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Belarussian and Jewish Issues in the Political and Legal Thought of Polish Groups in Vilnius in the First Years of Independence – Selected Issues

Kwestia białoruska i żydowska w myśli polityczno-prawnej polskich ugrupowań w Wilnie w pierwszych latach niepodległości – wybrane zagadnienia

SUMMARY

The position of Polish groups of interwar Vilnius (in the first years of independence) on the issues presented in this article was varied. National Democracy did not regard Belarusians as an independent nation and denied them the right to an independent state. Democrats, on the other hand, were in favor of equal rights for all nations and granted Belarusians the right to their own culture and education. In a similar vein, the Democrats, along with Vilnius conservatives, also expressed their opinions on the Jewish question. Representatives of National Democracy found a lot of space for this issue in their statements. In the context of the dispute about Vilnius, it was emphasized that the Jews would opt for Lithuania and Vilnius's membership of the Lithuanian state.

Keywords: Belarussian issue; Jewish issue; Vilnius; political and legal thought

INTRODUCTION

After the occupation of Vilnius by the Polish army, on 12 April 1919 Marshal Józef Piłsudski expressed his view on nationality issues in the north-eastern part of the Republic of Poland. He delivered the famous appeal in Vilnius to the inhabitants of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which began with the words: "Your country has not known freedom for a hundred or so decades, oppressed by hostile Russian, German, and Bolshevik violence – violence which, without asking

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the people, imposed foreign behaviours, restrained their will, often breaking their lives". He further postulated the right of free expression, as well the resolution of internal, national and religious matters: "[…] as you all wish for it, without any violence or pressure from the Polish side"[1]. The main tasks of the newly founded Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands (19 February 1919 – 9 September 1920) included: protection for all the people living on the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, regardless of nationality or religion, granting order and peace, as well as safeguarding the right to decide about their future through secret ballot, direct, universal and equal elections[2]. The appeal was received with great hopes by both the Lithuanian and Belarusian population. Hope for a final solution on the political fate of Belarus among numerous Belarusian groups and sympathizing circles with Poles arose, however still in close connection with Poland[3].

State Department Bureau in Cracow also discussed the future of the Lithuanian-Belarusian territory. The meeting took place on 6 July 1918, and commenced with a statement:

> First of all, we should reject the incorrect opinion that all Lithuania is ethnographically Lithuanian. Only raising the awareness in Europe that the Polish presence in Lithuania is completely equivalent to the Lithuanian and Belarusian in the lands of the Grand Duchy can reinforce the Polish Government in political actions[4].

They were in favour of federation, self-determination and equal rights for the Polish community. They also emphasized with all force the equality of the "Polish community in Lithuania, existing within its compact territory, significantly outside the Lithuanian ethnographic area". According to Marian Świechowski – one of the leading politicians of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the biggest mistake of Lithuanian Poles was to give up the independent political action and hand it over to the authorities in Warsaw. He stated:

> Warsaw could not or was not able to, but did not at all push the Polish matters in Lithuania further. This led to a political distancing of the Polish community in Lithuania by Lithuanians and Belarusians. And now we have to take into account the fact of the emergence of Lithuanian and

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[1] J. Gierowska-Kałłaur, *Zarząd Cywilny Ziem Wschodnich (19 lutego 1919 – 9 września 1920)*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 52–53.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

[3] *Położenie ludności litewskiej w Polsce w okresie 1935–1938*, typescript, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius (LMAVB), Zespół Tymczasowego Komitetu Wileńskiego Litewskiego, ref. fond 254, folder 558, fol. 1.

[4] *Sprawozdanie z zebrania dyskusyjnego w sprawie Litwy*, typescript, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius, Kolekcja Ludwika Abramowicza, ref. fond 79, folder 866. Jan Boguszewski, Edward Ligocki, Marian Świechowski, Wasilewski, Antoniewicz, Janikowski participated in the meeting, among others.

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Belarusian statehood, ignoring the Polishness of the significant Polish areas in Lithuania and the partition of these areas between the Lithuanian and Belarusian states[5].

Świechowski claimed that Polish policy in Lithuania should focus on the abolition of the dividing line and ensuring the integrity of ethnographically Polish lands, as well as the territorial autonomy of these areas. This sovereignty would not preclude the creation of a federation with similar autonomous units: Lithuanian and Belarusian, and in case they opposed, connecting these areas with the Polish state[6].

