

DOI: 10.11649/abs.2018.005

***Darius Staliūnas***

*Lithuanian Institute of History*

*Vilnius*

*darius.staliunas@istorija.lt*

## **Hybrid identities in the era of ethno-nationalism: The case of the *krajowcy* in Lithuania**

In response to the suspension from his duties of the Catholic Bishop of Vilnius Edward von der Ropp, the Baltic German newspaper *Rigasche Zeitung* described this senior Catholic clergyman as follows: “ein wenig Pole, ein wenig Deutscher, ein wenig Litauer, aber stark katholisch” (Wronka, 1917, p. 113) (slightly Polish, slightly German, slightly Lithuanian, but most of all a Catholic). There are no doubts as to his Catholic identification and involvement. The Bishop of Vilnius went to great efforts in trying to unite not just the Catholics in his diocese, but in all the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) (Staliūnas, 1996, pp. 291–299), which is most likely what prompted the Riga newspaper to describe him as “slightly Lithuanian”. Ropp went so far as to establish a political party in 1906, which was dominated by Polish figures, and there is basically no question that of all the cultures in this land, he identified most closely with Polish culture. However, the Polish national democrats accused the bishop of not defending Polish interests strongly enough, whereas the Lithuanian intelligentsia considered Ropp a Polish nationalist. In the end, we should not be surprised at the fact that the newspaper published in the “capital” of the Baltic provinces made sure to remind its readers of Ropp’s German origins.

In this case, it is not the individual’s own self-identification that we encounter, but the interpretation given by the publicist, one that the bishop himself would hardly have

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 PL License ([creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl/)), which permits redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, provided that the article is properly cited. © The Author(s) 2018.

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences  
[Wydawca: Instytut Sławistyki Polskiej Akademii Nauk]

found appropriate. However, what is more important here is that Ropp was a figure who was difficult to place within the dominant ethno-linguistic identity ideologies of the time.<sup>1</sup> It should be obvious that there were quite a few such atypical figures in the historic lands of the GDL. Michał Römer (Mykolas Römeris), another character who will be mentioned quite a lot in this article, claimed in one of his private letters that he identified both as a Lithuanian and as a Pole (Solak, 2008, p. 356).

This phenomenon, where in the modern period in Central and Eastern Europe an individual could not identify with any one of the dominant ethno-linguistic identity ideologies, has been the focus of researchers' attention for several decades now. Ever since the 1990s, some aspects of the phenomenon, such as the *krajowcy* (from the Polish *kraj*, for 'land'), have received so much attention from historians that it might appear to have been a very strong movement (Jurkiewicz, 1999; Miknys, 2000, pp. 21–31, 2001, pp. 97–114; Sawicki, 1999). In recent years, at first Polish and later Lithuanian historians even started to claim that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a collision not of two modern ethno-nationalisms, Lithuanian and Polish, but a kind of civil conflict between groups representing two different types of Lithuanian identity ideologies, old Lithuanians and young Lithuanians. Old Lithuanians were said to identify with the GDL, whereas young Lithuanians belonged to the modern ethno-linguistic nationalism (Buchowski, 2012, pp. 38–39, 126; Bumblauskas, 2015, pp. 445–462). But these claims rest on weak foundations, for even if individuals did exist who called themselves old Lithuanians, instead of confronting the Lithuanian national movement, they were actually more likely to cooperate, whereas the majority of Polish-speaking historic Lithuanian society identified with the modern Polish nationalist ideology (Staliūnas, 2016a, pp. 109–119).

In analysing in this article the already-mentioned forms of *krajowcy* self-identification and the identity ideologies they propagated, as well as their political agenda, I argue that the term to describe this phenomenon is hybrid identification. There can be various types of hybrid identities. Of most interest here are those cases that may be described as double consciousness, i.e. when one individual tries to combine two or even more national cultures. At the same time we should understand that unlike biology, where there are indeed different species, in the contemporary social world all cultures are already hybrid to some extent, i.e. influenced by other cultures.<sup>2</sup>

But we should begin with a brief discussion on the dominant collective identity ideologies of the nineteenth century. In other words, we need to clarify what systems

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Lithuanian historian Vasilijus Safronovas, the system of meanings constructed and supported in the public space about belonging to a group is called identity ideology. This system of meanings should not be confused with self-identification (Safronovas, 2015, p. 10). For more on the problems associated with the term "identity", see: Brubacker & Cooper, 2000, pp. 1–47.

<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see Smith & Leavy, 2008.

of meanings predominated in particular periods. In the late eighteenth century in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the nation was identified with the noble estate. In the Age of Enlightenment, the nobility understood the nation as a community of citizens bound by mutual obligations, and one became a citizen by participating in the governance of the state. In this way, a very close link existed between the nation and the state, which had to guarantee its citizens certain civil freedoms. This kind of political nation concept could not survive after the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as the state of “citizens” no longer existed. Had the dominant identity ideology not changed, there would have been a danger that the population of the former Polish-Lithuanian state would have integrated into the nations of the states that had partitioned the Commonwealth if just the nobility were given actual political participation rights (Beresnevičiūtė-Nosálová, 2001, pp. 47–48).

