in a daily newspaper published in Kaunas at the time when Lithuanians had already heard the news that a memorial plaque was to be unveiled in Vilnius in the premises where the defenders of the Kražiai church had been put on trial.

In the autumn of 1933, the Lithuanian press of various ideological streams marked the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre. If we look at the entirety of publications that appeared at the time, we can distinguish two of the main opposing attitudes towards the story of the defence of the Kražiai church, which can conditionally be called the Catholic and the nationalist narratives (the latter is associated with the political party that was in government at the time, the Lithuanian Nationalist Union). Two differently accented invitations to commemorate the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre reveal this difference in attitude: in a Catholic youth organisation’s urge published in the press to mark the anniversary, the defenders of the Kražiai church are referred to as Lithuanian saints comparable to the first Christian martyrs;\(^1\) whereas in the nationalist press, they are compared to the early volunteers in the struggles for Lithuanian independence of 1918, claiming that the battle begun in Kražiai ended 25 years later when Lithuania’s independence was finally won.\(^2\) The nationalist press also acknowledged that at the end of the 19th century, the religious and national identities of Lithuanians had intertwined, so those defending the Kražiai church were not only standing up for their right to profess the Catholic faith, but also for their Lithuanian identity; however, the nationalists accentuated the national resistance aspect of this struggle. In the discourse spread by the nationalists, the Kražiai massacre was named as one of the most significant events in the history of Lithuania’s national liberation.\(^3\)

The Kražiai massacre in the light of the liberation of Vilnius

Even though the nationalist press highlighted the importance of the Kražiai massacre, the official government did not show very much interest in the commemoration of the anniversary. Yet this does not mean that only the Catholic Church and its related social

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organisations, primarily the Catholic Action Centre (CAC, Katalikų veikimo centras), actually did something about its commemoration. The vacuum in the government initiative was filled by the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius (ULV), a social organisation not formally associated with the political regime, but one that shared Lithuanian nationalist ideals. Founded in 1925, one of the most popular social organisations in the country, it promoted the idea of reclaiming Vilnius. Let us recall that for almost the entire interwar period, Vilnius, Lithuania’s historic and actual capital, was a Polish city. Applying various practices, the ULV instilled the idea in Lithuanian society that Vilnius had to belong exclusively to Lithuania, while the goal of Lithuanian society should be to regain Vilnius, which, due to the alleged trickery of the Poles, had been torn from Lithuania’s core. ULV activists decided to use the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre for their propaganda needs. In this way, in the autumn of 1933, two organisational centres formed simultaneously in Kaunas dealing with the commemoration of the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre: the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius (ULV), and the Catholic Action Centre (CAC).

We shall focus our attention on the efforts of the ULV in organising the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre, as it was the first to take an initiative and was the most active thanks to the broad network of the organisation’s branches. On 29 October 1933, the ULV officially announced to the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kaunas J. Skvireckas that it was organising an event for the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre in Kražiai on 26 November. The organisers of the Kražiai memorial event also asked the metropolitan archbishop to mark the anniversary in diocesan churches on 26 November during religious services. On this note, the archbishop’s secretary entered the resolution of 2 November announcing that, regarding the commemoration of the anniversary, arrangements had already been made with the CAC, and that it would do everything to ensure that the anniversary would be suitably marked. No arrangements had in fact yet been

24 Letter from the Kaunas Vytautas the Great Branch of the ULV to the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kaunas (29 October 1933), Lithuanian State Historical Archives (LVIA), col. 1671, inv. 5, file 223, p. 3.
made with the CAC: the Lithuanian episcopate simply did not want the lead to fall into the hands of the ULV. Jumping ahead of events somewhat, we notice that the Lithuanian episcopate did not interfere with the organisational activities of the ULV, and the ULV and the CAC often worked together in organising anniversaries of the Kražiai massacre in various locations around the country. However, the ULV showed the most initiative: it collected information about the defenders of the Kražiai church who were still alive in order to give them state awards, and only after an appeal by the ULV did the Ministry of Education publish a circular addressed to school directors indicating that lessons were to be replaced by a commemoration of the Kražiai massacre on 22 November.

I mentioned that activists from the ULV decided to use the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre for their propaganda purposes. This demonstration of interest in the history of the Kražiai massacre by the ULV was shaped by the desire to use Polish society’s claims on the symbolic capital of the defenders of the Kražiai church in their own propaganda campaign. This was convenient for the ULV in spreading the propaganda image of the ‘sneaky Pole’: the one that stole the historic capital Vilnius from the Lithuanians, and was now intending to claim the credit for defending the Kražiai church. The ULV activists closely following the Polish press were among the first in Lithuania to learn about the Poles’ preparations to mark the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre in Vilnius. It is likely that the idea to memorialise the trial of the defenders of the Kražiai church that was born in the Polish community in Vilnius prompted the ULV to take the initiative into its own hands, and to organise a commemoration of the Kražiai massacre in Lithuania. We should note that the ULV was the first social organisation in


26 Letter from the Kaunas Vytautas the Great Branch of the ULV to the Minister of Education 2 November 1933, ibid., p. 189.