BELARUSIAN ISSUE

On 8 August 1919, Polish troops occupied Minsk, and Marshal Piłsudski spoke in his next appeal about a "long harmonious co-existence between the Belarusian and the Polish nations". Per order no. 2, the commander of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Division, General Stanisław Szeptycki, Polish was to be the official language in the areas occupied by the Polish army, but all official ordinances should also be translated into Belarusian. The Belarusian journals appraised these events very positively:

> We turn to the Polish democracy with such words: in the times of the former Belorussian-Lithuanian Duchy, our ancestors helped your ancestors free themselves from the German-Teutonic storm; we used to defend ourselves together against our enemies and we were great and cultured, but when Poland ceased to respect our state and our national and cultural needs, it led to our and your slavery […]. Poland should help Belarus. It should move its troops further east and take Eastern Belarus back from the Bolsheviks and merge it into one whole. Belarus has the right to expect that Poland has not forgotten its former ally and companion. Old friend is better than two new ones[7].

Piłsudski arrived in Minsk on 18 September 1919 as planned. The Belarusian journals received the visit with great enthusiasm. One of the newspapers stressed: "[…] in these days Józef Piłsudski, the Head of the Polish State, comes to Minsk. We owe him that our country, tired and exhausted, saved itself from the bloody rule of Muscovites […]. Welcome to Belarus – your homeland"[8]. Marshal was greeted by a delegation of the Belarusian National Committee temporarily operating in Minsk, in the rooms of the Noble Club (Resursa Obywatelska) – an institution that

[5] *Ibidem*, fol. 3.

[6] *Ibidem*, fol. 4.

[7] *Zarys ruchu białoruskiego. Od czasów jego powstania aż po dzień deklaracji mińskiej z dnia 1 III 1924 roku*, TS, [in:] *Sprawy białoruskie. Województwo wileńskie*, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius, Zespół Tymczasowego Komitetu Wileńskiego Litewskiego, sygn. fond 254, folder 821, fols. 50–51.

[8] *Ibidem*, fol. 50.

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was a place of discussion for the political elite of Vilnius at that time[9]. One of its representatives received the Chief of State with the following words:

> Welcome Chief, on behalf of our Belarusian delegations representing the Belarusian population. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for freeing Minsk and the region from the new heavy invasion of Moscow imperialism, this time dressed in the clothes of Bolshevism. But mothers are still crying in Vitebsk, people are moaning in Mohylów, quiet because forbidden is the voice of the rusty belfries of Smolensk. We believe and hope that together with free Minsk, Vilnius and Grodno, free and joyful will be the age-old strongholds of our free and independent Belarusian Republic in the Eastern Borderlands of Moscow – Vitebsk, Mohylov and old Smolensk. We expect it, we believe it, with this faith and hope we have been entrusted by a brotherly nation, whose excellent and famous representatives we are not only ready to thank in Minsk today, but to whom we will always repeat: "we welcome you, come to us, our friendly guest, neighbour of the road"[10].

Another representative of the Belarusian National Committee, Makar Krawcow, claimed in turn that as liberators, Poles and Poland were expected to recognize the rights of the Belarusian nation to function as an independent national entity[11].

Not all Belarusian circles, however, were in favour of the Polish proposals. The only Belarusian periodical entitled "Krynica" began circulating from 24 August 1919, in Vilnius. Father A. Stankiewicz was its editor and publisher[12]. Initially, the subtitle read "Catholic weekly newspaper", but it was changed to "Christian weekly newspaper"[13]. Main tasks specified in the program article by the editor-in-chief included: 1) defending the Catholic faith; 2) promoting justice in economic and social life; as well as 3) making Belarusian society aware of national separateness, "confirming their belief that they are neither Polish nor Russian, that they would feel like free, self-controlled hosts in their homeland"[14].

The newspaper was often against the Poles who "try to entice Belarusians with the promise of providing them with oil and salt in exchange for renouncing their nationality". Father Stanisław Maciejewicz, one of the leading representatives of

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[9] A. Romanowski, *Młoda Polska wileńska*, Kraków 1999, p. 275; C. Jankowski, *Z dnia na dzień. Warszawa 1914–1915 Wilno*, Wilno 1923, p. 169.

[10] *Zarys ruchu białoruskiego*..., fol. 51.

[11] *Ibidem*, fol. 52.

[12] *Encyklopedia Ziemi Wileńskiej. Książka i prasa na Ziemi Wileńskiej. Drukarnie, wydawnictwa, księgarnie, biblioteki, czasopisma XVI w. – 1945 r.*, oprac. M. Jackiewicz, Bydgoszcz 2008, p. 171. See P. Dąbrowski, *Tradycja Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego a rzeczywistość. Myśl polityczno-prawna i działalność Tadeusza Wróblewskiego (1858–1925)*, Sopot 2018, p. 293.