It is no wonder that given this situation changes to identity ideology took place: new elements were given more significance in the Polish discourse in the first half of the nineteenth century, such as the territory of the former state. Common origins in one historically formed land became for some time the most important criterion integrating the nation. However, after the failed uprising of 1830–1831, and influenced by the Enlightenment, a cultural concept of nation became established where the most important elements consolidating the community became language, religion and customs, even though similar concepts of nation had already existed at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, the science of linguistics and the concept of nation proposed by Johann Gottfried Herder placed more emphasis on the importance of language and folk culture in the formation of a national group. Incidentally, up to the mid-nineteenth century, the ethno-linguistic concept of nation was used ever more widely in linguistics, ethnographic accounts and statistical censuses, though not in the political discourse in the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Medišauskienė, 2016, pp. 96–188). The ethno-linguistic concept of nation became dominant, even in the political discourse, at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. It was then that in the dominant identity ideologies one’s mother tongue became the most important criterion for belonging to the Polish, Lithuanian or Belarusian nation. Of course, there were many situations when, often due to pragmatic motives, the language criterion was supplemented with other markers: Polish nationalists in Lithuania harnessed the confessional criterion (being a Catholic meant being Polish) in order to show that Belarusian Catholics were none other than Poles (Mastianica & Staliūnas, 2016, pp. 241–242). Lithuanian nationalists sometimes gave prominence to ethnic origins when they tried to show that the nobility in Lithuania, despite using Polish as their primary language, were indeed Lithuanians because their ancestors were Lithuanians (Mastianica, 2016). Ethno-linguistic nationalism became a normative phenomenon, and any diversions from the dominant identity ideology were treated as a malady or as going astray. An even more abnormal expression in

this nationalist discourse was an individual's identification with several nations. Not surprisingly, Polish and Lithuanian nationalists called individuals like the earlier-mentioned Römer and others like him renegades, "false Lithuanians", not to mention other demeaning epithets (Sawicki, 1999, p. 169; Sirutavičius, 1996, pp. 274, 288).

These kinds of individuals of non-typical identification not only existed in the early twentieth century but were quite active in society in the lands of the former GDL. Probably the most distinctive were two of the already-mentioned *krajowcy* groups: one consisted of conservative figures, the other of people whose political orientation was democratic. Due to the limited scope of this article, I shall analyse only the attitudes and activities of the second group.<sup>3</sup> This group started forming during the period of the 1905 Revolution, when the political regime in the Russian Empire grew more liberal, and when at the same time the struggle between local nationalisms became more evident. The first platform for *krajowcy* democratic activity was the autonomists' discussions, during which democratic Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Jewish social activists tried to prepare a joint political agenda. In 1906, this group published *Gazeta Wileńska* (The Vilnius Newspaper), and also nominated candidates in elections to the Russian State Duma (parliament), despite always losing. After 1910, the group members were quite active in Masonic lodges, where they promoted their political agenda. Note, however, that the group was not clearly institutionalised in any way, their attempts at a stricter definition of their ideology were fruitless (Solak, 2008, pp. 151–152), and there were even cases when activists belonging to this group competed with each other, for example, publishing two newspapers before the First World War, *Przegląd Wileński* (The Vilnius Review) and *Kurjer krajowy* (The Land Courier).<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, having become clearer in their periodical press from 1906 during elections to the Russian State Dumas, certain features of *krajowcy* ideology can be defined from the many articles and journal entries by Römer, from the writings of Konstancja Skirmuntt, who gravitated between the two *krajowcy* groups, and from many other sources.

Firstly, the *krajowcy* democrats considered the entire territory of the former GDL lands as their homeland, whose population, first of all Poles, Lithuanians and Belarusians (Szpopper, 2009, p. 264), should be treated as equal citizens, that is, Lithuanians in a civil sense. The *krajowcy* looked unfavourably on the other two large national groups, Russians and to an extent Jews, seeing them as elements that did not identify with this land. Incidentally, just before the outbreak of the First World War, certain *krajowcy*, including Römer, started to change their attitude towards particular Jewish

---

<sup>3</sup> Some Polish historians are more inclined to stress the similarities between these two groups, rather than their differences (Szpopper, 2009, pp. 233–234).

<sup>4</sup> In this article I shall focus on the period running up to the First World War, and only occasionally shall one or another thesis be illustrated from interwar sources.

activists, namely those who allegedly began to identify with this land (historic Lithuania) instead of the entire Russian Empire, allowing them to be viewed as potential Lithuanians in a citizenship sense (Römeris, 1925–1926; Sawicki, 1999, pp. 102–104).

The aim of this group was to initially seek territorial autonomy for this land, and later – liberation from Imperial Russia. The concept was not intended to eliminate ethno-cultural differences, but overwhelm them. In other words, their aim was not the French model for a nation, but something closer to the Belgian or Swiss models. It is no accident that members of this group and its close collaborators dreamed about a collective identity type for Poles in Lithuania, one that would be similar to Belgium's Walloons (Bardach, 1988, pp. 226–227, 243; Sawicki, 1999, p. 167), or the kind of national integration that the Svecoman and Fennoman movements achieved in Finland (Szpopier, 2009, p. 232). In addition, the *krajowcy* political agenda usually accentuated the necessity for the modern Lithuania that was being created within the lands of the former GDL to cooperate as closely as possible with Poland, without rejecting the idea of creating a joint state (Bardach, 1988, p. 227; Solak, 2008, pp. 192, 243).

As this group did not even succeed in clarifying a uniform ideology, and attempts at finding common ground with the most mobilised national group, the Lithuanian leaders, failed due to questions of principle,<sup>5</sup> it is no surprise that the *krajowcy* did not devote much attention to how their imagined Lithuanian society, based on civil integration, could even function, for example, how the national needs of Lithuanians, Poles or Belarusians could be met. The only exception was the personal autonomy model borrowed from the Austro-Marxists, and suggested by the lawyer Tadeusz Wróblewski, one of the most consistent activists in the group.

