

THE VIEW OF LITHUANIAN STATEHOOD HELD BY THE POLISH UNDERGROUND DURING 1939–1944

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ABSTRACT This article investigates the Polish underground's view of Lithuanian statehood, territorial integrity, and Lithuanian-Polish relations during the Second World War. The concept 'Polish underground' is applicable not only to the military organisation, which came to be called the Armia Krajowa (AK) in 1942, but also the secret civil administration, called the Delegation of the Government to the Country. The article investigates not only the view of Lithuania held by the Polish underground operating in Lithuania (primarily the Vilnius area) but also the Polish underground's central leadership in Warsaw as well as the view held by the Polish government-in-exile. The author used Lithuanian and Polish archive documents and works by historians from both countries.

In accordance with the 10 October 1939 Treaty between the Republic of Lithuania and the Soviet Union, on 28 October 1939 the Lithuanian army advanced into Vilnius and Lithuania assumed sovereignty of the recovered part of the Vilnius region. The residents of Vilnius, tired of the forty-day Bolshevik occupation (18 September–27 October 1939), initially reacted loyally to the transfer of the Vilnius area to Lithuania but the Lithuanian authorities immediately had to confront very difficult political, social, and economic problems. A large percentage of the Poles in the Vilnius region associated their future with the restoration of a post-war Polish state with the pre-war eastern borders. For this reason they regarded the Lithuanian authorities as a short-term occupying regime. These sentiments were especially strong among the war refugees from various areas of Poland (Vilnius had about 15 thousand of them in the autumn of 1939), Polish clergy, and nationalist-minded intelligentsia. The Lithuanian government's radical 're-Lithuanianisation' course in the Vilnius region further strengthened the local Poles' sentiments and attitudes of disloyalty and opposition to the Lithuanian authorities. The statements and agitation of the Polish government-in-exile and the

emerging Polish underground further strengthened the belief among the Poles of the Vilnius region in the restoration of the Polish state with its pre-war borders. Even prior to the transfer of the Vilnius region to the control of the Lithuanian authorities, the Polish government-in-exile attempted to put diplomatic pressure on Lithuania over the Question of Vilnius. On 13 October 1939, the Polish envoy in Kaunas Franciszek Charwat, on orders from the Polish government, presented a note of protest to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the alleged illegal annexation of part of the territory of Poland to Lithuania. The next day (14 October 1939) the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered an answer to Charwat, in which it was stressed that Lithuania had never recognised the severing of Vilnius and the restoration of Vilnius meant that the unlawful situation, which had been created due to the violent actions of Gen L. Želigowski in 1920, had been eliminated and that Poland did not have the moral right to present claims to Lithuania.¹ In reacting to this statement of the Lithuanian authorities, Charwat, together with Polish military attaché Col Leon Mitkiewicz, ostentatiously left Kaunas on 16 October 1939 and in this manner Polish diplomatic relations with Lithuania were virtually broken off.² Nevertheless the Polish government was not prepared to break off relations with Lithuania and its diplomatic representatives completely. This is testified to by the frequent diplomatic Lithuanian and Polish contacts and meetings during the later years of the war, even after Lithuania had been occupied by the Soviets and Nazis.

The first Polish military underground organisation in the Vilnius region began to be created as early as October 1939 when Vilnius was occupied by the Red Army. In all about 30–40 secret Polish organisations and groups were created in Vilnius in the autumn of 1939.³ By the end of 1939 the Polish underground in Vilnius was very motley with various political orientations, fragmented, and without a centralised leadership. At the turn of 1940 through the efforts of military officers sent from Warsaw it was united and became subordinate to the Vilnius District leadership of the *Związek walki*

¹ K. Tarka, 'Spor o Wilno. Ze stosunkow polsko-litewskich w latach Drugiej wojny światowej', *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris, 1995) Nr. 114, p. 61; R. Žepkaitė, *Vilniaus istorijos atkarpa 1939 m. spalio 27 d.–1940 m. birželio 15 d.* (Vilnius, 1990), p. 40.

² Ibid.

³ L. Tomaszewski, *Kronika Wileńska 1939–1941* (Warsaw, 1990) pp. 48–49.

zbrojnej (ZWZ, Union for Armed Struggle), which was in turn subordinate to the ZWZ Supreme Command in Warsaw. On 14 February 1942, the ZWZ was renamed the *Armia Krajowa* (AK, Home Army). The AK was subordinate to the Polish government in London and implemented the latter's political and military goals. Beside the military organisation, i.e. the AK, there was also the apparatus of the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of Poland in the Country (*Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj*), which headed the unarmed civil resistance, secretly created the future Polish public authorities and administrative organs, and implemented the political line and corresponding propaganda of the government-in-exile. The institution of the Delegation of the Government was also founded in the Vilnius area and worked closely with the AK Vilnius District leadership.