27 Ministry of Education circular dated 10 November 1933 to directors of higher and secondary schools, teacher training colleges and primary school inspectors, Lithuanian Central State Archives (LCVA), col. 391, inv. 8, file 205, p. 259.
Lithuania to speak publicly about the necessity of marking the Kražiai massacre, and sought to see that it was commemorated as widely as possible. In its appeal to the Bishop of Telšiai, the ULV openly admitted that as the Poles were also commemorating this event they considered some of the defenders of the church to have been Poles and were also taking credit for the church’s defence, so the Lithuanians should demonstrate that they valued the event more than the Poles, and would commemorate it more solemnly, ‘as it was ours alone’.  

Due to the terms of the propaganda discourse the ULV was spreading, according to which it was prepared to fight for the exclusive right of Lithuanians to the symbolic capital of the defence of the Kražiai church, the organisation did not need to search for its propaganda foe in Poland. By mid-October, articles devoted to the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre appeared in the Polish newspaper Dzień Kowieński published in Kaunas, in which the defence of the Kražiai church was described as a joint struggle by both Lithuanians and Poles, claiming that the Žemaitijan peasants and the Polish nobles defended the church together. The articles also tried to prove that the initiative and command of this struggle belonged to the intelligentsia, which meant the Poles, and that it only appeared as if the Žemaitijans were acting independently. This mention of the 40th anniversary of the defence of the Kražiai church in the Dzień Kowieński daily newspaper did not escape ULV activists, who, as they themselves admitted, had been following the Polish press and radio programmes about the Kražiai massacre since the beginning of 1933. A publication appeared in the Kaunas-based Polish newspaper stating that Poles too had been victims in defending the Kražiai church, and this became a pretext for a propaganda response from the ULV. In its weekly Mūsų Vilnius, a notice appeared that the church was defended ‘almost exclusively by peasants alone, Žemaitijans, real

28 Letter from the Kaunas Vytautas the Great Branch of the ULV to the Bishop of Telšiai J. Staugaitis, 24 October 1932, LVIA, col. 669, inv. 48, file 135, p. 5.
30 UVE, ‘Jak Kopernika wszystko nam ukradną ... ’ (Poles’ Claims on Kražiai), in: Mūsų Vilnius, No 32 (1933), pp. 441–442.
Lithuanians', that the Polish landlords had no significant influence on the Lithuanian peasants, and that this was 'a purely Žemaitijan peasant uprising against the Russians'. In brief, the Poles were accused of attempting without foundation to take the credit from the Lithuanians for the defence of the Kražiai church: in much the same way as they had 'stolen' Vilnius from the Lithuanians, they were now trying to assume the heroic credit for defending the church.\textsuperscript{31} The ULV press stated categorically that there had been no Poles present during the defence of the Kražiai church, and that their claims of also being among the ranks of the defenders at Kražiai was simply an example of the 'treachery of Warsaw'. The unmasking of this Polish 'treachery' in the magazine \textit{Mūsų Vilnius} concluded with a mobilising oath in the name of the liberation of Vilnius: 'As the Žemaitijans triumphed in Kražiai, so too shall all of Lithuania triumph in its liberated capital, Vilnius.'\textsuperscript{32}

Issues of the weekly \textit{Mūsų Vilnius} published in the second half of November 1933 invited readers to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre, and one cover even bore the rousing call: 'We are pleased with the struggle and victory in Kražiai: let us not fear the struggles for Vilnius, so that we may crown our triumph in the capital.' Leafing through the press from around the anniversary period, one gets the impression that no other social organisation devoted as much attention to the commemoration of the Kražiai massacre as the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius. The ULV activist Vincas Uždavinys arrived in Kražiai in mid-November 1933 to discuss the organisation of the future memorial event, and met in the presbytery Česlovas Mikolajūnas, the correspondent from the Polish daily newspaper \textit{Dzień Kowieński}, who was collecting material about the Kražiai massacre. He found the Polish journalist's interest in the events suspicious, believing that he was not actually collecting material for the Kaunas newspaper 'but for Warsaw, who wanted to use the Kražiai massacre for its own aims, to prove that this was an act of heroism by the Poles and not the Lithuanians'. These suspicions declared in the newspaper

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.

were followed up by the reasoning that the defence of the Kražiai church was ‘purely the work of Lithuanian peasants’ and stressed that ‘There were no Poles there. The Poles are falling over themselves in vain by declaring the extraordinarily good times of unity, there’s no need for them to send Poles such as Mikolajūnas to spy for them.’

