

---

## UNITING AND POLARISING FEATURES OF NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA IN 1918 AND IN THE 1990S

**Audronė Janužytė**

Mykolas Romeris University  
Institute of Political Science

Ateities st. 20, 08303 Vilnius, Lithuania

E-mail: [audrone\\_januzyte@mruni.eu](mailto:audrone_januzyte@mruni.eu)

ORCID: 0000-0001-6012-0598

Received: 07 February 2021; accepted for publication: 11 November 2021

DOI: 10.13165/SMS-21-12-1-04

**Abstract.** *Two critical factors influenced the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1918 and in the 1990s. The external factor was composed of the international politics of the time and the geopolitical situation of the country. In the clash of the national interests of Russia (the Soviet Union) and Germany over the territory of Lithuania, Lithuanians first restored their statehood in 1918, then lost it under the Soviet and Nazi occupations of the country from 1940 to 1990, and then declared the independence of Lithuania on 11 March 1990, when the Soviet Union began to crumble after the end of the Cold War. The internal factor that united and mobilized the national movement of Lithuanians seeking the creation of an independent state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was nationalism. Relying on theoretical insights into nationalism, this article examines two aspects of the discourse of Lithuanian politicians on issues of nationalism: 1) the concept of nationalism and its key features, i.e., highlighting the concepts of nationalism used for the construction of political discourse in an attempt to substantiate the right of the Lithuanian nation to build its independent state; and 2) Lithuanians' attitude towards*

*ethnic minorities, i.e., revealing their distrust of ethnic minorities when building the nation state in 1918, and certain tensions between Lithuanians and ethnic minorities when restoring the independence of Lithuania in 1990.*

**Keywords:** *nationalism, nationalism in Lithuania, statehood, statehood of Lithuania, independence, independence of Lithuania, ethnic minorities, Lithuanians and ethnic minorities.*

## Introduction

Changes in the statehood of Lithuania were affected by a number of critical factors in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The major external factor was the threat to national security due to the geopolitical position of the country, where the national interests of Russia/the Soviet Union and Germany clashed over Lithuanian territory as a strategic area in the global wars in which they fought. Lithuania restored its statehood after the First World War, and continued creating the nation state from 1918 to 1940; but Lithuania lost its statehood (for the period of 1940–1990) when the Soviet and then Nazi armies occupied the country during the Second World War. Following the end of the Cold War at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the deepening ideological, political, economic, financial, and social crisis of the Soviet Union, after the critical mass of the movement of people was reached in the country, Lithuania re-established its independence in 1990. The key internal factor when restoring the statehood of Lithuania (in both 1918 and 1990) was nationalism as a movement, uniting and mobilizing the Lithuanian nation to create an independent state. Two concepts can be identified in the way that Lithuanian politicians perceived nationalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the first concept, the self-determination of the nation to create an independent state is an ethnic-national law which relies on “objective and ethnic” factors, i.e., that each nation living in a certain territory and united by common origin, language, history, traditions, culture, national self-awareness, and national ideals has the right to be an independent state (Petras Klimas). The second concept defines nationalism as the ideology or political principle of the movement of the Lithuanian nation, promoting the re-establishment of statehood which was lost in certain historical periods. The restoration of statehood then becomes a political principle (Augustinas Voldemaras). The same is confirmed by the objectives, agendas, and mass rallies of the Lithuanian Liberty League and the mass Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) in the 1980s–1990s for the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania. When assessing the activities of the Lithuanian Liberty League, Romualdas Ozolas, one of the leaders and ideologists of the Sąjūdis Movement, noted that: “All the work of the Lithuanian Liberty League until the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania was an unconditional demand for recognition of the fact of occupation, termination of occupation, withdrawal of the occupying army, and granting the conditions for