Although the chief enemies of the Polish underground were Nazi Germany and the Bolshevik Soviet Union, the Polish underground organisations operating in Lithuania were marked by a strong anti-Lithuanian attitude. When the Committee of Ministers for National Affairs (*Komitet Ministrów dla Spraw Kraju*) of the Polish government-in-exile passed a resolution on 15 November 1939, which stated that 'the question of Vilnius and the Vilnius region remains open' and urged Poles to maintain friendly relations with the Lithuanians, great dissatisfaction with this Committee resolution arose among the Poles of Vilnius. The leadership of the Polish underground in Warsaw and Vilnius energetically opposed this resolution of the Polish government. The Policy Co-ordination Committee (*Polityczny Komitet Porozumiewawczy*, PKP), which represented the Polish parties, on 24 February 1940 passed a declaration protesting the Polish government's resolution on the Vilnius question because the latter resolution created the impression that the Polish government had renounced Vilnius in favour of Lithuania, which could induce the Poles of Vilnius to elemental actions of armed protest. In turn, the ZWZ Commander in Warsaw, Col Stefan Rowecki, informed the ZWZ Supreme Commander in France, Gen K. Sosnkowski, that the Poles of Vilnius stated that they did not agree with any compromise or the surrender of Vilnius to Lithuania and were resolved to fight for Vilnius.⁴ It is necessary to add that the Polish government-in-exile and the ZWZ supreme leadership

⁴ *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945*, t. 1 (London, 1970) p. 82.

forbade the establishment of secret Polish military organisations or the conducting of armed actions in Lithuania. An order of 26 February 1940 concerning ZWZ activities in Lithuania stated that it was forbidden for the Polish underground to wage an armed struggle against the Lithuanian authorities. The most important task of the ZWZ Vilnius organisation had to be maintaining contact through Kaunas (the 'Ana' reconnaissance base) with the Polish lands occupied by the Germans and Soviets.⁵ The liberal and cautious policy of the government-in-exile on the Vilnius question did not comfort the local Poles or the underground's leadership. On 17 March 1940, ZWZ Vilnius District Commander Lt Col Nikodem Sulik reported to Gen K. Sosnkowski about the moods of the Poles of Vilnius: '...all the residents of Vilnius refuse to even discuss control of Vilnius and the Vilnius region and that the one and true will of the inhabitants was expressed in the 1922 Vilnius Sejm, and Vilnius, if necessary, will prove by force of arms that it belongs to Poland, and that is the view of absolutely all the political groups except an insignificant group called the *Krajowcy* [Fellow Countrymen]. We request the Government...take into consideration the unanimous view of Vilnius society'.⁶

In reaction to the protests of the commanders and politicians of the Warsaw and Vilnius undergrounds, the Polish government toughened its position in respect to Lithuania. On 27 April 1940, the Committee for National Affairs decided to allow ZWZ structures to operate in Lithuania but forbade them from carrying out armed actions. Up until the summer of 1943 the Polish underground in Lithuania confined itself to developing its organisational structures, recruiting new members, amassing weapons, collecting reconnaissance, campaigning and spreading propaganda. From the very autumn of 1939 the Poles of the Vilnius region were disposed to fight for the restoration of a future powerful Polish state with at least the pre-war borders in the east.

In June 1940 the political and military situation in Europe changed radically. Germany forced France to capitulate and the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States. The Polish government-in-exile moved from France to London. The new situation in Europe forced many governments to adjust the provisions of their foreign policies. The Polish government on 30 July and 3 November 1940

⁵ Tomaszewski, *Kronika*, p. 67.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

adopted new foreign policy objectives. They stated that Poland was in a state of war not only with Germany but also the Soviet Union. The occupation of the Baltic States was judged to be unacceptable to Poland but Poland refused to allow any discussion of the Vilnius Question considering Vilnius to be an inalienable part of its state. The policy also stated that Poland was interested in the existence of an independent Lithuania and friendly relations with Lithuania, which should possess Klaipėda and the River Nemunas. Poland, in addition, should support those political forces of Lithuania, which were speaking out against the Soviet Union and Germany.⁷ The Polish government-in-exile connected the question of Lithuanian independence with Poland's security needs. The Polish government well understood that it was better for Poland to have a small and militarily innocuous Lithuania as its neighbour rather than the powerful and aggressive Soviet Union. Due to this the Polish government was vitally interested in Lithuanian statehood. During the years of the Second World War the Polish government and Polish diplomacy sought to create a federation of Central and Eastern European states, which, headed by Poland, would include Czechoslovakia, Finland, the Baltic States, and an East Prussia that would be incorporated into Poland. It was thought that this bloc of states would be able to counterbalance Germany and Russia and guarantee the security and independence of the states of this region. This provision of Polish government's foreign policy did not essentially change throughout the entire period of the war. But the view of Lithuanian statehood held by the Polish underground frequently did not coincide with the provisions of the Polish government and was markedly more hostile to Lithuania. This discrepancy was caused in part by the concrete conditions of the Soviet and German occupations and the constant acridness of Lithuanian-Polish relations.