As far as is known, Wróblewski promoted these ideas in a fairly streamlined form for the first time during the 1905 Revolution. At that time, he indicated as a certain ideal a situation where “national matters, i.e. all educational-cultural activities, would be taken away from the state, and given to free national unions, which would be financed by the state”. In his opinion, however, it would be possible to realise this ideal only when the nationalisms had rejected “racial antagonism”, i.e. they would stand for the equal rights of all nations. Wróblewski did not set this ideal out more broadly at the time. He was mostly concerned with reorganising Russia into a federation, and guaranteeing the nations proportional representation, including in autonomous institutions (Wróblewski, 1906, p. 6). He returned to the problem in 1919, when the political future of the entire region was still very hazy. At that time, he supported the concept set forth in a book by Karl Renner according to which nations

---

<sup>5</sup> Lithuanian nationalists projected their “national territory” within the so-called ethnographic boundaries. This “national body”, aside from the territory dominated by Lithuanian speakers, also had to include Vilnius and its surrounds as the historic capital of Lithuania and the territory in which Lithuanians were autochthons, only temporarily denationalised at the time.

are organised in a similar manner to religions (Rudolf Springer, 1902). Cultural and educational issues would lie within their competency. In this way, nationalisms would be depoliticised. But both Renner and Wróblewski, in following him, perceived that national problems were not restricted to just these spheres; therefore, they also proposed a mechanism for politically regulating the rest of public life. In order for equal rights to be guaranteed in other spheres, it was necessary to follow a principle of proportional representation in filling various state positions (Wróblewski, 1919, pp. 11–13). He proposed resolving the question of whether disputed territories belonged to one or another state through plebiscites (Wróblewski, 1919, pp. 15–16).

Thus, in order to implement this concept all the inhabitants of the former GDL had to be divided according to their national belonging. This means that Wróblewski's proposal would have led to a strengthening of national loyalties, or even to producing them in many areas, especially in central and eastern parts of the former GDL, where there were many so-called *tutejsi* (locals), inhabitants who identified with a religion or with the locality, i.e. who considered themselves to be locals.

After this brief discussion of the features of the *krajowcy* political vision, we need to ascertain what motivated this small group to “go against the current”, i.e. to suggest political reforms that opposed the dominant political thought. These motives can be conditionally divided into two categories: pragmatic motives, and those relating to identification problems of members of this group.

Their pragmatic motives were related to the new reality formed by ethno-nationalisms, which in the opinion of the *krajowcy* could have been disastrous for the non-dominant national groups in the lands of the former GDL. Many of the group believed that the ethno-culture of Lithuanians, not to mention Belarusians, was weak and only in its initial stages of development, and without Polish culture or Catholicism, i.e. factors that link Lithuanians with Western Europe, Lithuanians would find themselves drawn into the influence of Russian culture and Orthodoxy, which they would not be able to directly resist (K. Skirmuntt, 2014, pp. 304, 308). However, the majority of the *krajowcy* imagined that cooperation alone between Lithuanians and Poles in the lands of the former GDL would not suffice for the safe existence of these non-dominant national groups in the future, as two predatory states (Russia and Germany) lurked in their immediate neighbourhood. That is why, in the opinion of Römer, Juozapas Albinas Herbačiauskas and other *krajowcy* figures, a union between the former GDL lands and modern Poland was absolutely necessary (Herbačevskis, 1919, p. 16; Sirutavičius, 1996, pp. 282–284, 286; R. Skirmuntt, 2014, p. 457), which, of course, was then often metaphorically identified as a revival of the Jagiellonian union, only with a new, democratic, face. But the challenges that ethno-nationalisms did or could have elicited lay in wait within society itself, and not just beyond the state's borders.

One key task of the varieties of ethno-nationalism, especially when they all started to create political agendas, was to draft their own “national territories”, in which they

sought territorial autonomy at first, and later on to potentially create a nation-state. The problem in the lands of the former GDL, as in the majority of other Central and East European countries, was that it was impossible to define a “national body” in a way that other non-dominant national groups would find acceptable; or, in other words, these “national territories” overlapped (Staliūnas, 2016b). The idea of the “1722 borders” dominated in the Polish discourse, i.e. to recreate the Poland that existed before the First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian state. Lithuanians projected their modern Lithuania within “ethnographic boundaries”, which spanned not only the area where Lithuanians predominated, but also Vilnius and its surroundings. As official statistics indicated that only around 2 per cent in the historic capital of the GDL were Lithuanians, the Lithuanian intelligentsia applied the ethnographic argument: they tried to prove that Vilnius and its surroundings and ethnic Lithuanian lands inhabited by Lithuanians had over time been Polonised. Additionally, Lithuanians claimed that they were the rightful heirs of the GDL; therefore, the historic capital should belong to them and to no one else (Mačiulis & Staliūnas, 2015). In the early twentieth century, Belarusian nationalism also started to mark its own “national territory”, which included the Vilnius province, where, based on official statistics, Belarusians made up over half the population. In this situation, as Herbačiauskas explained in 1919, “Vilnius cannot be a purely national capital of Lithuania; without a fight, undefeated, the Poles will *never* surrender Vilnius to that kind of Lithuania!” (Herbačevskis, 1919, pp. 10, 15; Sirutavičius, 1996, pp. 282–283). The *krajowcy*, as democrats, especially Römer, understood clearly that if the leaders of the Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Jewish movements in the lands of the former GDL failed to find common ground, this brewing territorial conflict would only be resolved through force, to the benefit of one of the competing sides.