restoring the state of Lithuania". This demand was announced in public for the first time on 23 August 1987, at a rally near the monument to Adomas Mickevičius.<sup>1</sup> Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing the secret protocols of Ribbentrop and Molotov on 23 August 1989, the Popular Front of Estonia, the Popular Front of Latvia, and the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) undertook the initiative to organize the Baltic Way campaign to state their goal of independence, where more than two million people linked hands in a human chain that stretched for 650 kilometers from Vilnius through Riga to Tallinn. According to R. Ozolas, the Baltic Way showed that the states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia initiated the processes of ending the unjust occupation and fighting for the re-establishment of independence.<sup>2</sup> The ideas and positions of the Sąjūdis Movement and the Lithuanian Liberty League can be associated with the concept of nationalism promoted by A. Voldemaras, i.e., after recognition of the secret protocols of Ribbentrop and Molotov of 1939 and the occupation of the three Baltic States, the restoration of Lithuanian statehood became a political goal. The aim of this article is to analyze the two aspects of the discourse of Lithuanian politicians on issues of nationalism, relying on theoretical insights into nationalism: 1) the concept of nationalism and its key features, i.e., highlighting the concepts of nationalism used for the construction of political discourse in an attempt to substantiate the right of the Lithuanian nation to build its independent state; and 2) Lithuanians' attitude towards ethnic minorities when building the nation state in 1918 and restoring the independence of Lithuania in 1990, also disclosing the principal positions of ethnic minorities in the independent state of Lithuania. Discourse is examined based on the research methods of content analysis, document analysis, and comparative analysis. The research methods of content and document analysis are applied in discussing the concepts of nationalism promoted by Lithuanian politicians, identifying their key features, and revealing the attitudes of Lithuanians towards ethnic minorities. The comparative research method is used to compare the attitudes of Lithuanian politicians towards ethnic minorities, indicating their similarities and differences. The sources and literature of the discourse may be classified into two groups: the first includes political publicistic articles and public statements of the period discussing issues of nationalism and ways in which relationships with ethnic minorities should be developed during the re-establishment of the Lithuanian state in 1917–1918. The second group covers documents of the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) concerning the relationship of Lithuanians with ethnic minorities, as well as positions and opinion polls of ethnic minorities related to the independent state of Lithuania in 1988–1991.

---

1 Ozolas, R., "Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio įsikūrimas", in *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis, A. Rupšytė (Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010), 26.

2 Ozolas, *supra note*, 1: 36.

## 1. Conceptions of nationalism

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, nation-based thinking was marked by a noticeable general trend for each nation to become independent: at first this would involve demanding equal rights with other nations, then fighting for cultural and political autonomy as well as self-governance, and later fighting for independence and the right to build a nation state. During World War I, the political discourse concerning the statehood of Lithuania became intense and focused on the key issue as to why Lithuanians as a nation should unite and fight for their right to create an independent state of Lithuania. Two particularly active figures in this discussion were P. Klimas and A. Voldemaras. When analyzing the national movements of the time, it becomes clear that both Voldemaras and Klimas provided conceptions of nationalism and indicated the main factors proving the right of the Lithuanian nation to its independence.

According to Voldemaras, nationalism is primarily the ideology of the reborn nation. In his view, each public movement has its own ideology which develops together with the nation's resistance to oppression: no ideology can emerge by itself, nor can its creation be disassociated from actual conditions. The ideology and the public movement interact with and adjust each other. Voldemaras arrives at the conclusion that nationalism is the ideology of the public movement of the re-awakened nation, which is born alongside the nation's resistance to oppression under certain circumstances. Thus, the restoration of statehood then becomes a political principle.<sup>3</sup>

Another concept of nationalism is well-reflected in the political publicistic writings of P. Klimas in the *Lietuvos aidas* newspaper in 1917–1918. Klimas understood a “nation” as an essentially ethnic and cultural entity composed of people living in an ethnic territory, sharing a common origin, language, religion, traditions, and customs, and having a common past and consciousness, who begin to claim the self-determination of the nation in order to create an independent state. Klimas called this the ethnic-national law,<sup>4</sup> and regarded it as a material phenomenon that could be divided into certain elements:

1. *Language.* Assessing the importance of the native tongue in shaping the national and political identity of Lithuanians, Klimas noted that, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, instead of the native language, parts of society gradually began using the Polish or Russian languages.<sup>5</sup> He provided two models

3 Voldemaras, A., “Keletas žodžių apie lietuviškąjį socializmą [Vilniaus žinios, 12 March 1907 (25), no. 56 (665)]”, in *Profesorius Augustinas Voldemaras. Raštai: 90 metų sukakčiai paminėti* (Chicago, IL: Lietuvos Atgimimo Sąjūdis, 1976), 1–10.

4 See: Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsno reikšmė , II”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 27 November 1917, 1–2; Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsno reikšmė , II”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 29 November 1917, 1–2; Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsno reikšmė , III”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 1 December 1917, 1–2; Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsno reikšmė , IV”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 4 December 1917, 1–2. More about P. Klimas' concept of nationalism see: Janužytė, A., “Petras Klimas' concept of nationalism”, *Istorija* 62 (2005): 57–66.

5 Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsno reikšmė , III”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 1 December 1917, 1.