Mikolajūnas’ report from Kražiai appeared in the Polish daily on the eve of the anniversary. Šukštas, a journalist who was staying at a manor in Kražiai and had spoken with the Kražiai priest and church defenders, formed a different opinion, reaching the conclusion that Poles and Lithuanians had defended the church together in unison.

The Polish press in interwar Lithuania devoted a lot of attention to the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre, with the daily Dzień Kowieński setting aside an entire issue for the occasion. Mikolajūnas had also arrived in Kražiai to collect material for this issue. Incidentally, less attention was shown that year to the Kražiai massacre than the universal commemoration in Poland of the 1863 uprising. The Polish community in Lithuania considered the Kražiai massacre and the 1863 uprising as their national community’s sites of memory, or, more precisely, sites of memory common to both Poles and Lithuanians. However, the importance of both these sites of memory was resoundingly equal: this was reflected in the Kaunas-based weekly Chata rodzinna in a public appeal published in the middle of 1933 encouraging people to collect museum-worthy objects pertaining to the nation’s past and testimonials of witnesses to historic events of national importance. The appeal stressed that everything relating to the two ‘national anniversaries’ being marked in 1933 was to be collected, of which one was more important, the 70th anniversary of the 1863 uprising; and the other, ‘smaller, affecting only a part of the country,

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however no less important to us all, was the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre.³⁶

The main commemoration of the Kražiai massacre was held in Kražiai itself on 26 November 1933. The memorial event began with Mass in the church said by the Bishop of Telšiai, J. Staugaitis, who was assisted by another bishop, M. Reinys. This was followed by a procession of participants to sites in the town related to the main events where speeches were given. Later that afternoon, a dinner was held in honour of the defenders of the Kražiai church, during which J. Giedraitis, the head of the Raseiniai district, granted medals of the Order of Vytautas the Great to 38 of the defenders of the Kražiai church on behalf of the president.³⁷ The memorial event in Kražiai was organised by an anniversary commemoration committee chaired by the Kražiai parish priest Canon V. To-

maševičius.³⁸ However, the ULV was also actively involved in the organisation of the event in Kražiai, not only helping to coordinate the programme, but also solving matters of a technical nature.³⁹

In the speeches given in Kražiai during the memorial event, besides the religious aspects being accentuated, the speakers also highlighted the necessity of following the example of the defenders of the Kražiai church in defending their religious and national identity, also appealing to national feelings and trying to instill ideas of Lithuanian nationalism. The ULV purposely exploited the memorial event as a mobilisation campaign oriented at the liberation of Vilnius. The history of the defence of the Kražiai church and the issue of the liberation of Vilnius were intertwined in the speeches of a number of speakers, as many were also members of the ULV. If during the part of the memorial event held in the church the Kražiai parish priest only metaphorically mentioned

³⁸ Letter from the Kražiai Branch to the Kaunas Vytautas the Great Branch of the ULV, 14 November 1933, ibid., col. 178, file 227, p. 171.
the goal of reclaiming Vilnius in his sermon,\(^{40}\) then the teacher P. Balčiūnas, who spoke on behalf of the anniversary commemoration committee, urged those who had gathered to take away some of the fortitude of the defenders of the Kražiai church when defending their own faith and Lithuanian identity, and to prepare for the liberation of the increasingly Polonised Vilnius region.\(^{41}\) Other speeches were also deeply infused with ideas about the campaign for the liberation of Vilnius. The ULV activist V. Uždavinys not only used this as an opportunity to make a speech inviting others to participate in the liberation of Vilnius, but after the memorial event was over he also gave a lecture about Vilnius in the gymnasium hall.\(^{42}\)

We have mentioned that branches of the ULV were the most active organisers of local events commemorating the Kražiai massacre. They would often organise these events in collaboration with other branches of Catholic and pro-government social organisations and parish communities. The commemoration was one of the anniversaries that almost all social organisations were involved in jointly, overlooking all divisions and friction in their political and world-views. This happened not only because groups with various world-views acknowledged the importance of the Kražiai massacre, but also because the organiser of the commemoration was the ULV. The organisation associated the Kražiai massacre with what was relevant to Lithuanian society at the time: the idea of liberating Vilnius and the persecution of Lithuanian Catholics in the Vilnius region. In this way, the ULV created a propaganda parable between the 19th-century defenders of the Kražiai church, who wanted to protect not just their place of prayer, but also their right to pray in their native language and preserve their Catholic-Lithuanian identity, and the Lithuanians living in Vilnius, who were fighting for Lithuanian language rights in churches in the Vilnius region, and often experienced restrictions to their national rights in daily life. To this end, two