Some *krajowcy* had an even more utilitarian view of this concept. Ludwik Abramowicz, one of the more striking figures from this group, claimed that the core of the issue was not the idea itself, but the form of action, i.e. Poles in the lands of the former GDL had to adapt to the changing circumstances, specifically, the strengthening of Lithuanian and Belarusian nationalism, and act accordingly in order to preserve their dominant role in the country:

In the light of national ideas, a *krajowość* will become what he must be: a method for preserving the influence of Western culture, the road leading to the return of Polish society’s domination, because today, partly because he does not understand his duties to culturally and spiritually weaker peoples, he is losing that [domination]. (Abramowicz, 1913, p. 2)

Thus, Abramowicz and certain other activists from this group took an instrumental approach to the idea of a citizen-based consolidation of the non-dominant national groups in the lands of the former GDL, seeing it as a means by which Polish influence in the country could be strengthened, or at least maintained, and that did

not go against Polish national interests at all. This kind of approach was typical of only some of the *krajowcy*, even eliciting rather harsh criticism from members of the other group, including Römer (Solak, 2008, pp. 150–151). The preservation of Polish influence played an even greater role in the conservative *krajowcy* motivation to promote ideas about the common interests of all the land's inhabitants, and the necessity to act together as one, an aspect which is not analysed here in detail. Activists from this group were especially alarmed at the events of the 1905 Revolution in the Baltic provinces, where the Latvian and Estonian confrontation with Baltic Germans descended into extreme forms of violence (R. Skirmuntt, 2014, p. 462).<sup>6</sup> The fear that similar events could be repeated in the North-Western Region is what led to the idea of the necessity of civil integration.

In addition, for the very same pragmatic reasons, Belarusian nationalist leaders took part in the activities of the *krajowcy*, who believed that the Belarusian national movement at the beginning of the twentieth century was still too weak, and that they would not be able to secure territorial autonomy. Thus, they thought that granting autonomy to the North-Western Region would benefit Belarusians, as it would allow them to boost Belarusian nationalism (Solak, 2008, p. 174; Смалянчук, 2000, pp. 105–114, esp. 110).

Nevertheless, aside from these various pragmatic motives that encouraged the formulation of the *krajowcy* concept, activists of this group also tried to resolve their identification dilemmas, and searched for a position in society at a time when the contours of a world divided into monolithic nations were growing ever more distinct.

We should start from the fact that the national identification of this article's heroes changed. Römer could be a good example of this transformation, as he left a great deal of reflective material on this topic. If we are to believe his autobiography, in his youth he believed he was as much a Pole as a Lithuanian, and that these two identifications did not have to be mutually exclusive. Only on encountering Lithuanian nationalism did he understand that he was being forced to choose, and decided that he was nevertheless a Pole. Later, he highlighted on numerous occasions that his Polishness was different to that of Poles from ethnic Poland (Römeris, 1925–1926). In addition, in different contexts, one or another identity component could be given prominence:

My Lithuanian-Polish duality was never so evident as when I was in Vilnius. In Kaunas, my Polish side completely vanished. I would become almost 100 per cent Lithuanian [...]. Here, in Vilnius, I felt different. My duality came alive again. I considered my Polishness one of my local internal factors. (after Sawicki, 1999, pp. 172–173)

Indeed, as far as we can gather from the sources available, this *krajowcy* democrat identity situation placement was not rationally instrumental; it was more like an internal

---

<sup>6</sup> On the 1905 Revolution in the Baltic provinces, see Raun, 2006, pp. 48–59.



emotional feeling, rather than a declaration with pragmatic aims. The latter situation can be seen in, for example, the equilibristics of Lithuania's conservative nobility, when figures like the brothers Hipolit and Ignacy Korwin-Milewski, who had declared their social conservatism and loyalty to the Russian Empire, announced that they were actually Lithuanians, doing so only to de-legitimise Lithuanian nationalism, to distance themselves from Polish nationalism in the Kingdom of Poland, which pronounced democratic ideas, and to receive equal rights from the Imperial Russian government, making them equivalent to the Russian nobility (Weeks, 1999, pp. 347–369).

Taking into consideration the transformations experienced by Römer that we have just mentioned, we should understand that analysing non-typical identity ideologies and making generalisations is not a forgiving task. However, some common features can be gathered from the identity ideologies declared by a majority of *krajowcy* democrats.

Many of the *krajowcy* denied the role of language as the essential criterion for national identity. Konstancja Skirmuntt, a historian who cooperated with both *krajowcy* streams, as well as many leaders of Lithuanian nationalism, acknowledged the importance of language to national culture: "One's native language is a great and important treasure to every nation and every individual. The language is a form that can reflect the national soul in the best, closest and most open way" (K. Skirmuntt, 2014, p. 303). But she immediately added that language was just a form of nationhood, not its content, that it was not language that set one nation apart from the rest. The conservative *krajowcy* group also tried to de-legitimise another pillar of ethno-linguistic nationalism, and ethnicity in particular as the foundation for nationhood. Bolesław Jałowiecki, one of the more active figures in this group, tried to prove that in the Middle Ages a great number of Polish slaves had been sent to Lithuania: "Since time immemorial Polish blood was mixed with Lithuanian and Belarusian blood. Perhaps even in the times of Jagiełło,<sup>7</sup> there would not have been a single person across all of Lithuania who did not have traces of the blood of at least one of those nations" (B. J.....is, 1907, p. 5). In other words, there were no "pure" ethnic groups.

This kind of approach to the key postulates of ethno-linguistic nationalism, to use contemporary scientific terminology, could be identified as a critique of primordialism. Especially since some figures discussed in this article claimed to be, let us say, almost radical constructivists. Herbačiauskas alleged that a person should be allowed to decide on his or her national identification (Sirutavičius, 1996, p. 275).