of nations in relation to the use of languages. Based on the first model, individuals using the same language form separate nations. For instance, Americans speak English but they are not English. In the case of the second model, individuals using various languages form a separate nation. Lithuanians, according to him, belonged to the second model of nations. In some historical periods, nations which began using a foreign language instead of the native one were not eliminated as nations, and could still remain separate, unique, and autonomous.<sup>6</sup> However, in assessing the situation of the period, P. Klimas noted subjective and objective reasons which yet had to be overcome so that the native language could prevail throughout the whole of society. He ascribed the negative view of the Lithuanian language to subjective reasons. A common peasant residing in the Eastern Lithuania, once addressed by a nobleman or a priest in Polish, avoided speaking or did not dare to admit that they spoke Lithuanian.<sup>7</sup> There was a common stereotype in the society of the period that the Lithuanian language was inferior to the languages of other nations, and could only be the language of a marginal group of society (the stereotype that, being inferior to other languages, the Lithuanian language could merely serve as the language of the rabble – the uneducated, poor peasantry<sup>8</sup>). At first it was necessary to remove the negative stereotype regarding the use of the Lithuanian language. According to Klimas, the objective reason due to which parts of the nation started using alien languages instead of the native language was the undeveloped nature of written Lithuanian. As such, Klimas raised three crucial objectives so that the Lithuanian language would become the official language of Lithuania: 1) standardization and modernization of written Lithuanian; 2) high-quality teaching of the native language at schools; and 3) preparing educational textbooks in the Lithuanian language.<sup>9</sup> Accomplishing the above-mentioned objectives was very important, as the native language became a significant factor in assisting the formation of the nation state and uniting all members of society in the independent state of Lithuania as well as the most important instrument for building and spreading unique Lithuanian culture and public communication.<sup>10</sup>

2. *National consciousness.* In the process of nation state-building, in the opinion of Klimas, it was important for individuals to have a national consciousness so that they could dissociate the use of an alien language from national identity.<sup>11</sup>

6 Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė\*, IV”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 4 December 1917, 1.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

8 Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė , III”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 1 December 1917, 1.

9 Kl.[imas], P., “Mūsų kalba”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 14 February 1918, 2.

10 *Ibid.*, 1–2; Kl[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 24 November 1917, 1.

11 Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė , II”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 29 November 1917, 1.

To this end, he proposed applying the principle of national self-determination, i.e., to allow people living in Lithuania (with some territorial exceptions) to decide on their national allegiance.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that he suggested avoiding this principle in the Eastern part of Lithuania (Švenčioniai, Vilnius, Lyda, and Ašmena districts), where the majority of peasants spoke Polish or Byelorussian and, accordingly, identified themselves as Polish or Byelorussian.<sup>13</sup> When asked about their nationality, a peasant could not answer – they realized that they were a Catholic, a local person (*tutejszy*), and not a stranger.<sup>14</sup> The term “local inhabitant” was much clearer and more understandable for them. We should point out that Voldemaras also supported the application of the principle of national decision-making, but, unlike Klimas, he proposed to implement it for all individuals to define their nationality in Lithuania.<sup>15</sup>

3. *Culture and history.* In Klimas’ view, the culture of the nation develops in a certain territory, and we can understand the relevant phenomena and processes by familiarizing ourselves with that culture. The prevalence of the unique national culture signals the territory populated by the individual nation, and may be one of the factors determining the territorial boundaries of nation-states. Knowledge of history is of great assistance in perceiving yourself and your culture – this is why Klimas attributed a special role to history in the cognition process. Looking at history is a way of revealing the past of the nation, understanding its present, and foreseeing a vision of its future. The historian’s task is to disclose the birth of the Lithuanian nation – i.e., from its origin and the building of the state to the loss of its statehood – while at the same time interpreting the national re-awakening as the nation’s right to restore its statehood.<sup>16</sup>
4. *A vision of the future and national ideals.* Speaking about the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Klimas distinguished its main feature, i.e., the liberation of nations from national oppression. Each nation seeks to become free: at first it demands equal rights with other nations, which later turns into fighting for its cultural and political autonomy and self-government, and, finally, it fights for independence and the right to build an independent state. In Klimas’ opinion, nations formed their own national ideals in each historical period; during World War I, Lithuanians shaped a national ideal – namely to build an independent state of Lithuania.<sup>17</sup>

---

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.* Kl.[imas], P., “Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė\*, IV”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 4 December 1917, 1–2.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

15 Voldemaras, A., “Lietuvos sostinė ir rytinės sienos [Das neue Litauen, 20 March 1918, no. 8–9]”, in *Profesorius Augustinas Voldemaras. Raštai: 100 metų gimimo sukakčiai paminėti* (Chicago, IL: Lietuvos atgimimo sąjūdis, 1983), 59.

16 Klimas, P., “Senovės tyrimo uždaviniai ir keliai”, *Mūsų senovė* 1 (1921): 4–5.

17 Kl.[imas], P., “Dėl naujo mūsų pagrindo”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 3 November 1917, 1–2.

The conception of nationalism promoted by Voldemaras mainly focuses on its “subjective and political” factors. As for modern theories, the concept developed by Ernest Gellner that nationalism means “primarily a political principle, which holds that political and national unit should be congruent”<sup>18</sup> is close to that of Voldemaras. The conception of nationalism suggested by Klimas mainly concerns “objective and ethnic” factors of shaping national self-awareness. Of the modern theories of nationalism, the ethnic theory devised by Anthony Smith is the closest to the conception of nationalism promoted by Klimas. This concept mainly focuses on the “objective or ethnic” factors of developing national self-awareness – i.e., the resolution of the nation to build its statehood is determined by four elements: 1) a vision, as all those who share a common history and culture should be autonomous, united, and distinct in their recognized homelands; 2) a culture, as a historical culture is one that binds present and future generations, like links in a chain, to all those who preceded them, and one that therefore has over the years shaped the character and habits of a nation; 3) solidarity based on “homeland” for the nation, and the right to “build” the nation on it; and 4) a policy, in terms of politics aiming at a self-government and sovereignty in the homeland.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. The relationships of Lithuanians with ethnic minorities in 1917–1918