\(^{42}\) V. Uždavinys, journal entries, LMAVB, col. 188, file 28, p. 409.
narratives were conveyed during the memorial events organised by the ULV: one about the defence of the Kražiai church and the tsarist government’s brutal treatment of the church’s defenders; and another about the national persecution of Lithuanians in Polish-ruled Vilnius. For example, during a memorial event for the Kražiai massacre organised by the Palinkuvė branch of the ULV, the first speaker talked about how the Kražiai church was defended, while the second explained that Lithuanians in the Vilnius region were being harrassed by Poles in the same way that they had been harrassed by the tsarist police in Kražiai.\textsuperscript{43} The topic of the Polish occupation of Lithuanian Vilnius was even reflected in evening artistic programmes commemorating the Kražiai massacre. This made it similar to the commemoration of 9 October, which was marked in interwar Lithuania as the Day of the Loss of Vilnius.

When the ULV publicly accused the Poles of trying to claim the honour rightfully belonging to the Lithuanians of defending the Kražiai church, a short but heated public debate unfolded. The Vilnius Polish press gave proof of the participation of the Poles, and expressed their regret over the fact that \textit{Mūsų Vilnius} was counting who had shed more blood at Kražiai, the Lithuanians or the Poles.\textsuperscript{44} The Lithuanian Polish press asked the following rhetorical question: was it genuinely expected that anti-Polish rhetoric and accusations of ‘stealing Kražiai’ would succeed in ‘hitting at the heart of Vilnius’ residents and recover the old city of Gediminas, which gave Polish cultural history one of its most beautiful pages?\textsuperscript{45} The polemic even shifted to the radio waves. A radio programme by the ULV, \textit{Pavergtas Vilnius} (Subjugated Vilnius), featured a reading of a text by M. Biržiška, in which it was stated that the Polish press was simply continuing what it had begun immediately after the Kražiai events, to consciously lay claim to the honour of defending the church.\textsuperscript{46}


The Polish community in Lithuania marked the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre separately. The commemoration was characterised by the idea of union; however, ideas of union from 1920 and 1933 were rather different. In 1920, at least some of Poland’s political elite tried to promote the idea of a union as a revised common project of Lithuanian-Polish statehood; while by 1933 the idea of union was presented as looking back on the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or the period after its demise; this was first of all a reminder of the times when the Lithuanian and Polish nations were thought to live in brotherly concord, suffering and fighting together. It was asserted that things would be fine as long as the brotherly co-existence of the Lithuanian and Polish nations was not destroyed by the Lithuanian national movement and Lithuanian nationalism which had emerged in the 19th century.

The Lithuanian Polish press presented the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory by referring back to the religious and national persecution experienced by Poles and Lithuanians living under the control of the Russian Empire. The defence of the Kražiai church was described as a joint struggle by both Lithuanians and Poles, in which Lithuanian peasants and Polish nobles and landlords all participated, stating that the latter had taken a leading role in the struggle. The role of the Raseiniai district landlords in organising all manner of support for the defenders of the Kražiai church who were put on trial was also highlighted. The image of the Kražiai massacre was conveyed not just as ‘a nice example of devotion and bravery in defence of the faith and the church’, but also as ‘a monument of brotherly solidarity’ between Poles and Lithuanians. However, in one way or another, the Polish community’s narrative also stressed the commanding role of members of the Polish community in the story of the defence of the Kražiai church.

In all the texts about the Kražiai massacre published in the Lithuanian Polish press at the time, we find the merits of the Polish community in defending the church very clearly distinguished. This was related not just to their desire to share the symbolic collective memory capital with the Lithuanians, for they felt they were the legitimate successors of this capital. We can recall that the interwar Lithuanian Polish community had become a similar hostage to mirrored retortions as the Lithuanian community in Poland. We think that their orientation to the past and reminders of those times when Lithuanians and Poles suffered and fought together against a common enemy was a convenient way of trying to support and defend their national identity: to underline that they were Polish autochthons, and not Lithuanians transformed into Poles. In addition, the accentuation of a shared memory between Lithuanians and Poles by Polish community activists could also have appeared as a convenient way of demonstrating their loyalty to the nation-state without denying their own ethnic identity, and even highlighting it. The Lithuanian Polish press stressed that the church’s defenders were an example to be followed ‘of how the greatest treasures of man had to be loved: the faith and language of their ancestors, and to be prepared to sacrifice anything to defend them’.