After the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania, the problem of the possession of Vilnius lost the relevance it had held up until then in Lithuanian and Polish relations. Preconditions emerged for the mutual improvement of relations and closer collaboration against the Soviet Union. But neither took advantage of these opportunities due to the different geopolitical orientations of both sides as well as their ingrained mutual distrust and hostility. On 30 June 1940 newly appointed ZWZ Supreme Commander Gen S. Rowecki judged the possibilities for Lithuanian and Polish collaboration especially sceptically. In the

⁷ *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945*, t. 6, p. 71; t. 1, p. 318.

opinion of S. Rowecki, Lithuanians fanatically hated the Poles and the time had not yet arrived to begin negotiations with them. The Lithuanians hoped to restore their independence with Germany's help.⁸ In the eyes of the Lithuanian anti-Soviet underground Poland was considered to be an unpromising ally, who, being herself occupied, could not realistically help restore Lithuanian independence.

During the years of Nazi occupation, Lithuanian and Polish relations became even more acrid and in 1943–1944 grew into an armed struggle between Lithuanian police officers and *Armia Krajowa* partisans. During the German occupation the Vilnius area remained in the territory of the general Lithuanian area, the government and administration of the region being essentially in German and Lithuanian hands. Due to the Lithuanian police's repressive actions towards the members of the Polish underground and the civil inhabitants, mass deportations of Poles to forced labour in Germany, restrictions in the area of culture and education, the removal of part of the farmers from their land, and the material difficulties and decline in the standard of living that arose as a consequence of the war, Polish hatred of Lithuanians grew even further. These attitudes were reflected in the Polish underground's press, notices, and documents investigating Lithuanian-Polish relations. Nevertheless the position of Poles in Lithuania was not so oppressive or tragic as it was portrayed in the Polish secret press and notices. The occupational authorities in Lithuania did not persecute Poles just because they were Poles. Repressions were employed in respect to the Poles for activities that were harmful and/or hostile to the Germans. The scale of the repressions was also not as large as in the General Government and due to this part of the Poles during the German occupation sought shelter in Vilnius. The thousands of Poles who had come to Lithuania in 1939 as war refugees made no effort to return to central Poland.

It is worth noting that the Polish underground was very interested in Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian relations. Many reviews, notices, projects, declarations, and other documents prepared on this topic survive in the archives of Lithuania, Poland, and other countries. Lithuanian-Polish relations, which became bitter after the Nazi occupation began, strengthened the conviction of the activists in the Polish underground that no attempt to find a common language with the Lithuanians or to achieve a peaceful compromise would be

⁸ *Ibid.*, t. 1, p. 462.

successful. Such convictions and views were especially characteristic of the Poles of the Vilnius region. The review *Stosunki Polsko-Litewskie* [Polish-Lithuanian Relations] compiled in October 1941 stated that Polish society did not believe in the possibility of an agreement with the Lithuanians and did not even wish to think or speak of some common platform. It wrote that there are no elements in Lithuanian society, with which it would be possible to find a common language. According to the authors of the review, even the loss of independence had not changed the anti-Polish orientation of the Lithuanians. They wrote that the contemporary Lithuanians are either nationalists who have adapted to the circumstances, pro-Russian communists, pro-German national socialists, or in actuality murderers and villains. With the Lithuanians' hatred for Poles and everything that is Polish having alone not changed, the review ends with the following conclusions:

1. Lithuanians are still not mature enough for an independent existence and cannot be considered an equal partner to Poland;

2. A union of Lithuania and Poland is unacceptable at this time to both nations and especially the Poles, due to the injustices they have experienced from the Lithuanian side;

3. In solving the problems of Eastern Europe, Poland must follow its rationally conceived national interests and seek to create a buttress of Western culture and civilisation in this region;

4. Due to these reasons, Poland must create good relations with the Latvians and Estonians so that a federation of these states is created and thus push Lithuania into a hopeless situation;

