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**FORMATION OF THE GREAT BROTHER IMAGE IN READERS
OF LITHUANIAN LITERATURE FOR PRIMARY FORMS**

by

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Formation of the Great Brother Image in Readers
Of Lithuanian Literature For Primary Forms

Formation of Homo Sovieticus - Soviet person - was one of the main tasks of the totalitarian ideology. Future psychological investigation should give an answer to the question how much and how far it has influenced mentality of the Lithuanian people during the last fifty years of existence in conditions of totalitarian state. It is clear today, though, that the influence inevitably manifested itself. It is obvious, because ideological "processing" of a person used to start from the earliest years of his or her life. We have dumb witnesses - textbooks of that period - in front of us. We ourselves formed the general world image from these textbooks; unfortunately, our kids use them even today - let us hope, it will not last for a long time.

We have tried to analyze only one aspect of the world image formation - relations between nations. We based our investigation on Readers of Lithuanian literature for the 1st-3rd forms, i.e. for pupils who are 6-8 years old. We have restricted ourselves taking textbooks published in Brezhnev and post-Brezhnev period, because formation of a Stalinistic person is a separate and, doubtlessly, much more painful theme.

The image of the world of a typical Homo Sovieticus is rather simple, one may even call it primitive. Monosemantic categories, such as "black-white", "a friend-an enemy", "bad-well" are used here. The model of relations between nations is not complicated, too. Thus, what is that model of inter-national relations that our textbooks try to mould for us? Let us clear it up.

The first axiom is that all nations are equal. One can often

come upon this idea in works about friendship of nations. If indeed the notion is formed, that all nations are valued in the same way, without reservations, one could doubtlessly approve of such ideology. However - let us start with one of the most important State symbols - the Anthem of the USSR, which is found in the Reader for the 2nd form:

Eternal union of free republics
 Brought firmly together by great Russia
 Long live, our Soviet Union,
 Powerful, inseparable, created of nations!

(Ažuolelis^x. Reader for the 2nd form, by E.Preskieniene and V.Ramonaite. Kaunas, Šviesa Publishers, 1978, p.4)

Yes, formally all nations are equal, there is, however, one nation - the Great Brother - which is primum inter pares. Without a shade of modesty it is asserted in the anthem of "brought firmly together" country; the younger brother, by the way, repeats it himself, too. Let us recall lines from the Anthem of the Lithuanian SSR, which is found in the same Reader:

Lenin enlightened our way to freedom
 The great Russian nation helped us in our struggle
 The Party leads us toward freedom and power
 Friendship between nations is firm like steel.

(the same, p.5)

The same statement is found in a very overt form further:

"Lithuania, exhausted by the war, was rebuilt, too - Russian and other nations provided Lithuania with their great help".

(the same, p.278. The Great Constructions)

Thus, the Great Brother. Friendship firm like steel ties him to other nations of the USSR. This fact is also presented as an axiom. Pupils of the 1st form find out from their Reader that soldiers Popov from Siberia and Deltuva from Lithuania were inseparable friends. They used to sleep under one greatcoat, they ate from one pot. They used to help each other to polish and clean their weapons. Other soldiers used to say:

"Only a bullet can separate them".

(K. Marukas. Friendship, in the Reader for the 1st form Sky-lark, by L. Jakubauskiene. Kaunas, Sviesa Pub., 1982, p.214)

As one can see, friendship is also reinforced with a weapon. Why? This question can be answered with a stanza from a poem by a famous Lithuanian poetess:

Lithuania will sound among all nations
As the most sonorous string of the USSR
Lithuania is no longer afraid of invaders
The giant's power is vigilantly protecting it.

(S. Neris, in The Native Word, Reader for the 3rd form, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matutis. Kaunas, Sviesa Pub., 1973, p.3).

The giant Great Brother protects the younger brother from invaders. The image of the enemy is introduced into the consciousness of a primary school pupil:

"The working people of Soviet Lithuania decided: "Fraternal Soviet nations will be our eternal friends and no enemy will ever dare to destroy our friendship!"

(the same, p.26. R. Kašauskas. The Emblem)

The image of the enemy is one of the most fundamental in Homo Sovieticus formation. Not incidentally military themes are so frequent in our textbooks, and one is forced to openly admire them.

"Soldiers were marching in the street.

- Look, look!- Sigute shouted. - What lovely caps! And the belts - they're golden!

- They are officers, - the uncle explained.

- And trumpets! Look, how many of them!..

- And now, what do you see now? - the uncle asked in a while.

- Motocars are passing. They are carrying cannons. And over there, tanks. Such like yours, aren't they, uncle?