This could be interpreted as the aim of sending a message to the Polish community: the defenders of the Kražiai church were an example of the necessity of defending the most important components of the national identity, faith and language, and this meant remaining a Polish Catholic in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Polish community marked the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre separately and at a later time. One event was held on 3 December in Raseiniai. In his speech, W. Budzynski, the president of the Pochodnia society, who opened the memorial event, looked back to the historic past of Kražiai, reminding his audience that the walls of the Jesuit college church had heard the voice of the ‘most eminent Polish preacher’ Piotr Skarga. By doing so, he wanted the Polish community to realise that Kražiai

was a town deeply marked by Polish culture and the Christian tradition. He considered the Kražiai massacre part of the essence of the history of both nations, and a shared place of martyrdom of Lithuanians and Poles, which was a living example of how ‘the blood of sons of this land of two nations could be mixed in one communion cup, which was shed as an offering defending shared ideals.’ He thus highlighted that during the Kražiai massacre there were a number of Poles present among the church’s defenders who opposed the shrine’s closure and violence along with the Lithuanians. During this memorial event, the Polish gymnasium teacher and historian Marta Burbianka read a presentation about the defence of the Kražiai church, which was followed by the drama *Hanusia Krożanka* staged especially for the evening by Polish amateur actors. The Kražiai massacre memorial event in Raseiniai was suffused with ideas of a union, or more precisely, the content of its programme contained elements that reminded the audience of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its ideals, a time when the Lithuanian and Polish nations lived in concord.\(^5\) A literary-musical evening dedicated to marking the Kražiai massacre organised by the Polish Workers’ Union’s drama section, held in Kaunas on 10 December, was held in a similar spirit.\(^5\) If we look at the literary works presented and read at these evenings, we will notice the aim of placing the story of the defence of the Kražiai church in the context of the narrative about the Polish nation’s struggle for freedom, and to position its defenders alongside the Polish soldiers who served in Napoleon’s army in 1812, and the rebels in the 1831 and 1863 uprisings.

**Commemorations in Vilnius**

It is likely that the anniversary of the Kražiai massacre in Poland was actually publicly marked only in Vilnius. On 17 December 1933, in the conference hall of the Vilnius voivodeship, where the trials


of the defenders of the Kražiai church had been held 40 years ago, the Voivode of Vilnius Władysław Jaszczółt ceremoniously unveiled a memorial plaque, with the inscription that in that hall 40 years ago the defenders of the Kražiai church had been put on trial. Zygmunt Nagrodzki shared his personal memories during the ceremony, highlighting the mobilising power of the events at Kražiai that were said to have united the intelligentsia and the townspeople to ‘fight together for independence’.\(^{53}\) Judging by the report by Helena Romer who described the event, witnesses to the tragic events, whom she described as the generation of ‘old inhabitants of Vilnius’, showed a much greater interest in the commemoration.\(^{54}\) It is likely that the organisers of the memorialisation of the trial of the defenders of Kražiai church did not even consider inviting Lithuanians to the unveiling of the plaque. Only Nagrodzki expressed some regret at the fact that the text on the plaque was only in Polish, and not in Lithuanian as well.

While we do not know what Nagrodzki spoke about during the ceremony, he probably shared the same memories that were published the next day in the daily *Słowo*. The author, who had been a 28-year-old Vilnius trader at the time of the events, described how the Vilnius public organised support in the city for the prosecuted defenders of the Kražiai church: they provided legal assistance and meals, and took care of the relatives of the arrested defenders who also arrived in Vilnius, etc. The organisation of this support was remembered as a mobilising campaign that brought Polish society together, and inspired them to oppose the tsarist authorities: it was a time when ‘the hearts of Poles and Lithuanians beat in unison.’ For him, the story of the church’s defence was akin to the defence of the union’s ideals, and a natural successor to


the 1863 uprising. Members of Polish society in Vilnius who were actively involved in organising support for the defenders of the Kražiai church did not feel they were mere observers of the event, but active participants, brought closer to the actual defenders by notions of opposition to tsarist rule. That is why it is not suprising that they felt as if they participated in the church’s defence, and thus considered the Kražiai massacre a place of memory of their own and of Vilnius society, and were the most inspired initiators of memorialising the Kražiai massacre in Vilnius.

Lithuanians living in Vilnius were not officially invited to the unveiling of the memorial plaque honouring the defenders of the Kražiai church, and only learned of the forthcoming ceremony in the press. One month before the unveiling ceremony, an article devoted to the story of the defence of the Kražiai church appeared in Vilniaus rytojus (this was almost the official newspaper of the Lithuanian community in Vilnius), in which it was stated that soon after the Kražiai massacre the Poles tried to exploit the event to achieve their own aims, complaining to the world about the persecution of Polish Catholics in tsarist Russia, so it is no wonder that by unveiling the memorial plaque, a reminder of the trials of the defenders of the Kražiai church, they were again trying to claim the merit for defending the church. The same kind of accusation appeared in another Vilnius-based Lithuanian newspaper. The Lithuanian press in Vilnius asserted unanimously that the defenders of the Kražiai church were Lithuanians, who stood in defence of the Catholic faith and the Lithuanian identity.