5. In seeking to change the mentality of the Lithuanian nation and bring up a new generation of Lithuanians, for whom a feeling of chauvinism would be alien, it should introduce a protectorate for Lithuania by establishing Polish military bases and the institution of a Polish General Commissar with broad authority for a period of ten or more years;

6. Poland, in solving the question of Lithuania, can in no way renounce Vilnius or any lands inhabited by Poles since that would abandon the Poles living there to the extermination policy being carried out by the Lithuanians.⁹

Nevertheless projects of this nature had no decisive effect on the development of events or the position of the Polish government-

⁹ *Stosunki Polsko-Litewskie*, Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw (henceforth AAN), sygn. 211/16, fos. 21–25.

in-exile. The latter defended the idea of a Lithuanian state and promoted Polish diplomatic contacts with the Lithuanian diplomats operating in exile. Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Edward Raczyński on 11 January 1942 gave an interview to the British 'Sunday Times' newspaper, in which he promoted the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovakian confederation and spoke for the independence of the Baltic States. This interview caused a stormy Soviet reaction. The Soviet Union ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile A. Bogomolov on 23 January 1941 stated in a note that Lithuania was part of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ The statements of some Polish underground activists that it was impossible and senseless to negotiate with the Lithuanians were also unjustified. During 1942–1944 Polish underground representatives negotiated many times in Vilnius with Lithuanian anti-Nazi underground representatives. The initiative for negotiations with the Lithuanians was shown by Polish leftist party representatives, who were united by the 'Vilnius Democratic Concentration' (*Wileńska Koncentracja Demokratyczna*). Even in March 1942 this organisation had published the radical 'Declaration on the Lithuanian Question', which stated that, in seeking to ensure the common interests of Lithuanians and Poles to the Baltic Sea, it was essential that Lithuania be 'tied to the Republic of Poland politically and economically'.¹¹ Negotiations between representatives of the Lithuanian and Polish leftist parties took place in Vilnius on 30 June 1942. During the negotiations, a Lithuanian representative said that Lithuanians desired neither a German nor a Soviet occupation and had ever more begun to understand the importance of an agreement with the Poles and a joint struggle against the occupying forces. The Polish representatives stated that they welcomed the Lithuanian desire, although greatly overdue, to seek an agreement with the Poles and stressed that an agreement with Poland was vitally essential for Lithuania while it was only desirable for Poland. The discussion took place in a friendly atmosphere but produced no concrete results. The Polish representative, the Socialist Jerzy Dobrzański ('Maciej'), summarised the meeting as follows: 'Both sides recognised the necessity for the pursuit of harmony and the promotion of the idea of coming closer within the framework of a post-war

¹⁰ A. Budreckis, 'Baltasis erelis – Lietuvos nepriklausomybės gynėjas per II pasaulinį karą', *Aidai* (1971) Nr. 5 (241–254), p. 208.

¹¹ Vilnius Democratic Concentration, 'Deklaracja w sprawie litewskiej', March 1942, AAN, sygn. 211/16, fos. 25–25a.

confederation of Central and Eastern European states'.¹² During 1942–1944, meetings of Polish and Lithuanian underground representatives of various ranks occurred several times more in Vilnius but they ended without results because neither side agreed on the question of the possession of Vilnius. The interest of the Polish underground in Lithuania was especially active during 1942–1943. Among the Polish underground structures, which constantly sought Lithuanian and Polish relations and supplied information to higher instances of the underground, it is worthwhile to mention the AK Vilnius District Information and Propaganda Office (*Biuro informacji i propagandy*, BIP). The Vilnius District BIP was headed during 1941–1943 by Dr J. Dobrzański and from mid-1943 by Antoni Kokociński ('Julian'). The Vilnius BIP published the secret newspaper *Niepodległość* [Independence]. This newspaper had a great deal of influence on the self-awareness and political orientation of the Poles of Vilnius. *Niepodległość* promoted allegiance to the Polish state and hatred of its enemies. The AK Vilnius District BIP prepared many notices devoted to Lithuanian-Polish relations and Lithuania. Other instances of the Polish underground were also interested in the same questions: the Information and Propaganda Office of the AK Supreme Command in Warsaw (*Biuro Informacji i Propagandy Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej*), the Information and Press Department of the Government's Delegation in the Country (*Departament Informacji i Prasy Delegatury Rządu na Kraj*), the Eastern Bureau operating in Warsaw (*Biuro Wschodni*), and the National Council (*Rada Narodowościowa*). Reports and accounts about the situation were sent to these institutions from all the AK districts including from the Vilnius District. The information obtained was processed and was sent as monthly and quarterly reports from Warsaw to the Polish government-in-exile in London. The reports supplied information about all the principal areas of life in the occupied country, i.e. the political, economic, and cultural situation, the actions of the occupiers, the resistance, and the Poles' relations with other nations (Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians). Below we will review several characteristic Polish underground documents, which investigate the perspective of Lithuanian statehood.