The first years of the restoration of the statehood of Lithuania in both 1918 and in the 1990s were marked by changes in the allegiances of nations to certain states, and by the exceptional position of the Russian nation. The latter changed from previously dominating and ruling over various nations in the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union into a minority in the newly-founded republic of Lithuania in 1918 and 1990.<sup>20</sup>

18 Gellner, E., *Nation and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 1.

19 Smith, A., *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 2–4.

20 According to the census data of 17 September 1923, the population of Lithuania (excluding Vilnius and Klaipėda regions) was 2,028,971, comprising: 83.88% Lithuanians; 7.58% Jews; 3.23% Poles; 2.49% Russians; 1.44% Germans; 0.73% Latvians; 0.22% Byelorussians; 0.01% Gypsies; and 0.1% residents of other ethnic groups. Based on the census data of 12-19 January 1989, the population of Lithuania was 3,674,800, comprising: 79.58% Lithuanians; 9.37% Russians; 7.02% Poles; 1.72% Byelorussians; 1.22% Ukrainians; 0.34% Jews; 0.14% Tatars; 0.11% Latvians 0.07% Gypsies; 0.06% Germans; 0.04% Armenians; 0.04% Moldovans; 0.03% Azerbaijani; 0.02% Estonians; 0.02% Georgians; 0.01% Karaites; and 0.21% people of other ethnicities. *Lietuvos gyventojai. Pirmojo 1923 m. rugsėjo 17 d. visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys = Population de la Lithuanie. Données du premier recensement du 17 septembre 1923* (Kaunas: P. Sokolovskienė ir G. Lano spaustuvė), XXII, XXXVI, accessed 22 August 2020, <https://statistikouzasai.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/lietuvos-gyventojai-pirmojo-1923-m-rugsc497jo-17-d-visuotinio-gyventojc5b3-surac5alyimo-duomenys.pdf>; *Gyventojai pagal lytį, amžių, tautybę ir tikybę = Population by sex, age, nationality and religion* (Vilnius: Statistikos departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės, 2002), 9, 13, accessed 22 August 2020, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/services-portlet/pub-edition-file?id=3037>

Politicians had certain doubts regarding several issues: first, whether all ethnic minorities would be loyal to and support the independence of Lithuania; second, whether they would present threats to the re-establishment of the statehood of Lithuania *de facto* and to its international recognition *de jure*; and, third, whether all ethnic minorities would be successfully involved in the creation of the independent state. In analyzing the relations between Lithuanians and ethnic minorities and groups in the period of the restoration of Lithuanian statehood in 1918, the following key aspects can be distinguished:

First, the relationship between Lithuanians and ethnic minorities was one of the major issues during heated discussions while restoring the statehood of Lithuania in 1917–1918. Three main questions can be indicated in these debates. The first asked why representatives of ethnic minorities were not invited to the Vilnius Conference in 1917, which elected the Council of Lithuania and which was meant to solve the issue of Lithuanian statehood. The second question asked why it was necessary to invite representatives of minorities to the Council. The third question asked why, initially, representatives of ethnic minorities refused to participate in the work of the Council. It was not easy for politicians to answer the first question. During heated discussions, Klimas, the secretary of the Council of Lithuania, suggested that the main reason for this omission was the difference between majority and minority rights in a nation state undergoing formation. In his opinion, ethnic minorities should not be allowed to stand in the way of building a nation state; otherwise, no nation state could ever have been built. Contemplating whether the Lithuanians violated the principles of democracy, he asked rhetorically whether the principles of democracy would not have been violated if the right of Lithuanians (as the majority) to decide their own fate would have been determined by ethnic minorities opposing the independence of Lithuania.<sup>21</sup> However, after the independence of Lithuania was restored, the inclusion of representatives of minorities into the Council of Lithuania became imperative, as all citizens had to build the state. Furthermore, representatives of minorities in the Council could work to ensure the right of ethnic minorities to their cultural autonomy.<sup>22</sup> The fact that representatives of ethnic minorities initially refused to participate in the work of the Council was due to several reasons. One reason was that an ethnic minority may not have felt as a minority – i.e., they wanted to have the same rights as the majority, and intended to have a leading position in the new state. Another reason was the doubt among minorities that the Council would really take account of their interests. The third reason was related to the fact that ethnic minorities, for instance, Poles or Jews in Vilnius, actually opposed the independence of Lithuania. Due to Jews' poor knowledge of Lithuanian, according to Klimas, without the Russian language it was dif-