But the very same Herbačiauskas sometimes spoke about his identification as if it were inherited: "I gained Polish culture from my father, and Lithuanian blood

---

<sup>7</sup> Władysław Jagiełło (c. 1352(1362)–1434) was the Grand Duke of Lithuania (1377–1434) and then the King of Poland (1386–1434).

from my mother!” (after Sirutavičius, 1996, p. 273).<sup>8</sup> Römer expressed similar ideas: “Back then, I did not yet quite understand how unique my skin was, neither purely Polish nor purely Lithuanian, but combined in such a special way that exhibits marks of both Polishness and Lithuanianness” (Römeris, 1925–1926). Since skin is a part of the body, this metaphor suggests that such identity is a natural phenomenon. The ideas of Konstancja Skirmuntt were not very different from these reflections, whose declared collective identity was not the result of any particular influence or specific reading, but simply innate, “given by the grace of God” (Szpopier, 2009 p. 140).

Nor should we be surprised that these self-reflections were transferred to an analysis of society, or that the *krajowcy* used this method to promote a particular identity ideology. Römer, for example, explained that Poles in Lithuania could not be considered an integral part of the Polish nation, or Polish-speaking Lithuanians, because in terms of their ethnic origins they were not Poles but Lithuanians or Belarusians, and calling them Lithuanians, albeit Polish-speaking Lithuanians, was not quite correct either:

The psyche of Lithuania’s Polish population – he claimed – arose from a common national foundation with Lithuanians, and that is what makes them different to real Poles. Also, major changes in the psyche due to several centuries of Polish cultural influence bound them closer to the Polish nation’s culture, to Polish statehood and politics, and that in turn led to even deeper changes to the psyche of Lithuania’s Polish population, distancing them from the Lithuanian national character-type. That is why Lithuania’s Poles constitute a unique psychological character type and social compound, based solely on the land’s fundamental compounds. (after Sawicki, 1999, p. 170)

Römer claimed that the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Polish nations in the lands of the former GDL were formed from one ethnic substratum, “a common pre-ethnic pharmacy of the land” (Sawicki, 1999, pp. 162–163). Their degree of relativity is illustrated by the story of the well-known Iwanowski/Ivanauskas/Ivanouski family when its members could choose to identify with different imagined communities: two became Poles, one became a Belarusian, and the fourth a Lithuanian. However, Römer added, there was no way they could become Jewish, French, German or Russian (Sawicki, 1999, pp. 162–163). It is here that we encounter not radical constructivism, but something more like an interpretation closer to ethno-symbolism.

The question of why the *krajowcy* chose such non-typical forms of identification is even more complex, and cannot be answered in this article. We should also ask whether the research methods used by historians can resolve such questions at all. What we can do is formulate several hypotheses. In the case of Konstancja Skirmuntt, it is likely

---

<sup>8</sup> There are more similar reflections: “My Lithuanianness comes from the fact that my mother was Lithuanian. Stemming from that, in my psyche, which consists of a Slavic and Lithuanian element, I feel bound to the Lithuanian nation” (Sirutavičius, 1996, p. 274).

that she remained framed in the identity ideology of the first half of the nineteenth century, when the concept that dominated was that individuals form a community based on their belonging to the same historically formed land. Römer tried to explain his identification in a similar way, based on a specific historical tradition:

Perhaps some kind of ancestral spirit remains alive in me, going back to my noble-blooded grandparents and great-grandparents, who in pre-democratic times, being part of the Polish nation and belonging to Polish culture, still had a civil self-awareness, and in their actions expressed not the determination and needs of just one nation in the land, but of its entirety, of the collective, the whole land with all its inhabitants, then still passive and apathetic. (after Sawicki, 1999, pp. 164–165)

However, in his case, it would not be much use to search for reasons for this kind of decision in his family tradition, as his father and many other members of his family identified unambiguously with the Polish nation. It could be that for Römer, who was raised in Polish culture, a deep sense of democracy and a particular sensitivity in his youth to the cultural landscape that surrounded him, which was dominated by Lithuanian ethnic culture, ended up playing a very important role (Solak, 2008, pp. 360–361). This is how he described one particular emotional experience in 1895 in St Petersburg in his diary:

I went this evening to St Catherine's Church. [...] A sermon was being preached. The sermon in Polish was about marriage [...]. But what distressed me was that I did not have any small change, because near me there was a poor, blind beggar, and most importantly he was Lithuanian, as he said his prayers in Lithuanian. It was so nice to hear the Lithuanian language, God knows what I would give to always be able to hear our language.<sup>9</sup>

So, even in the case of Römer and Konstancja Skirmuntt, both of whom are *krajowcy* figures who left an enormous written legacy,<sup>10</sup> we can still only give a hypothetical account of the reasons for the formation of their declared identity ideologies, and so such attempts with other members of this group would be even less successful.

\*\*\*

In this article, I have tried to demonstrate that the *krajowcy* democrats were not nationally indifferent. On the contrary, they promoted a clearly formulated national identity ideology, different to the dominant (ethno-linguistic) one. First of all, the *krajowcy* were nationalists in a civic sense, they were Lithuanians, citizens of Lithuania within

---

<sup>9</sup> Quoted after: Solak, 2008, p. 36. Later in his autobiography, he described this story somewhat differently: (Römeris, 1925–1926).

<sup>10</sup> Römer kept a daily diary for a large part of his life where he not only discussed political events and his everyday life, but also included many reflections about the trajectory of his identification.

its historical boundaries. In addition, some of them such as Wróblewski suggested strengthening ethno-linguistic nationalism as well, otherwise his national personal autonomy concept would simply not have worked. Others, such as Konstancja Skirmuntt, Herbačiauskas and Römer, expressed a hybrid identification with several national cultures, and sometimes their self-identification was even reminiscent of identity ideologies that had dominated in earlier epochs. Of course, that hybridism is evident first of all if we look at the matter from a contemporary world-view perspective influenced by nationalist thinking. Living in a world dominated by nationalist thinking, the *krajowcy* also often interpreted their identification as dual (two-ness), although sometimes they also tried to deny this hybridism.<sup>11</sup> That desire to deny hybridism was most likely related to the search for normality in a world where hybrid identification was treated as a deviation from universally accepted norms.