- No, they are different. They are bigger and better. Everything is new now. No enemy will dare to attack us now."

(K. Saja. Something That Sigute Didn't Know; in The Native Word, Reader for the 3rd form, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matutis. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1973, p. 71)

Efforts are not only made to fixate the military theme in the child's consciousness. He is constantly oriented toward his future, when he will have to serve his main purpose - to fight against enemies; thus a rather peculiar early professional orientation is going on:

The commander is marching

In front and singing:

- One, two, three,

- One, two, three!

I shall be a hero soldier

And if enemies attack my motherland
I shall defend it like my father did.

(J. Lapašinskas. The Octobrians' March; in The World of Books, Reader for the 2nd form, by L. Šepkus. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1984, p.44)

Check questions are given below. Their aim is to test the understanding of the material: "What aims and wishes are expressed in this poem? What is the Octobrians' mood?" (in the same Reader).
What can be answered?

The child is not only orientated to future fights. The texts emphasize the inevitability of these fights.

"- What are the soldiers carrying? - Danukas asked his father.

- Guns, son, - father replied.

- What are these guns for?

- To defend our Motherland!

Danukas became thoughtful. He pulled daddy's jacket.

- Daddy... I want to defend Motherland, too... Buy a gun for me, please...

Father stroked Danukas' head.

- Right you are, son. Everybody, big and small, must defend our Motherland. Time will come, son, and you too will have a real gun..."

(V. Misevičius. The Gun, in Our Years, Reader for the 2nd form, by L. Jakubauskiene, E. Marcelioniene and L. Žukauskiene. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1983, p.147).

It goes without saying, that emphasis on the theme of Motherland defence is understandable, because the theme of war may be looked upon as a historical one. One must, however, notice the places

of the strongest accents: "enemy!", "to destroy!" Here is one more passage for illustration:

"The war was going on. Forests were surrounded by Germans (I - R.Ž.), while here, in these forests partisans' camps were located...

Suddenly a partisans' reconnoitrer ran into the grounds.

- Enemy, enemy!..

The enemy crept secretly, unnoticed. They were running to the plane and shouting:

- The plane, the plane!.. Surrender!..

Uncle Augustas turned on the fuel tap and stroke a match...

... The plane was burning heavily, with bluster. Such is the law of war - one never leaves one's weapon to the enemy. If it's impossible to take it along, one has to destroy it".

(J. Dovydaitis. Uncle Augustas and Partisans. The same, p. 213).

Thus, relations with the Great Brother have one meaning - indissoluble friendship conditioned by fight against a common enemy. Does any further vertical hierarchy exist? It does. The image of the Great Leader is introduced into the child's soul:

On your birthday

The earth changes its mist

With bunches of violets

Children hurry to the square.

The children gather in the square

They bring at your feet

Flowers from their native fields
For their bright childhood.

The blossoms are twinkling;
Little Jurate's and
Little Kastytis' big THANK YOU
For you, the Great Leader, is ringing.
(marked out by the author)

(M. Vainilaitis. On Your Birthday. The same, p.197)

Thus, apart from the Great Brother, there also exists the Great Leader. The theme of the Great Leader runs through all readers for junior schoolchildren. More often than not it is V.I. Lenin, although the role of the Great Leader or other Leaders may be taken by other political figures, depending on the political situation.

It is more or less clear with the vertical hierarchy. Let us survey horizontal ties. With whom else are we equal, excluding the Great Brother, who is equal to us only formally? Readers give a very exact answer to this question:

We are growing in October's motherland
Like green birch-trees
And everybody is our friend here
In the land of Soviets.

A Russian, a Latvian, an Armenian
A merry Ukrainian
We are all as if one
The most friendly family.

(A. Matutis. Shine, the Sun of Friendship, in The Native Word, Reader for the 3rd form, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matutis. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1973).

These fraternal nations help the Lithuanians to build bright tomorrow. In other text we also find a list of our real helpmates

"On the Castle Hill, on the top of the Gediminas Castle, there flies the flag of our republic. It as if announces, that Vilnius is the capital of Soviet Lithuania. The Lithuanian nation, helped by Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussian and other Soviet nations steps into even more happier life (Vilnius, the Capital of Lithuania. The same, p.91)

It is very interesting to note, that in these texts only the nations of the European part of the USSR are enumerated. One will not find nations of the Central Asia mentioned here. Is it a coincidence or is it done deliberately, in order to demonstrate close relations among European nations? Or maybe it is unconscious aspiration to further gradation, as if, apart from the Great Brother and middle brothers (Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Latvians) there also exist little brothers. To be earnest, one of these nations has been mentioned in one of the texts. It is a tale, a very interesting and instructive one. Here are some excerpts from it.