On 13 December, the Presidium of the Provisional Committee of Vilnius Lithuanians (the committee was the official embassy of the Lithuanian community) invited Lithuanian activists to discuss the approaching elections to the Vilnius city council. Using this opportunity, Lithuanian activists also discussed another matter: was it worth it for Lithuanians to participate in the unveiling of the plaque dedicated to the defenders of the Kražiai church? During

the discussions, it was decided not to participate in the ceremony, with the reason for this choice resting on the fact that Lithuanians were not invited to join the organisational committee, that the inscription on the memorial plaque was written only in Polish, and not in Polish and Lithuanian, and that ‘Lithuanians must endure occurrences similar to those in Kražiai in our times’, bearing in mind the Lithuanian cross that was toppled in Marcinkonys. After the plaque had been unveiled, the following exclamations appeared in the Lithuanian press in Vilnius: the exclusion of Lithuanian representatives from the commemoration’s organisational committee was understood as a clear message sent to Lithuanians, they were deemed unacceptable guests at the memorial event.

The Lithuanian Art and Literature Society of Vilnius took the initiative to arrange a commemoration of the Kražiai massacre for the Vilnius-based Lithuanian community. The society was headed by the influential Vilnius clergyman and Lithuanian social activist Prelate Antanas Viskantas. Due to the society’s conflict with the Presidium of the Provisional Committee of Vilnius Lithuanians, the memorial event marking the Kražiai massacre held on 10 December was more modest than was initially planned. Viskantas gave a lecture about the defence of the Kražiai church at the memorial event, which was followed by an artistic programme. In his lecture, he highlighted the fact that the Kražiai massacre had strengthened the faith of Catholics and aroused a feeling in the Lithuanian nation of national self-worth, thereby acting to further seek Lithuania’s independence. Interestingly, Viskantas wished to bring Lithuanians and Poles closer together, and in his lecture he did not mention the role of Poles in defending the Kražiai church.

58 Meeting protocol of members of the Presidium of the Provisional Committee of Vilnius Lithuanians, 13 December 1933, LMAVB, col. 254, file 17, p. 15; P. Bieliauskas, Dienoraštis 1920–1957 (Vilnius, 2012).
60 Meeting protocol of the Lithuanian Art and Literature Society of Vilnius, 5 November 1933, Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art (LLMA), col. 291, inv. 1, file 1, p. 16.
Prelate Viskantas was an influential and well-known clergyman in both the Polish and Lithuanian communities, and thus he hoped his organised event would attract other prominent public activists in Vilnius. We know that the event was attended by the rector of Stephen Bathory University Vitoldas Stanievičius. The organisers also invited the Archbishop of Vilnius Romuald Jałbrzykowski to the event. The latter hesitated somewhat on receiving his invitation; however, on the advice of the Lithuanian priest Pranas Bieliauskas, he decided against attending. We do not know the reason for this advice, but it could be that the cross erected by Lithuanians in the parish of Marcinkonys had just recently been pulled down, causing a wave of anger. Let us take a brief look at the story behind the toppling of this cross. Lithuanians in the parish of Marcinkonys had erected a cross to commemorate the Catholic Church’s anniversary year of 1933; the cross was soon covertly pulled down and taken away to be destroyed. The locals managed to save the cross from being taken away for destruction and returned it to its place; however, the Polish police and soldiers did not give permission for it to be re-erected, and forcibly dispersed the crowd. We do not know whether this act of vandalism was performed on the direct orders of the Polish authorities, or whether it was the initiative of Polish ‘patriots’ working in the local administration; however, the details of this story that were made public suggest that it occurred with the knowledge of the local government, or at least its silent approval. The people who had erected and tried to save the cross ended up facing administrative persecution, during which the Polish officers resorted to physical violence.

When the Kražiai massacre memorial events in Lithuania, in which the ULV was an active participant, were over, it could be expected that the associative link between the Kražiai massacre and Lithuanians in Vilnius experiencing national persecution would subside in the propaganda discourse for the liberation of

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Vilnius. However, it did not have the chance to subside properly, because it was revived again in the Polish-ruled Vilnius region with the story of the toppled Lithuanian cross in Marcinkonys. This story aroused anger among Lithuanians on both sides of the demarcation line. It was not the first time a cross erected by Lithuanians had been brought down in the Vilnius region; however, this time it occurred just before the commemoration of the Kražiai massacre organised by the Lithuanian Art and Literature Society of Vilnius. The memorial evening could have turned into a protest against the vandalism so obviously tolerated by the Polish authorities, and Archbishop Jałbrzykowski could have found himself in an unenviable double-edged situation. The participants in the memorial evening could, for example, have decided to pass a protest resolution condemning the actions of the officers of the Polish government. It is likely that, with all this in mind, Bieliauskas advised the archbishop against participating in the memorial event.