## Bibliography

- Abramowicz, L. (1913). Stanowisko krajowe a idea narodowa. *Przegląd Wileński*, 2(12–13), 1–3.
- B. J.....is [Jaloveckis, B.]. (1907). *Lietuva ir jos reikalai... Tautiškas Lietuvos katekizmas*. Vilnius: M. Kuktos spaustuvė.
- Bardach, J. (1988). *O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Beresnevičiūtė-Nosálová, H. (2001). *Lojalumų krizė: Lietuvos bajorų politinės sąmonės transformacija 1795–1831 metais*. Vilnius: Vaga.
- Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond 'identity'. *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1–47. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007068714468>
- Buchowski, K. (2012). *Litvomanai ir polonizuotojai: Mitai, abipusės nuostatos ir stereotipai lenkų ir lietuvių santykiuose pirmoje XX amžiaus pusėje*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.
- Bumblauskas, A. (2015). Apie 'starolitvinus', Senąją Lietuvą ir šiuolaikines tapatybes. In O. Mastianica, V. Pugačiauskas, & V. Žaltauskaitė (Eds.), *Kintančios Lietuvos visuomenė: Struktūros, veikėjai, idėjos* (pp. 445–462). Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Herbačevskis, J. (1919). *Kur eini, Lietuvi?* Vilnius: n.p.
- Iyall Smith, K. E., & Leavy, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Hybrid identities: Theoretical and empirical examinations*. Leiden: Brill.
- Jurkiewicz, J. (Ed.). (1999). *Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej w Instytucie Historii UAM w Poznaniu (11–12 maja 1998)*. Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM.

---

<sup>11</sup> Römer, for example, tried to prove that the Poles, Lithuanians and Belarusians from the lands of the former GDL originated from the same ethnic substratum, thus these Belarusian, Polish or Lithuanian identities were like a superficial phenomenon, whereas deep in their "psyche", as he liked to say, they were all the same.

- Mačiulis, D., & Staliūnas, D. (2015). *Lithuanian nationalism and the Vilnius question, 1883–1940*. Marburg: Herder-Institut.
- Mastianica, O., & Staliūnas, D. (2016). 'Lithuania – An extension of Poland': The territorial image of Lithuania in the Polish discourse. In D. Staliūnas (Ed.), *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century* (pp. 239–278). Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Mastianica, P. (2016). *Bajorija lietuvių tautiniame projekte (XIX a. pabaiga – XX a. pradžia)*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Medišauskienė, Z. (2016). Images of Lithuania in the first half of the nineteenth century. In D. Staliūnas (Ed.), *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century* (pp. 96–188). Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Miknys, R. (2000). Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku. *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza*, 1, 21–31.
- Miknys, R. (2001). Wileńscy autonomiści i ich projekty autonomii politycznej Litwy w latach 1904–1905. *Lituano-Slavica Posnaniensia: Studia Historica*, 8, 97–114.
- Raun, T. U. (2006). Violence and activism in the Baltic provinces during the revolution of 1905. *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, 10, 48–59.
- Römeris, M. [1925–1926]. Mykolo Römerio autobiografija. Retrieved October 25, 2016, from [http://www.xn--altiniai-4wb.info/files/literatura/LH00/Mykolo\\_Riomerio\\_autobiografija.LHJ501.pdf](http://www.xn--altiniai-4wb.info/files/literatura/LH00/Mykolo_Riomerio_autobiografija.LHJ501.pdf)
- Rudolf Springer [Renner, K.]. (1902). *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*. Leipzig: Deuticke.
- Safronovas, V. (2015). *Kampf um Identität: Die ideologische Auseinandersetzung in Memel/Klaipėda im 20. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Sawicki, J. (1999). *Mykolas Römeris ir buvusios Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės žemių tautinės problemos*. Vilnius: Eugrimas.
- Sirutavičius, V. (1996). Apie 'blogą lietuvių' Juozapą Albiną Herbačiauską. In *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos: Vol. 8. Asmuo: Tarp tautos ir valstybės* (pp. 271–290). Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla.
- Skirmuntt, K. (2014). Apie tiesą ir santaiką dėl lietuvių balsų magnatams, gyventojams ir bajorams Lietuvoje ir dėl jaunojo lietuvių bajoro atsakymo. In *Краёвая ідэя: Канец XIX пачатак XX стагоддзя: Анталогія* (pp. 301–315). Vilnius: "Палітычная сфера".
- Skirmuntt, R. (2014). Praeities balsas ir laiko reikalingumas. In *Краёвая ідэя: Канец XIX пачатак XX стагоддзя: Анталогія* (pp. 454–458). Vilnius: "Палітычная сфера".
- Solak, Z. (2008). *Tarp Lenkijos ir Lietuvos: Mykolo Römerio gyvenimas ir veikla (1880–1920 metai)*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Staliūnas, D. (1996). 'Truputį lenkas, truputį vokietis, truputį lietuvis, o visų pirma katalikas...' Vilniaus vyskupas Edwardas von der Roppas tarp etninių, pilietinių ir konfesinių vertybių. In *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos: Vol. 8. Asmuo: Tarp tautos ir valstybės* (pp. 291–299). Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla.
- Staliūnas, D. (2016a). 'Senalietuviai' ir 'jaunalietuviai' kaip analitinės kategorijos, apibūdinančios lenkų ir lietuvių konfliktą. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 2015(2), 109–119.