"Kchan Tokchtamysh was sitting in his tent and enjoying the future victory. He had no doubt, that his warriors would conquer rich Moscow at once. He had more, much more warriors than there were defenders behind the Kremlin walls. Spies had reported to Kchan, that Russians had very heavy spears which flew with flames and thunder. But Tokchtamysh did not attach much importance to them and sort of did not hear the

spies' words...

Suddenly the lightning flashed and thunder struck above Kremlin walls... The nomads looked up at the sky. They could not understand where did lightning and thunder come from. Attacking ranks were in total confusion, while heavy, red with heat balls fell into the very swarming heap of enemies. Mysterious heavy spears about which the spies spoke to the Kchan, proved to be a fatal weapon. Warriors of Tokchtamysht took to their heels..."

Check questions presented below are also of interest: "What were the aims of the Nomads and those of Russians in this war? Whose aims were just?" It is clear at once, whose aims were just. In this way, the historical continuity of the image is formed. The Great Brother is right not only today, he has been right always. Right and unconquerable.

The image of motherland is closely connected with the model of inter-national relations. What image of motherland do Soviet textbooks present while forming the Homo Sovieticus?

"What about your motherland? It is a huge country - the Soviet land, the land of fifteen republics, with mountains supporting the sky, with boundless plains, with sparkling cities. Many nations live here, they speak a great number of languages; they are all joined by friendship..."

Thus the motherland is everything: the whole huge garden of our State. Together with Lithuania - a green apple-tree, and with your native land - a tiny branch of this apple-tree (Native Land, Native Country, Motherland; in The World of Books, Reader for the 2nd form, by L.Šepkus. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1984, p.120).

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ry, supporting the sky, a big garden, while Lithuania here is only a young apple-tree in the huge garden. The child has to realize our helplessness, impossibility to live without the Strong Centre, which knows everything, can give advice and teach which gives warm reception to everybody:

"Moscow is a city of friendship of nations. In streets, offices, schools, in the exhibition of national achievements one can very often meet people speaking different languages. They come here from the farthest corners of our motherland and from abroad to discuss matters of work and peaceful life. Moscow gives warm reception to all".

(Moscow. In The Native Word, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matut Kaunas, Šviesa Publishers, 1973, p.92)

"Many railways and highways cross in Moscow. Trains and cars come to Moscow from the whole Soviet Union. Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Byelorussians and people of other nationalities visit Moscow. Here they take counsel with each other how to live better, here they teach each other".

(Moscow; in Ažuolelis, Reader for the 2nd form, by E. Prekieniene and V. Ramonaite. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1978, p.109).

On the whole, the idea of the Centre is very strong in Readers. The Great Brother's home is not only the Strong Centre for all Soviet nations; it is also the Centre of the whole world and its voice is heard in all countries:

October goes across the motherland
Hey, Octobrians, let's sing a song

So that everybody hears our song -
October marches across the motherland.

Our song, like a light bird
Will fly up to light blue heights
So that all countries hear -
October marches across the motherland.

Let the whole world see
How old our October is today
Let the whole world hear
The young heart of October
(R. Skučaite. The Octobrians' Song, in The World of Books,
Reader for the 2nd form, by L. Šepkus. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub.
1984).

Thus, the voice of the Great Brother is heard all over the world. But the USSR is not the whole world. What is going on behind its frontiers? What nations live over there and what are the Great Brother's relations with them? Children receive a very exact answer to this question, too:

" Our country has got many friends in different countries. It has enemies, too; they are used to thrive on other people's labour and to take wealth which does not belong to them. They hate our peaceful, industrious country".

(L. Kasil. Your Protectors, in The World of Books, Reader for the 2nd form, by L.Šepkus, p.133).

As one can see, behind the frontier , together with friends, there exist fierce enemies, who hate us. Is there any kind of differentiation? Can one distinguish between friends and enemies?

One can, and the frontier-guards know it best of all:

" Frontier-guards are on duty in severe frosts of the North in the heat of deserts; they climb mountains and survey sea distance. It is good if a friendly socialist country is behind the frontier. If not, then day and night you are observed by enemy's eyes. If just for a second you're off guard, a man sent by the enemy is sneaking across the frontier. Therefore frontier-guards must always be alert, they must learn and be able to outwit the enemy".

(The same, p. 145).

Consequently, the criterion is simple enough: friends live in the so-called socialist countries, while enemies - in all other countries. There certain reservations, however, and the poem below is a proof to that:

Let children of all countries
Sing a merry song
In a roundelay of friendly nations
Go around the earth.