---

21 Klimas, P., "Mažumų ir daugumos teisės", *Lietuvos aidas*, 29 September 1917, 1–2.

22 Klimas, P., "Lietuvos mažumos", *Lietuvos aidas*, 27 September 1917, 1–2.



difficult for Jewish politicians, especially those from Vilnius, to decide whether they supported the establishment of the Lithuanian state. They saw their future as lying with Russia or Belarus, and not with Lithuania, which remained a puzzle that they could not solve.<sup>23</sup> As colorfully illustrated by some Jews: “What is Lithuania? One said: Lithuania is dryness; the second argued: Lithuania is emptiness; the third one answered – it is boredom; the fourth said – it is a yawn; then the fifth concluded – that Lithuania is calculation. Calculation is the only parameter according to which they eat and drink, sell and buy, love, be loved, and even procreate”.<sup>24</sup> The fourth reason for lack of participation was the ethnic definition of the territory of the Lithuanian state. Ethnic minorities believed that they did not reside in ethnic Lithuania, and for this reason Byelorussian politicians, for example, justified their refusal to participate in the Council. They considered the ethnic territory of Lithuania to be the east of Vilnius to be the ethnic territory of the Byelorussians. After lengthy negotiations between politicians and representatives of ethnic minorities on 27 November 1918, six Byelorussian representatives joined the State Council of Lithuania, to be followed by three Jewish representatives on 11 December the same year. The Poles remained outside this political body for the time being.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. The relationships of Lithuanians with ethnic minorities and groups in 1988, 1989, and the 1990s

Unlike in 1918, when restoring the state of Lithuania in the 1990s, politicians did not even discuss restricting the rights of representatives of ethnic minorities in declaring independence. On 23 October 1988, the general agenda of the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) already declared that it was bringing together all of the people of Soviet Lithuania “[...] irrespective of their occupation, party identification, nationality and religion”, promising to ensure that all citizens would have “equal social, economic, cultural rights and freedoms irrespective of their ethnic origin, religion and customs”, and warranting their cultural autonomy.<sup>26</sup> The resolutions of the Constituent Assembly of the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) noted that it “strongly condemns all expressions of nationalism and discord among

23 Kl[imas], P., “Lietuvos atstatymas ir žydai”, *Lietuvos aidas*, 15 December 1917, 1–2.

24 Zalkin, M., “Lithuanian Jewry and the concept of East European Jewry”, in *Jews in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772*, edited by Liekis, Š., Polonsky, A., and Freeze, C. Y. (Liverpool University Press, 2013), 61.

25 For more, see: Janužytė, A. “National minorities and the founding of the nation state” (academic dissertation; Studies in European Societies and Politics: Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence, Tampere: University of Tampere, 2005), 131–138.

26 *Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio bendroji programa: priimta Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio Steigiamajame suvažiavime 1988 m. spalio 23 d.* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1988), 3, 9, accessed 18 August 2020, [https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/2025903/\\_nnVvzw1](https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/2025903/_nnVvzw1)

the nations, and defends cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities in Lithuania”.<sup>27</sup> In 1989, the declaration of the Seimas of the Reform Movement of Lithuania (Sąjūdis) again reiterated the right of ethnic minorities in Lithuania to their cultural autonomy.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Lithuanian politicians sought the integration of all minorities in rebuilding statehood so that they were not left on the margins, and were not enlisted by separatist movements working against autonomy and the territorial integrity of Lithuania. On 11 March 1990, deputies both of Lithuanians and ethnic minorities voted in favor of the Act on the Restoration of an Independent State of Lithuania in the Supreme Council-Reconstituent Seimas of Lithuania. Only 6 individuals of Polish nationality abstained. In Dainius Žalimas’ view, this essentially shows that some of the Polish deputies were as yet undecided about the independence of Lithuania. For instance, Leon Jankielewicz and Ryszard Macekianec were forced to abstain during the voting since they could not endorse the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania “without consulting their electorate”. A somewhat more critical opinion was voiced by V. Sirutavičius, who claimed that some of the elected representatives of Polish nationality did not support the restoration of the state of Lithuania. Both authors agree that some of the Polish deputies at first coordinated their position with officials of the Soviet Union in Moscow, and as a result intended to vote against the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania, yet decided to abstain in the voting after having been convinced by Stanisław Ciosek, the ambassador of Poland to Moscow, and Polish MPs Marek Karp and Jerzy Nowakowski.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that some people were against the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the independence of Lithuania. For instance, members of anti-Sąjūdis Movement and the Yedinstvo (“Vienybė” – “Единство” – “Jedność”) pro-communist organization, supported by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, endorsed the establishment of an autonomous region in South Eastern Lithuania.<sup>30</sup> After the abortive coup (putsch) in Moscow in August 1991, this organization became dormant. Another example illustrating the position of ethnic minorities on independent Lithuania is the process of taking up citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania. Under Lithuanian law and under the Treaty on the Foundations of Inter-State Relations between the Republic of Lithuania and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic of 29 July 1991, any

27 “Iš Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio Steigiamojo suvažiavimo rezoliucijų. Rezoliucijos Nr. 1, 4, 6”, in *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė (Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010), 471–472.