On hearing the story of the toppling of the Marcinkonys cross, numerous Lithuanians made parallels with how Catholics living under the tsarist regime were persecuted. A column appeared in the Vilnius Lithuanian press whose author ironically drew historical parallels between the situation of Lithuanians in the Vilnius region in the 1930s and life under tsarist rule in the 19th century. In Lithuania, the story of the Marcinkonys cross immediately entered the Vilnius liberation campaign propaganda discourse being spread by the ULV: it was presented as evidence of the brutal national persecution of Lithuanians in the Vilnius region. Events in Marcinkonys were compared to the Kražiai massacre in the ULV magazine *Mūsų Vilnius*: the first publication to appear in the press even bore the sub-heading ‘Just like the Kražiai massacre', while an account of the events highlighted the fact that Polish police officers and soldiers acted as brutally as the Russian Cossacks in Kražiai.

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stimulus for *Mūsų Vilnius* to again remind readers of the story of the defence of the Kražiai church, suggesting that the Poles’ pretence of standing among the ranks of the church’s defenders were unfounded, and that Poles in general certainly did not play a heroic role at the time.\(^6\) Efforts were also made to deny the statements appearing in the Polish press that Polish landlords had looked after the defenders of the church, even hiding some from persecution by the tsarist authorities. To this end, the story was made public of Antanas Vaidotas, who was threatened with being turned over to the authorities by the landlord hiding him, and ‘was forced like a slave to work hard just for food’.\(^7\) This was how *Mūsų Vilnius* defended the exclusive rights of Lithuanians in assuming the title of defenders of the Kražiai church.

Audiences of the *Pavergtas Vilnius* radio programme broadcast by the ULV heard of the toppled cross in the parish of Marcinkony, by which the event was compared to what had happened in Kražiai: ‘As in Kražiai, so too in Marcinkony, Lithuanians are being punished for defending their nationally religious belief,’ but it was highlighted that this time the punishment was greater, as it came not from the hand of the Orthodox Russian, but ‘the so-called Catholic Pole’.\(^8\) Letters of condolence from all over Lithuania immediately flooded the radio programme’s editorial office, addressed to the Lithuanians in Marcinkony, as well as protest resolutions condemning the actions of the Polish administration. In these resolutions and letters coming in from the branches of various organisations, schools and individuals, the events in Marcinkony were often compared to the Kražiai massacre, with Poland compared to tsarist Russia.\(^9\) At around the same time, mobilising proclamations, full of determination and saturated with the spirit of the Vilnius liberation campaign, could also be heard, such as the following one from the Raseiniai district riflemen’s team: ‘We shall liberate subjugated Vilnius and erect a cross that no Pole will

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\(^8\)V. Uždavinys, journal entries, LMAVB, col. 188, file 28, p. 485.

\(^9\)D. Varénis, *Išniekinti kryžiai* (Kaunas, 1934).
be able to pull down, and mark on it in golden letters the second bloody Kražiai story in Marcinkonys.\textsuperscript{72}

In 1934, the ULV also published a booklet covering the events in Marcinkonys, in which other acts of vandalism against crosses erected by Lithuanians in the Vilnius region were listed.\textsuperscript{73} In this booklet about a range of similar instances in the Polish-ruled Vilnius region, the Kražiai massacre was continually recalled as well. This associative image of the Kražiai massacre, so well-known to Lithuanian society, served to maximally draw readers’ attention to the brutality of the persecution Lithuanians were experiencing in the Vilnius region. On the other hand, the account of the Marcinkonys story against the backdrop of the defence of the Kražiai church also served to entrench the image of the Kražiai massacre in the collective memory, in addition to the propaganda discourse jumping at the opportunity to actualise this image. The discourse stressed clearly that the Kražiai massacre was an exclusively Lithuanian place of memory, and that any Polish claims on the symbolic capital of this image were unfounded. The ULV purposely acted in seeking to entrench the provision of the exclusive merits of Lithuanians alone in defending the Kražiai church, and the exclusive right of Lithuanians to the symbolic capital of this place of memory. In 1934, the Bishop of Telšiai received a letter from the ULV, reminding him that, on account of its dramatic history, the Kražiai church ‘was the most revered by all Lithuanians’, and had become ‘a shared shrine for the whole nation’, whereas ever since the brutal events, the Poles had tried to claim the honour of defending the church for themselves. The bishop was then asked to remove the Polish inscriptions on the Stations of the Cross inside the Kražiai church as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{74} In this way, the ULV tried to erase any signs of Polishness in the Kražiai church, and thereby defend the exclusive right of Lithuanians to the honour of being the sole defenders of the church. At the same time, the Kražiai massacre was brought up again in the Polish press,