Let African children, too
Together with boys from India
March at the Kremlin like friends
With Lenin's Octobrians.

(K. Kubilinskas. Welcome, May Day! in *Ažuolelis*, Reader for the 3rd form, by V. Ramonaite. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1988)

If people of Africa and India march at the Kremlin walls, they will be our friends. Those who do not express their wish to march together, they tremble when opposed by the power of our working

people. They are also very accurately enumerated here:

" Everywhere, when working people are marching in ranks, they feel how powerful and united they are. Oppressors in capitalist countries tremble when they see and feel their power. In our country all people and also children are very happy about the work they have done. They decide to work even better, in order to make our life brighter!

(Welcome, May! in The Native Word, Reader for the 3rd form, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matutis. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1973).

Thus, the image of the enemy is created, the enemy himself is named. The enemy may appear everywhere - at the frontier of our country as well as in any corner of the world. The enemy is fought with in every place of the earth:

" Somewhere in sea and ocean raids fast ships and undetectable submarines are swaying; if necessary, they will reach undetected and unnoticed even the border of the world - wherever the enemy appears".

(S. Baruzdin. There Is No Greater Power; in Ažuolelis, Reader for the 2nd form, by E. Preskieniene and V. Ramonaite. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1978, p. 137).

A question arises: why should one look for the enemy at the border of the world? The answer is clear: the Great Enemy - America is hidden in the other hemisphere of the earth. It is the only particular nation (excluding Germans mentioned in stories about war) which is shown from the negative point of view in stories found in Readers. In the process of Homo Sovieticus formation, the child is being suggested the idea, that particularly in America, the land of the Great Enemy, national and racial hatred dominates.

" A Negro boy of about seven years old was sitting on a low bench at the hotel door. With two brushes he was polishing shoes for a corpulent man... A new working day was beginning in a small town not far from New York... The bald man, whose shoes Bill was polishing, took out a large pocketwatch on a golden chain from his pocket. He looked at it and his face wrinkled up, as if he had bit a lemon.

- Hurry up! - he shouted. - Time is money!..

When panting heavily, the man stood up, the boy hastily tucked the bench under the steps, threw the brushes and shoe polish into his sack and hurried to school. He ran, however, not in the direction, where white boys and girls were going, but in the opposite one. There, behind the railway, stood old and shabby houses. Only Negroes lived there".

(A. Laurinčiukas. The Brush; in *Ažuolelis*, Reader for the 2nd form, by E. Preskieniene and V. Ramonaite. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1978, p.190-192).

Is there any way out for the oppressed and the exploited? There is. The question is explained in detail for Soviet junior school-children:

" After lessons, led by the teacher, children decorated the classroom... On a drawing sheet an inexperienced hand had drawn a small Negro boy sitting under a palm tree. There was also a description at the bottom of the picture, written by the same child's hand.

As I started reading it, I recalled having read the same short story about a Negro in a newspaper. A Negro musician from San Francisco spoke about his father who had been by

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hung by the Whites only because he was a Negro. He also spoke how the Whites detested him and called him a black dog. Once, when William Smith was playing in an orchestra a white man shrieked: "Get out of here, you black dog!" Blood flooded his face and he set out running. He ran for a long time, for if the Whites had caught him, they would have killed or hung him at once - and only because he was a Negro. William Smith took his trumpet and left America for good. He loved America, for it was his motherland, he was, however, only a black dog here. He arrived to the land of Soviets and nobody hurted him any longer.

Below the story, which had evidently been re-written from the newspaper, one could read in somewhat larger letters: "All nations are our brothers. The USSR gives shelter to Negroes!"

(P. Cvirka. All Nations Are Our Brothers; in The Native Word, Reader for the 3rd form, by P. Gailiunas and A. Matutis. Kaunas, Šviesa Pub., 1973).

Thus, we have now a full picture of inter-national relations, which is presented in Soviet Readers of Lithuanian literature for junior schoolchildren. The main axis in this picture is the Great Brother, who is led by the Great Leader. The latter lives in the Strong Centre, around which middle and smaller brothers settle down. Their friendship is firm like steel. Behind the frontiers of the Great Land there exist friends and enemies. Our friends are socialist countries and also those, primarily in Asia and Africa, which listen to what we say. All the rest are enemies, which hate us. The Great Enemy across the ocean

stands out among all other enemies. He hates us as well as all other nations.

The present illustration of one of aspects in Homo Sovieticus formation gives more or less better understanding why the image of the outward enemy is so strong in the consciousness of a Soviet man. It also helps to understand, why perception of inter-national relations has undergone such deformations. It is painful to admit, that it is only one small link of the totalitarian chain, which has been binding us for years.