A 1942 document called 'The Settlement of the Lithuanian Problem' states that the Lithuanian national movement had been

¹² Quoted from W. Borodziewicz, 'Rozmowy polsko-litewskie w Wilnie 1942–1944', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 30(1989), p. 319.

formed by disavowing everything Polish. It stated that the Lithuanian state had always been against Poland acting as a branch of third states and the emerging Lithuanian nation was brought up with a spirit of hatred for Poles. Due to Lithuania's important strategic position Polish policy in respect to Lithuania must be based on Polish interests, which are understood in a businesslike manner, and by rejecting any historical sentiments. Because present-day Lithuania has not renounced any aggressive plans in respect to Poland, the authors of the 'Settlement' proposed the following manner of solving the Lithuanian problem:

'The territory of the former state of Lithuania must be joined to Poland, which would guarantee Poland's maritime, commercial, and especially political and military interests on its northeast borders.

'Only when Lithuanian society, isolated from any anti-Polish intrigues, understands the necessity of a voluntary union with the Polish state, will it be possible to raise the question of Lithuania's independence.

The Lithuanian problem must be solved together with the return of the northeast lands [i.e. the Vilnius region] to Poland because otherwise the fate of the Jews will befall the Polish inhabitants in Lithuania and the Lithuanian Question, unsolved at the fatal moment, will again become a never-ending topic of political negotiations and will continue to be an incurable wound on the body of Poland.¹³

In the autumn of 1943 the National Council operating under the Delegation of the Polish government in the Country published its 'Theses on the Lithuanian Question'. These theses essentially reflect the view of Lithuania and Lithuanian-Polish relations held by the Polish underground:

The Lithuanian question consists of two problems: the Lithuanian minority in Poland [including the Vilnius region] and Poland's view of Lithuanian statehood.

1) The Lithuanian minority in Poland is insignificant in number. Its temporary enlargement during the war due to an influx of foreign elements from the Kaunas region must be eliminated by natural means, i.e. their return to their homeland. Those elements, which have proven their disloyalty to Polish civic duties, can also not remain in Poland. According to the laws being prepared, they will lose their civil rights and may be forced to leave the country.

¹³ 'Uregulowanie kwestii litewskiej', AAN, sygn. 211/16, fo. 27.

Because the attitude of the entire Lithuanian community in Poland meets this criterion, the problem of the Lithuanian minority will be solved by sending it to Lithuania's primary territory.

2) The Lithuanian state cannot be annexed in such a manner to the USSR or be under its decisive influence. If this occurs, it would become a very convenient base for Soviet influence to penetrate into the Baltic region and deeper into Europe and would pose the same danger for Poland as an East Prussia controlled by Germany.

3) Lithuania also cannot reacquire complete and immediate independence. The behaviour of the Lithuanian nation during the war, its complete lack of feeling for its historical role, extreme opportunism and political duplicity, solidarity with the Germans, attitude in respect to Poles and Jews, etc proves that this nation is completely immature for independent life, which would only be a constant source of unrest in this part of Europe. Like the Germans, the Lithuanian nation must be strongly re-educated mentally, guided by external factors: national education and foreign policy. However, the development of the native culture and material welfare must be sufficiently guaranteed for Lithuanians within the limits of broad autonomy.

4) Poland is the only state, which, due to its geographic position, historical traditions, similarity of geopolitical goals, and knowledge of the region and nation, can perform this task of preparing the Lithuanian nation for a future life as an independent state positively. The supervision of autonomous Lithuanian life, which is carried out by the Poles, shall not have the goal of making them Polish or of inhibiting the development of their native culture or economy. [...]

5) The borders of the Lithuanian autonomous area can be expanded by returning Klaipėda and annexing the Lithuanian part of East Prussia. It is necessary to direct the Lithuanian national expansion in this direction. The border with Poland cannot be changed to our disadvantage. If it should appear expedient to exchange people between the Polish and Lithuanian autonomous areas, the border could be moved to Poland's advantage: this would allow the greater number of relocated Polish residents, compared to the number of relocated Lithuanian residents, to be settled. Meanwhile Poland's possession of Vilnius is not subject to discussion.

