

SUMMARY

*The Lithuanian film Tadas Blinda. Pradžia [Tadas Blinda. The Beginning] and the 1863 Uprising as a place of memory in Lithuania*

This text analyses how the fictional film *Tadas Blinda. Pradžia* (Tadas Blinda. The Beginning, 2011) reflects certain interpretations of the 1863 Uprising that have existed in Lithuanian society and in historians' works from the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the film, attention is primarily given to the following plot lines: the nature of the peasant uprising; the identity of some of the Lithuanian nobility; and, the struggle for Lithuania's freedom. This article states that the first attempts to transform the events of 1863 into a peasant uprising were actually made in the interwar years; however, it was Soviet Lithuanian historians who established a more thorough basis for this kind of interpretation. During the Soviet years, the events of 1863 were transformed into a peasant uprising against manor lords and tsarism, which masked the anti-Russian nature of the uprising. Yet, at the same time, this interpretation must have at least partly coincided with certain fundamental, traditional (ethnocentric) characteristics of the Lithuanian historical narrative: the elevation of peasants as the true preservers of Lithuanian identity and the main subjects of Lithuanian history.

The fact that the interpretation of the events of 1863, which suggests that it was actually a peasant movement, has been revived in this film in post-Soviet Lithuania should not be directly associated with the influence of Soviet historiography. This kind of image of the uprising has remained alive in post-Soviet society because the simplest way of making the uprising a "Lithuanian" one has been to turn the peasantry into the main instigators. Not all of the manor lords portrayed in the film are Lithuanian enemies because there is even a Lithuanian patriot among them, which reflects a trend that has existed in Lithuanian historiography in the last few decades highlighting that even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite speaking Polish, some of the Lithuanian nobility did consider themselves as Lithuanians. Ultimately, the film extends the tradition that arose in the interwar years, which incorporated the 1863 Uprising into the centuries-long struggle of Lithuanians for freedom.