28 “LPS seimo deklaracija, Kaunas, 1989 m. vasario 15 d.”, in *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė (Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010), 478.

29 Žalimas, D., “Sąjūdis ir Lietuvos Respublikos Nepriklausomybės atkūrimas”, in *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis, A. Rupšytė (Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010), 188–189; Sirutavičius, V., “Kovo 11-oji ir lenkų veiksnys”, *Kultūros barai* 7–8 (2013): 109–111.

30 For more, see: Anušauskas, A., “Okupacinės valdžios požiūris į Sąjūdį”, in *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė (Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010), 145–146, 158–160.

individual who had resided in Lithuania before 3 November 1989 could become a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>31</sup> Based on official statistics, citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania was taken up by 88% of the entire population of the country: approximately 90–95% of Lithuanians (72–76% of the population); and approximately 75% of other nationalities (12–16% of the population). Opinion polls of Russians in 1991 showed that 37% of Russian respondents intended to take citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania (half of respondents – 49% – were in favor of an independent Lithuania), 21% did not intend to assume its citizenship (30% of the respondents considered Russia their motherland, and 36% intended to return to Russia), one in four (25%) respondents were against independent Lithuania and supported the idea of Lithuania remaining within the Soviet Union, and 23% were undecided as to their citizenship.<sup>32</sup> A comparison of Polish positions on the independence of Lithuania in 1918 and 1990 reveals a certain similarity, i.e., not all politicians of Polish nationality approved of the idea of Lithuania as an independent state. The difference here was that, unlike in 1918, in 1990 politicians of Polish origin participated in re-establishing the independence of Lithuania from the very beginning.

## Conclusion

In summarizing, it could be claimed that nationalism in Lithuania, in the early and late 20<sup>th</sup> century, was defined as a political doctrine declaring the right of every nation to take the decision to (re)build an independent state relying on “subjective and political” or “objective and ethnic” factors. Based on “objective and ethnic” factors such as a common nation of origin, ethnic territory where a certain nation lives, language, national consciousness, traditions, culture, history, and national ideals, every nation has the right to take the decision to build an independent state (Klimas’ conception of nationalism). On the other hand, according to “subjective and political” factors, the re-awakened nation begins to resist oppression and Russification under certain circumstances. Restoration of statehood then becomes a political principle (Voldemaras’ conception of nationalism). When we compare the ideas of Voldemaras and Klimas with the concepts of nationalism scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it should be noted that the concepts of nationalism developed by A. Smith and E. Gellner are close to the understandings of nationalism shared by the Lithuanian political leaders of the period.

---

31 “Sutartis tarp Rusijos Tarybų Federacinės Socialistinės Respublikos ir Lietuvos Respublikos „Dėl tarpvalstybinių santykių pagrindų“, 29 July 1991, accessed 10 August 2020, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.97613>

32 Taljūnaitė, M., and Sviklas, E. K., “Lietuvos rusai Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atgavimo išvakarėse: santykis su Lietuva”, in *Lietuvos socialinė raida. Migracija ir etniškumas. Nuo totalitarinės iki demokratinės visuomenės*, no. 2, compiled by M. Taljūnaitė and A. Marcinkevičius (Vilnius: Lietuvos socialinių tyrimų centras, 2013), 103, 108, 110.

Interestingly, the comparison of the positions of Lithuanian politicians in 1918 and 1990 towards ethnic minorities in terms of independence in Lithuania reveals a major difference. On 11 March 1990, the Lithuanians declared the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania together with representatives of ethnic minorities in the Supreme Council-Reconstituent Seimas of Lithuania, whereas the Act of Independence of 16 February 1918 was adopted by the Council of Lithuania containing no ethnic minorities. In the context of doubts about the loyalty of ethnic minorities, the representatives of ethnic minorities were not elected to the Council of Lithuania, which was tasked with solving the issue of the independence of Lithuania.