6) In order to implement the aforementioned plans, it is necessary to explain point by point the true essence of the Lithuanian problem to Britain and America. To this end it is necessary:

a) to break off ties with Lithuanian exile groups and expose their role as one of many Lithuanian political guarantees in case of various outcomes of the war;

b) to inform the governments and public opinion of Britain and America about the terror being carried out by Lithuanians against the Poles, which is in no way less than the German terror, as well as the initiative and responsibility of the Lithuanians for the bloody annihilation of the Jews in Lithuania, which has become an example with the Germans disseminating these methods throughout all of conquered Europe;

c) as necessary, to elucidate in these lands the lack of ideas of Lithuanian policies, their constant support of whoever is stronger at the moment, their selling out to many countries, their understanding of only strong gestures and blows, and the insincerity of the society's recent pro-Soviet mood, which has manifested itself only now, clearly showing the victory of Western democracy;

d) to achieve the discontinuance of the uncritical position of British propaganda and radio, as well as to a certain degree Polish radio, of Lithuanian statements concerning the list of their alleged martyrs under German rule and in respect to their pro-Soviet orientation.

7) In connection with the slaughter, carried out in September, of the elite of Vilnius' Polish intelligentsia, who had been accused by the Lithuanians [On 17 September 1943 ten members of the Polish intelligentsia were shot in Vilnius as German revenge for the killing of Lithuanian Criminal Police Inspector M. Padaba], to break off any official contacts by the Polish government and political figures with any Lithuanian groups in the country.¹⁴

As we see, the authors of the 'Theses' not only did not recognise the right of the Lithuanian nation to its own state but also considered the very Lithuanian nation to be immature, a nation which Poland must re-educate. They proposed forming a similar opinion about the Lithuanian nation not only in Poland but also in Britain and America. In addition, they proposed renouncing any contacts by the Polish government and underground with the Lithuanian representatives in exile and in Lithuania. These 'Theses' performed their role. On 15 November 1943, the National Council passed a resolution, in which it was written that the immediate goal

¹⁴ 'Tezy Rady Narodowościowej w sprawie litewskiej'. No earlier than the end of September 1943, AAN, sygn. 202/III-201, fos. 94-95.

of the Delegation of the Government in the Country in the area of national policy should be the preservation of Poland's eastern lands and the 'incorporation of Lithuania into Poland'.¹⁵

Lithuanian-Polish diplomatic contacts in exile were virtually broken off from mid-1943 (after the death of Polish Prime Minister Gen W. Sikorski in an air crash on 4 July 1943).

During the years of German occupation, the institution of the Delegation of the Polish government in the Country focussed a great deal of attention on the creation of plans in respect to Lithuania. A negative view of the Lithuanian state and nation prevailed in Polish underground documents. Many Polish underground projects foresaw no place for a Lithuanian state in post-war Europe and were preparing to 're-educate' the Lithuanians similar to the German Nazis. An 'Outline of the Solution of the Lithuanian and Belarussian Question' [*Zarys rozwiązania sprawy litewskiej i białoruskiej*], written in 1943, discussed in detail Poland's policy in respect to Lithuania. The 'Outline' was based on the following assumptions: 1. The eastern borders of the Republic of Poland would remain those indicated in the Treaty of Riga (1921); 2. The solution of the Lithuanian question rested on Poland.

Below are presented two ways of solving the Lithuanian Question: the first foresees the abolishment of Lithuanian independence at the same time satisfying Lithuanian aspirations on the Vilnius Question, the second preserves formal Lithuanian independence but with Lithuania remaining militarily dependant on Poland. The authors of the 'Outline' supported formal and restricted Lithuanian independence. At the same time they proposed creating a Vilnius Province with broad self-rule and local enactment of laws without Lithuanian participation. In the opinion of the project's authors, the Republic of Lithuania had to become a member of the Central European Federation, which was closely tied to Poland. According to a special agreement, Poland would represent Lithuania in the international arena and according to a military convention, the Republic of Poland would guarantee the integrity of Lithuania's borders and their defence from foreign aggression. The Lithuanian army would be subordinate to Poland's armed forces command, with the Polish army using the land, naval, and air bases in Lithuanian territory. The same currency would be introduced in both states,

¹⁵ 'Uchwała Rady Narodowościowej z dn. 15. XI. 1943 r.', AAN, sygn. 202/XVI-1, fo. 2.

customs tariffs would be abolished, and a common administration would manage railway, sea and air transport. Polish Lithuanians would be guaranteed complete freedom of national development. The Republic of Lithuania would exist within its 1937 borders and in addition, the northwest counties of East Prussia up to the Labiau (Polessk) – Gumbinnen (Gusev) – Wizajny line would be annexed to it.¹⁶