- Staliūnas, D. (Ed.). (2016b). *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century*. Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Szpoper, D. (2009). *Gente Lithuana, Nazione Lithuana: Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934)*. Gdańsk: Arche.
- Weeks, T. R. (1999). Political and national survival in the late Russian empire: The case of the Korwin-Milewski brothers. *East European Quarterly*, 33(3), 347–369.
- Wronka, J. (1917). *Kurland und Litauen*. Freiburg: Herder.
- Wróblewski, T. (1919). *Naród i samookreślenie narodowe*. Vilnius: n.p.
- Wróblewski, T. (1906). *Sejmy prowincjonalne i obrona praw mniejszości (Pogadanka wygłoszona na wiecu Polskiego stronnictwa Konstytucyjno-Demokratycznego Ukrainy Wołynia i Podola w dniu 23 Kwietnia 1906 r.)*. Kijów: n.p.
- Смалянчук, А. (2000). Беларускі нацыянальны рух і краевая ідэя. *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 14, 105–114.

### Bibliography (Transliteration)

- Abramowicz, L. (1913). Stanowisko krajowe a idea narodowa. *Przegląd Wileński*, 2(12–13), 1–3.
- B. J.....is [Jaloveckis, B.]. (1907). *Lietuva ir jos reikalai... Tautiškas Lietuvos katekizmas*. Vilnius: M. Kuktos spaustuvė.
- Bardach, J. (1988). *O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Beresnevičiūtė-Nosálová, H. (2001). *Lojalumų krizė: Lietuvos bajorų politinės sąmonės transformacija 1795–1831 metais*. Vilnius: Vaga.
- Brubaker, R., & Cooper, F. (2000). Beyond 'identity'. *Theory and Society*, 29(1), 1–47. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007068714468>
- Buchowski, K. (2012). *Litvomanai ir polonizuotojai: Mitai, abipusės nuostatos ir stereotipai lenkų ir lietuvių santykiuose pirmoje XX amžiaus pusėje*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.
- Bumblauskas, A. (2015). Apie 'starolitvinus', Senąją Lietuvą ir šiuolaikines tapatybes. In O. Mastianica, V. Pugačiauskas, & V. Žaltauskaitė (Eds.), *Kintančios Lietuvos visuomenė: Struktūros, veikėjai, idėjos* (pp. 445–462). Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Herbačevskis, J. (1919). *Kur eini, Lietuvi?* Vilnius: n.p.
- Iyall Smith, K. E., & Leavy, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Hybrid identities: Theoretical and empirical examinations*. Leiden: Brill.
- Jurkiewicz, J. (Ed.). (1999). *Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej w Instytucie Historii UAM w Poznaniu (11–12 maja 1998)*. Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM.
- Mačiulis, D., & Staliūnas, D. (2015). *Lithuanian nationalism and the Vilnius question, 1883–1940*. Marburg: Herder-Institut.

- Mastianica, O., & Staliūnas, D. (2016). 'Lithuania – An extension of Poland': The territorial image of Lithuania in the Polish discourse. In D. Staliūnas (Ed.), *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century* (pp. 239–278). Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Mastianica, P. (2016). *Bajorija lietuvių tautiniame projekte (XIX a. pabaiga – XX a. pradžia)*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Medišauskienė, Z. (2016). Images of Lithuania in the first half of the nineteenth century. In D. Staliūnas (Ed.), *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century* (pp. 96–188). Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Miknys, R. (2000). Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku. *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza*, 1, 21–31.
- Miknys, R. (2001). Wileńscy autonomiści i ich projekty autonomii politycznej Litwy w latach 1904–1905. *Lituanio-Slavica Posnaniensia: Studia Historica*, 8, 97–114.
- Raun, T. U. (2006). Violence and activism in the Baltic provinces during the revolution of 1905. *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, 10, 48–59.
- Römeris, M. [1925–1926]. Mykolo Römerio autobiografija. Retrieved October 25, 2016, from [http://www.xn--altiniai-4wb.info/files/literatura/LH00/Mykolo\\_Riomerio\\_autobiografija.LHJ501.pdf](http://www.xn--altiniai-4wb.info/files/literatura/LH00/Mykolo_Riomerio_autobiografija.LHJ501.pdf)
- Rudolf Springer [Renner, K.]. (1902). *Der Kampf der österreichischen Nationen um den Staat*. Leipzig: Deuticke.
- Safronovas, V. (2015). *Kampf um Identität: Die ideologische Auseinandersetzung in Memel/Klaipėda im 20. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Sawicki, J. (1999). *Mykolas Römeris ir buvusios Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės žemių tautinės problemos*. Vilnius: Eugrimas.
- Sirutavičius, V. (1996). Apie 'blogą lietuvių' Juozapą Albiną Herbačiauską. In *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos: Vol. 8. Asmuo: Tarp tautos ir valstybės* (pp. 271–290). Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla.
- Skirmuntt, K. (2014). Apie tiesą ir santaiką dėl lietuvių balsų magnatams, gyventojams ir bajorams Lietuvoje ir dėl jaunojo lietuvių bajoro atsakymo. In *Kraiovaiva idėja: Kanets XIX – pachatak XX stahoddzia: Antalohiia* (pp. 301–315). Vilnius: "Palitychnaia sfera".
- Skirmuntt, R. (2014). Praeities balsas ir laiko reikalingumas. In *Kraiovaiva idėja: Kanets XIX – pachatak XX stahoddzia: Antalohiia* (pp. 454–458). Vilnius: "Palitychnaia sfera".
- Smalianchuk, A. (2000). Belaruski natsyianal'ny rukh i kraevaiva idėja. *Białoruskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 14, 105–114.
- Solak, Z. (2008). *Tarp Lenkijos ir Lietuvos: Mykolo Römerio gyvenimas ir veikla (1880–1920 metai)*. Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas.
- Staliūnas, D. (1996). 'Truputį lenkas, truputį vokietis, truputį lietuvis, o visų pirma katalikas...' Vilniaus vyskupas Edwardas von der Roppas tarp etninių, pilietinių ir konfesinių vertybių. In *Lietuvių Atgimimo istorijos studijos: Vol. 8. Asmuo: Tarp tautos ir valstybės* (pp. 291–299). Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla.
- Staliūnas, D. (2016a). 'Senalietuviai' ir 'jaunalietuviai' kaip analitinės kategorijos, apibūdinančios lenkų ir lietuvių konfliktą. *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 2015(2), 109–119.