When comparing the positions of ethnic minorities on the declaration of Lithuania as a *de facto* independent state in 1918 and 1990, we should point out both similarities and differences. The main similarity is that, at first, parts of these ethnic minorities did not approve of the idea of Lithuania as an independent state. After Lithuania was recognized *de jure*, the majority of Lithuanian residents of various ethnicities became citizens. This evidences their determination to associate their future with the independent state of Lithuania. The key difference is that the Polish ethnic minority of 1918 associated its future with the independent state of Poland rather than with Lithuania. As a result, a certain hostility and mistrust emerged between Lithuanians and Poles throughout the inter-war period, and certain historical grievances or nationalistic sentiments continue to occur in the present-day relationships between Lithuanians and Poles. This is especially the case when handling relevant issues of the education of ethnic minorities, or when using Polish letters in writing names and family names in the passports of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

## References

- Anušauskas, A. "Okupacinės valdžios požiūris į Sąjūdį". In *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė, 125–161. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010.
- Gellner, E. *Nation and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.
- Gyventojai pagal lytį, amžių, tautybę ir tikybą = Population by sex, age, nationality and religion*. Vilnius: Statistikos departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės, 2002. Accessed 22 August 2020, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/services-portal/pub-edition-file?id=3037>
- "Iš Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio Steigiamojo suvažiavimo rezoliucijų. Rezoliucijos Nr. 1, 4, 6". In *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė, 471–472. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010.
- Janužytė, A. "National minorities and the founding of the nation state". Academic dissertation; Studies in European Societies and Politics: Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence, Tampere: University of Tampere, 2005.
- Janužytė, A. "Petras Klimas' concept of nationalism". *Istorija* 62 (2005): 57–66.

- Kl.[imas], P. "Dėl naujo mūsų pagrindo". *Lietuvos aidas*, 3 November 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė, II". *Lietuvos aidas*, 27 November 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė, II". *Lietuvos aidas*, 29 November 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė, III". *Lietuvos aidas*, 1 December 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Etnografinio dėsnio reikšmė, IV". *Lietuvos aidas*, 4 December 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Etnografinio dėsnio vertybė". *Lietuvos aidas*, 24 November 1917, 1.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Lietuvos atstatymas ir žydai". *Lietuvos aidas*, 15 December 1917, 1–2.
- Klimas, P. "Lietuvos mažumos". *Lietuvos aidas*, 27 September 1917, 1–2.
- Klimas, P. "Mažumų ir daugumos teisės". *Lietuvos aidas*, 29 September 1917, 1–2.
- Kl.[imas], P. "Mūsų kalba". *Lietuvos aidas*, 14 February 1918, 1–2.
- Klimas, P. "Senovės tyrimo uždaviniai ir keliai". *Mūsų senovė* 1 (1921): 4–5.
- Lietuvos gyventojai. Pirmojo 1923 m. rugsėjo 17 d. visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys = Population de la Lithuanie. Données du premier recensement du 17 septembre 1923*. Kaunas: P. Sokolovskienės ir G. Lano spaustuvė. Accessed 22 August 2020, <https://statistikouzasai.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/lietuvos-gyventojai-pirmojo-1923-m-rugsc497jo-17-d-visuotinio-gyventojc5b3-sura-c5a1ymo-duomenys.pdf>
- Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio bendroji programa: priimta Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio Steigiamajame suvažiavime 1988 m. spalio 23 d.* Vilnius: Mintis, 1988. Accessed 18 August 2020, <https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/2025903/nnVvzwl>
- "LPS seimo deklaracija, Kaunas, 1989 m. vasario 15 d.". In *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė, 478. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010.
- Ozolas, R. "Lietuvos persitvarkymo Sąjūdžio įsikūrimas". In *Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis and A. Rupšytė, 19–45. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010.
- Sirutavičius, V. "Kovo 11-oji ir lenkų veiksnys". *Kultūros barai* 7–8 (2013): 107–115.
- Smith, A. *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 1979.
- "Sutartis tarp Rusijos Tarybų Federacinės Socialistinės Respublikos ir Lietuvos Respublikos „Dėl tarpvalstybinių santykių pagrindų“, 29 July 1991. Accessed 10 August 2020, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.97613>
- Taljūnaitė, M., and Sviklas, E. K. "Lietuvos rusai Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atgavimo išvakarėse: santykis su Lietuva". In *Lietuvos socialinė raida. Migracija ir etniškumas. Nuo totalitarinės iki demokratinės visuomenės*, no. 2, compiled by M. Taljūnaitė and A. Marcinkevičius, 101–112. Vilnius: Lietuvos socialinių tyrimų centras, 2013.
- Voldemaras, A. "Keletas žodžių apie lietuviškąjį socializmą [Vilniaus žinios, 12 March 1907 (25), no. 56 (665)]". In *Profesorius Augustinas Voldemaras. Raštai: 90 metų sukakčiai paminėti*, 1–10. Chicago, IL: Lietuvos Atgimimo Sąjūdis, 1976.
- Voldemaras, A. "Lietuvos sostinė ir rytinės sienos [Das neue Litauen, 20 March 1918, no. 8–9]". In *Profesorius Augustinas Voldemaras. Raštai: 100 metų gimimo sukakčiai paminėti*, 59. Chicago, IL: Lietuvos atgimimo sąjūdis, 1983.
- Zalkin, M. "Lithuanian Jewry and the concept of East European Jewry". In *Jews in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772*, edited by Liekis, Š., Polonsky, A.,

and Freeze, C. Y., 57–70. Liverpool University Press, 2013.