A clearly expressed negative view of the Lithuanian state and Lithuanians was characteristic of many of the Polish underground documents prepared during this period (1942–1943). Lithuanians were accused of all the injustices experienced by the Poles, heedless of the fact that Lithuania had also been occupied and controlled by the Nazis and that the Lithuanian people had also had to bear the hardships and misfortunes brought on by the war and occupation. In addition, a self-critical view of their own people and an analysis of the reasons for the Lithuanians' anti-Polish sentiments were clearly missing. A document of 22 October 1943 'On Lithuanian Matters' [*Ze spraw litewskich*] accused Lithuanians of annihilating the Poles of Vilnius, stating that it was possible to change this situation only by annexing the 'Kaunas' Lithuania' to Poland: '[...] it is necessary to move the borders of the Vilnius Region to the west, annexing Kaunas and its environs to Poland, returning the displaced Poles to their localities, removing the Germans and Russians from the Kaunas Region, and replacing them with a Polish element. Then Kaunas will reacquire its Polish nature. The source of chauvinism in Kaunas will be destroyed. Vilnius will reacquire its previous surroundings and link to the sea. Then the Vilnius region will not be a corridor. The Poles of the northeast lands will be consolidated and regain their trust of Poland. The Lithuanian element, following selection and the punishment any criminals, will be diverted from Vilnius and directed towards the sea, where together with the Poles they will create a huge economic centre in the communities of the cities of the Bay of Gdańsk. This relocation of the borders and the redirection of Lithuanian objectives for Vilnius in another direction must be made decisively and deliberately. The power of Polish will and thought must be manifested'.¹⁷ Among other documents prepared by the AK BIP, the project 'The Regulation of Polish-Lithua-

¹⁶ 'Zarys rozwiązania sprawy litewskiej i białoruskiej', AAN, sygn. 202/II50, fos. 109–117.

¹⁷ 'Ze spraw litewskich', LCVA, f. R-601, ap.1, b. 33, fo. 23.

nian Relations' [*Uregulowanie stosunków polsko-litewskich*] is also worthy of attention. The project debates three variants of the solution of the Lithuanian question: 1) the restoration of the Republic of Lithuania, 2) the restoration of a new Lithuanian state connected by federate ties with Poland; and 3) the incorporation of Lithuania into the Polish state while preserving national autonomy for ethnographic Lithuania. The authors of the project supported the second variant (a federation of Lithuania with Poland). In order to guarantee the realisation of this variant, Poland would first of all have to occupy Lithuania and then step-by-step implement the following policy:

a) after the occupation of Lithuania a civilian administration should be created, which would be subordinate directly to the presidium of Poland's council of ministers;

b) the civilian administration should be headed by an energetic and strong Polish politician with a knowledge of Lithuanian-Polish relations;

c) the civilian administration should guarantee both Lithuanians and Poles equal political rights and the right of free speech, allow both nations into the region's government, and nurture a spirit of coexistence and democracy;

d) All Lithuanians, who are guilty of worsening Polish relations with the Lithuanians, must be removed from the region's government and those who have committed crimes against Poles suitably punished.¹⁸

The documents presented here reflect the negative view of Lithuania and Lithuanian-Polish relations held by local Polish politicians and underground ideologists. The reasoning of the Polish underground activists influenced (although not decisively) the supreme institutions of the Polish political and military authorities (especially the AK Supreme Command in Warsaw). In addition, the propaganda of the Vilnius BIP ideologists strengthened the hatred of local Poles for Lithuanians and contributed to the incitement of Lithuanian-Polish conflicts.

The attitude of the Polish underground in Vilnius was significantly more hostile in respect to Lithuania and Lithuanians than the Polish government-in-exile. While the Polish government recognised

¹⁸ 'Uregulowanie stosunków polsko-litewskich', LCVA, f. R-601, ap. 1, b. 33, fos. 20–22.

the right of the Lithuanian nation to an independent state with the pre-war borders, a large percentage of Polish underground activists disavowed the possibility of the existence of an independent Lithuanian state. Official Polish underground statements maintained a more reasonable view and limited themselves to the requirements for recreating a Polish state with the pre-war borders.