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Letter from the Kaunas Vytautas the Great Branch of the ULV to the Telšiai bishop J. Staugaitis, 31 January 1934, LMAVB, col. 178, file 227, p. 130.
this time accompanied by expressions of regret that the Lithuanians had distanced themselves from the ideal of the union, and that there was no longer any concord between Lithuanians and Poles. However, they held on to the hope that ‘reminders of old, common struggles, defeats and triumphs would serve to smooth over the antagonisms and blind [the Lithuanians] to harmful chauvinism’. \(^{75}\) To put it briefly, the idea being publicly conveyed was that the Kražiai massacre could indeed become that shared place of memory bringing Lithuanians and Poles closer together.

**Conclusion**

In summary, it can be said that Lithuanians and Poles commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre separately in 1933. There was not even the slightest consideration of inviting representatives of the national communities to the official memorial events held in Lithuania and Poland: Poles to the commemorations in Kražiai, or Lithuanians to the unveiling of the memorial plaque in Vilnius. Neither side wanted to share the symbolic capital of the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory: the Lithuanians asserted that there were no Catholics of Polish nationality among the defenders of the church in Kražiai, while Poles, who claimed that the church was defended by Poles and Lithuanians in unison, highlighted their fellow countrymen’s leading role in the story of the shrine’s defence, an interpretation that was unacceptable to the Lithuanians. The explanations of the ideals guiding the believers to defend the Kražiai church also differed: the Lithuanians explained that by defending the church they were standing up for both their religious and their national identity, whereas the Poles explained that the defenders of the Kražiai church fought for both the Catholic faith and the restoration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, continuing the struggle of the 1863 rebels. Nor were there any attempts to use the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory that would serve to smooth tensions between Lithuania and Poland. The ULV used the image of the Kražiai massacre to

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develop its own propaganda discourse of the liberation of Vilnius, which can be viewed as the exploitation of this place of memory to sharpen Lithuanian-Polish relations.

Lithuanians and Poles commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre separately: there were not even any suggestions to organise a joint memorial event for the occasion. Thus, no representatives of the Polish community were present at the Lithuanian-organised event in Kražiai; and likewise, no Lithuanians participated in the unveiling of the memorial plaque in Vilnius which was organised by the Polish community. Incompatible attitudes regarding the ideals that had led the faithful to defend the Kražiai church, and debates over who played the main roles in the story of the church’s defence, prevented the Lithuanians and Poles from sharing the symbolic capital of the Kražiai massacre as a place of memory. The Lithuanians stated that there were no Poles among the church’s defenders in Kražiai, while they themselves were defending not only their religious but also their national Lithuanian identity. The Poles claimed that both Poles and Lithuanians defended the church together, but it was the Poles who initiated this battle and were its leaders, whereas Lithuanians only played the role of the fighting masses. The Poles also claimed that the defenders of the Kražiai church were fighting for the Catholic faith, as well as the restoration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Lithuanian society viewed this claim as a threat to the Lithuanian state’s political sovereignty. The Union for the Liberation of Vilnius used the Poles’ claim to the symbolic capital of the defenders of the Kražiai church and the commanding role in the story of the church’s defence to develop their own propaganda discourse of the liberation of Vilnius. This organisation was especially active in arranging a memorial event to mark the Kražiai massacre, while they also adopted the Poles’ claim to the symbolic capital of the church’s defenders in their propaganda discourse to construct the image of the ‘sneaky Pole’, trying to steal Lithuanians’ achievements in the defence of the Kražiai church. Thus, the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Kražiai massacre did not serve to reduce tensions between Lithuania and Poland; rather, it increased mutual mistrust between Polish and Lithuanian societies.
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KRAŽIŲ SKERDYNIŲ 40-MEČIO MINĖJIMAS LIETUVOJE IR LENKIOJE
Santrauka

DANGIRAS MAČIULIS


Iki 1938 m. pavasario tarp Lietuvos ir Lenkijos nebuvo diplomatinių santykių. 1923 m. Kražių skerdynių 30-metis Lietuvoje ir Lenkijoje praėjo beveik nepastebėtai, tačiau šio įvykio 40-metis paminėtas. Šio įvykio minėjimą pasinaudoti politinei įtampai tarp Lietuvos ir Lenkijos mažinti.