Žalimas, D. “Sąjūdis ir Lietuvos Respublikos Nepriklausomybės atkūrimas”. In:

*Kelias į Nepriklausomybę: Lietuvos Sąjūdis 1988–1991*, compiled by B. Genzelis, A. Rupšytė, 163–217. Kaunas: Šviesa, 2010.

## SOLIDARIZUOJANTYS IR SUPRIEŠINANTYS NACIONALIZMO BRUOŽAI: NEPRIKLAUSOMOS LIETUVOS ATVEJIS 1918 IR 1990 M.

**Audronė Janužytė**

Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Lietuva

**Santrauka.** Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimą 1918 ir 1990 m. veikė du esminiai faktoriai. Išorinis faktorius – to meto tarptautinė politika ir šalies geopolitinė padėtis, kai susidūrė Rusijos / Sovietų Sąjungos ir Vokietijos nacionaliniai interesai dėl Lietuvos teritorijos. Dėl to po Pirmojo pasaulinio karo lietuviai atkuria valstybingumą, Antrojo pasaulinio karo metais jį praranda sovietams ir naciams okupavus šalį (1940–1990 m.) ir, pasibaigus Šaltajam karui bei ėmus byrėti Sovietų Sąjungai, 1990 m. kovo 11 d. skelbia Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimą. Vidinis faktorius atkuriant Lietuvos valstybingumą XX a. buvo nacionalizmas kaip jungiantis ir solidarizuojantis lietuvių tautą judėjimas už savarankiškos valstybės sukūrimą. Straipsnyje, remiantis teorinėmis nacionalizmo įžvalgomis, dviem aspektais nagrinėjamas lietuvių politikų diskursas nacionalizmo klausimais: 1) nacionalizmo samprata ir jos esminiai bruožai, t. y. išryškinamos nacionalizmo koncepcijos, kuriomis remiantis konstruojamas politinis diskursas, kodėl lietuvių tauta turi teisę kurti nepriklausomą valstybę, ir 2) lietuvių požiūris į etnines mažumas, t. y. atskleidžiamas nepasitikėjimas etninėmis mažumomis kuriant tautinę valstybę 1918 m., taip pat tam tikra įtampa tarp lietuvių ir etninių mažumų atkuriant Lietuvos nepriklausomybę 1990 m. Straipsnyje prieita prie šių išvadų: 1) lietuvių politikų nacionalizmo sampratoje galima išvelgti dvi koncepcijas. Pirmoje koncepcijoje nacionalizmas apibrėžiamas kaip lietuvių tautos judėjimo ideologija ar politinis principas už valstybingumo atkūrimą, kuris tam tikrais laikotarpiais buvo prarastas (A. Voldemaras). Antroje koncepcijoje tautos apsisprendimas kurti savarankišką valstybę suvokiamas kaip etnis-tautinis principas / įstatymas, kuris remiasi „objektyviais ir etniniais“ faktoriais, jog kiekviena tauta, gyvenanti tam tikroje teritorijoje, kurios individus vienija bendra kilmė, kalba, istorija, tradicijos, kultūra ir nacionaliniai idealai, turi teisę būti savarankiška valstybė (P. Klimas). Svarbu akcentuoti, kad: 1) XX a. nacionalizmo teoretikų E. Gellnerio ir A. Smitho koncepcijos yra artimos lietuvių politikų nacionalizmo sampratoms ir

2) lietuvių santykiuose su kai kuriomis etninėmis mažumomis galima įžvelgti tam tikrą įtampą ir priešišumą, nes ne visos tautinės mažumos ar jų atstovai buvo linkę pritarti nepriklausomos Lietuvos idėjai 1918 ir 1990 m.

**Reikšminiai** žodžiai: *nacionalizmas, nacionalizmas Lietuvoje, nepriklausomybė, nepriklausomybė Lietuvoje, etninės mažumos, lietuviai ir etninės mažumos.*

---

**Audronė Janužytė** – Mykolo Romerio universiteto Viešojo administravimo ir verslo fakulteto Politikos mokslų instituto docentė. Mokslinių tyrimų kryptys: nacionalizmo teorijos ir koncepcijos, nacionalizmo problemos Europoje, etninės mažumos, aukštojo mokslo politika Europoje.

**Audronė Janužytė** – associate professor at the Institute of Political Science at the Faculty of Public Governance and Business at Mykolas Romeris University. Research interests: theories of nationalism, nationalism issues in Europe, ethnic minorities, politics of higher education in Europe.