When Churchill addressed the House of Commons in February 1944, he stated that Great Britain had never guaranteed the inviolability of Poland's borders and had not accepted the annexation of Vilnius to Poland. A convention of political parties representing Polish parties that met in Vilnius on 1 March 1944 published an 'Appeal to the Inhabitants of the Eastern Lands of the Polish Republic' [*Odezwa konwentu stronnictw politycznych do ludności Ziemi Wschodnich RP*]. This appeal stated that the convention of Polish parties never agreed and would never agree with any doubts about Poland's legal possession of the eastern lands [i.e. East Lithuania, West Belarus, and Ukraine]. It said that without the eastern lands, 'there can be no Free, Independent, and Large Poland. And there can be no Free, Quiet, and Democratic Europe without a large Poland. A Poland that included Vilnius, Grodno, Lvov, Lida, Novgorodok, and Pinsk'.¹⁹

A determination to fight by force of arms for Poland's possession of the so-called eastern lands poured out in the 'Appeal'.

After reviewing the aforementioned Polish underground documents, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the view of Lithuania held by the structures of the Polish underground was hostile and biased. They attempted to put all blame for the bad Lithuanian-Polish relations on one side, i.e. the Lithuanians. Polish underground activists living in Vilnius felt particular hostility towards Lithuania and the Lithuanians. The official policy of the Polish government in respect to Lithuania was more favourable than the plans for managing Lithuania and re-educating the Lithuanians that were being created by local Poles. The propaganda of the Polish underground exaggerated the injustices done to Poles by Lithuanians and attempted to thrust their especially negative image of Lithuanians on their military and political leadership and thereby justify their demands for implementing a severe and merciless policy in respect to Lithuania.

Translation: Artūras Bakanauskas

¹⁹ 'Odezwa konwentu stronnictw politycznych do ludności Ziemi Wschodnich RP z dnia 1 marca 1944 r.', AAN, sygn. 202/II-49, fos. 231-232.

LENKŲ POGRINDŽIO POŽIŪRIS Į LIETUVOS VALSTYBINGUMĄ
1939–1944 METAIS

Santrauka

ARŪNAS BUBNYS

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas lenkų pogrindžio požiūris į Lietuvos valstybingumą, teritorinį vientisumą, lietuvių–lenkų santykius Antrojo pasaulinio karo metais. Sąvoka *lenkų pogrindis* taikoma ne tik karinei organizacijai, nuo 1942 m. vadintai Armija krajova, bet ir slaptai civilinei administracijai – Vyriausybės įgaliotiniui kraštui. Taip pat nagrinėti ne tik Lietuvoje (pirmiausia Vilniaus srityje) veikusio lenkų pogrindžio, bet ir centrinės lenkų pogrindžio vadovybės Varšuvoje, Lenkijos emigracinės vyriausybės požiūriai į Lietuvą. Darbe remtasi Lietuvos ir Lenkijos archyvų dokumentais bei abiejų šalių istorikų darbais.

Išnagrinėjęs įvairius lenkų pogrindžio dokumentus, autorius padarė išvadą, kad lenkų pogrindžio struktūrų požiūris į Lietuvą buvo priešiškas ir neobjektyvus. Visa kaltė ir atsakomybė dėl blogų tarpusavio santykių suversta vienai pusei – Lietuvai ir lietuviams. Ypač priešiškai Lietuvos atžvilgiu buvo nusiteikę Vilniuje gyvenę lenkų pogrindžio veikėjai. Oficiali Lenkijos vyriausybės politika Lietuvos atžvilgiu buvo kur kas palankesnė, negu vietinių lenkų veikėjų kuriami pokarinio Lietuvos sutvarkymo ir lietuvių tautos „perauklėjimo“ planai. Lenkijos emigracinė vyriausybė pripažino lietuvių tautos teisę į nepriklausomą valstybę su prieškarinėmis sienomis, t. y. be Vilniaus ir Vilnijos, o nemaža dalis Vilniaus ir Varšuvos pogrindžio veikėjų neigė nepriklausomos Lietuvos egzistavimo galimybę ir reikalavo po karo prijungti Lietuvą prie Lenkijos arba paversti Lietuvą visiškai nuo Lenkijos priklausančia pseudovalstybe. Vilnijos lenkų pogrindžio propaganda išpūsdavo naciams pavaldžios lietuvių administracijos ir policijos padarytas skriaudas lenkams, bandė centrinei karinei ir politinei vadovybei įpiršti ypač neigiamą lietuvių įvaizdį ir tuo pagrįsti reikalavimus vykdyti griežtą ir nenuolaidžią politiką Lietuvos atžvilgiu. Vis dėlto oficialiuose centrinės vadovybės, ypač emigracinės vyriausybės, pareiškimuose buvo laikomasi nuosaikesnio požiūrio ir apsiribota reikalavimais atkurti Lenkijos valstybę su prieškarinėmis rytinėmis sienomis.

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