- Staliūnas, D. (Ed.). (2016b). *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century*. Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press.
- Szpoper, D. (2009). *Gente Lithuana, Nazione Lithuana: Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934)*. Gdańsk: Arche.
- Weeks, T. R. (1999). Political and national survival in the late Russian empire: The case of the Korwin-Milewski brothers. *East European Quarterly*, 33(3), 347–369.
- Wronka, J. (1917). *Kurland und Litauen*. Freiburg: Herder.
- Wróblewski, T. (1919). *Naród i samookreślenie narodowe*. Vilnius: n.p.
- Wróblewski, T. (1906). *Sejmy prowincjonalne i obrona praw mniejszości (Pogadanka wygłoszona na wiecu Polskiego stronnictwa Konstytucyjno-Demokratycznego Ukrainy Wołynia i Podola w dniu 23 Kwietnia 1906 r.)*. Kijów: n.p.

## Hybrid identities in the era of ethno-nationalism: The case of the *krajowcy* in Lithuania

### Abstract

This article deals with the identification of the so-called *krajowcy* – a relatively small group of Polish-speaking activists in Lithuania and Belarus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who promoted an idea of the re-establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This article claims that the *krajowcy* democrats (Michał Römer, Tadeusz Wróblewski, Konstancja Skirmuntt and others) were not nationally indifferent. On the contrary, they promoted a clearly formulated national identity ideology, different to the dominant (ethno-linguistic) one. First of all, the *krajowcy* were nationalists in a civic sense: they were Lithuanians, citizens of Lithuania within its historical boundaries. In addition, some of them, for example Wróblewski, suggested strengthening ethno-linguistic nationalism as well, otherwise his national personal autonomy concept would simply not have worked. Others, such as Konstancja Skirmuntt, Juozapas Albinas Herbačiauskas and Michał Römer, expressed a hybrid identification with several national cultures, and sometimes their self-identification was even reminiscent of identity ideologies that had dominated in earlier historical periods.

**Keywords:** *krajowcy*; nationalism; Lithuania; Belarus; hybrid identification; civic nationalism; personal autonomy model; identity ideology



## Tożsamości hybrydowe w erze etnonacjonalizmu – „krajowcy” na Litwie

### Streszczenie

Artykuł jest poświęcony identyfikacji tak zwanych krajowców, stosunkowo nielicznej grupy polskojęzycznych aktywistów, działających na Litwie i Białorusi pod koniec XIX i na początku XX wieku, promujących ideę odtworzenia Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Artykuł wykazuje, że reprezentanci demokratycznego skrzydła tego ruchu (Michał Römer, Tadeusz Wróblewski, Konstancja Skirmuntt i inni) nie byli narodowo obojętni. Wręcz przeciwnie, promowali jasno sformułowaną ideologię tożsamości, odmienną od dominującej wówczas narracji etnolingwistycznej. Byli przede wszystkim narodowcami w sensie obywatelskim – Litwinami, obywatelami Litwy w jej historycznych granicach. Co więcej, niektórzy z nich, na przykład T. Wróblewski, postulowali także wzmocnienie nacjonalizmu etnolingwistycznego, w przeciwnym bowiem razie proponowana koncepcja autonomii osobistej nie miałaby szans na zaistnienie. Inni działacze, tacy jak Konstancja Skirmuntt, Juozapas Albinas Herbačiauskas (Józef Albin Herbaczewski) i Michał Römer, identyfikowali się z wieloma kulturami narodowymi, a ich samoidentyfikacja przychodzi czasem na myśl ideologii tożsamości, dominujące we wcześniejszych epokach historycznych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** „krajowcy”; nacjonalizm; Litwa; Białoruś; tożsamość hybrydowa; nacjonalizm obywatelski; model autonomii osobistej; ideologia tożsamości

**Dr Darius Staliūnas** is a member of editorial boards of many academic peer-review journals, including *Ab Imperio*, *Nordost-Archiv. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte*, *Prace Historyczne*, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, *Lithuanian Historical Studies*. Since 2000 Dr Staliūnas has been a deputy director at the Lithuanian Institute of History. He is the editor of *Lithuanian studies series* at Academic Studies Press (Boston, USA). He teaches at Vilnius university. His research interests include issues of Russian nationality policy in the so-called North-Western Region (Lithuania and Belarus), ethnic conflicts as well as issues of places of memory in Central-Eastern Europe.

**Bibliography (selected):** *Making Russians: Meaning and practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863*, Amsterdam/New York 2007; *Enemies for a day: Antisemitism and anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania under the tsars*, Budapest/New

York 2015; *Lithuanian nationalism and the Vilnius question, 1883–1940*, Marburg 2015 (co-author: Dangiras Mačiulis); (editor), *Spatial concepts of Lithuania in the long nineteenth century*, Boston 2016).

---

**Correspondence:** Darius Staliūnas, Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, e-mail: darius.staliunas@istorija.lt

**Support of the work:** This work was supported by the Lithuanian Institute of History.

**Competing interests:** No competing interests have been declared.