[13] *Referat prasy białoruskiej. Tygodnik „Krynica"*, typescript, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius, Kolekcja Ludwika Abramowicza, ref. fond 79, folder 852, fol. 1.

[14] *Ibidem*. See also A. Pukszto, *Między stołecznością a partykularyzmem. Wielonarodowościowe społeczeństwo Wilna w latach 1915–1920*, Toruń 2006, p. 187.

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the Vilnius National Democracy[15] was also criticised, because he "led the agitation for the incorporation of Vilnius to Poland and tried to take advantage of the complete ignorance of the Lithuanian and Belarusian people"[16]. Politically, "Krynica" derived from the "Appeal to Belarusian Brothers", which encouraged: "[…] it's time to wake up from sleep, look around and call a spade a spade, it is time to see that they have been cheated by everyone and everything, it is time to defend our rights and start building our own home, our Belarusian Republic"[17].

Father Władysław Tołłoczko, a journalist, bibliophile, and representative of Belarusian Christian Democrats, also demanded solutions to the Belarusian issue[18]. He expressed his position in the text responding to the article by the famous historian Professor Józef Kallenbach entitled: *From the breakthrough*, published in connection with the book *Crime* by the lawyer and publicist Kazimierz Zdziechowski. Professor Kallenbach argued that the fate of the Polish state depends on the resolution of the Belarusian problem. He wrote:

> It is necessary to realize that the same duties that the noblest in the nation tried to fulfil there: Kościuszko, Mickiewicz, Zan and so many others broken by unlawful violence, that the same duties fell to the shoulders of the modern generation, and in the conditions a hundred times more prosperous, despite all the war unrest and complications that followed. After all, there is no more Murawjow… there is a ploughland, which awaits good cultivation and clean grain[19].

Tołłoczko responded that the failure to resolve the Belarusian issue meant only that "it was not attempted to be solved correctly […]. After all, if the tsarist rule in Belarus made it difficult for Poles to take any wider action, the more ideological approach towards the Belarusian government could have been undertaken". He also believed that the Polish side should recognize the right to revive the "indigenous people" without any reservations[20].

The Vilnius National Democracy spoke negatively about the national aspirations of Belarusians. Representatives of this political camp believed that they were not a compact and strong group, yet with still very strong Russian influences. Father S. Maciejewicz inquired: "And these people want to create a nation and their statehood, and lead those who do not want Belarusian happiness and are consciously

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[15] More broadly, see P. Dąbrowski, *Narodowa Demokracja byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Studium z zakresu myśli politycznej i działalności obozu narodowego na ziemiach litewsko-białoruskich w latach 1897–1918*, Kraków 2010, p. 45, passim.

[16] *Referat prasy białoruskiej…*, pp. 4–5.

[17] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[18] P. Dąbrowski, *Rozpolitykowane miasto. Ustrój polityczny państwa w koncepcjach polskich ugrupowań działających w Wilnie w latach 1918–1939*, Gdańsk 2012, p. 179.

[19] W. Tołłoczko, *Powierzchowny przełom*, typescript, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius, Zespół Wspólny, ref. fond 9, folder 2450, fol. 2.

[20] *Ibidem*, fol. 3.

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leaning towards Poland?"[21]. He further noted that Belarusian Catholics were united with Poles, guided by national ideals, while the Orthodox were in fact Russians, or "local"[22].

Emilia Węsławska, translator of fiction, spokeswoman for gender equality and supporter of the national democratic movement[23], referring to the meeting with Belarusians organized by the Polish National Council in June 1919, emphasized that if they only had wanted to "stay" with Poland, then Rzeczpospolita would have definitely opened her "arms" or else they would have been swallowed up by "a monster from the East who never gave them the right to call themselves a Nation". She plead, however, to sense the Belarusian mood more diligently in the future, because "there is a huge difference in feelings between the people and their leaders, who want these people on a short leash and lead them where healthy horse sense and good heart does not"[24].

Vilnius democrats, in turn, analyzed and interpreted the Belarusian issue in a national context, i.e. based on a broadly structured equality of all nationalities living in the territories of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was postulated to grant the Belarusian population the right to develop the education system and culture in their language. Vilnius conservatives also spoke in a similar tone[25]. At the beginning of 1924, natives Witold Abramowicz and Bronisław Krzyżanowski[26], among others on the initiative, proposed to establish the Polish-Belarusian Society in Vilnius. It was a response to attempts of creating the so-called Autonomous Club in Warsaw – an organization aiming to revive federal solutions, that brought together representatives of national minorities and political groups: Polish People's Party "Wyzwolenie" and the Polish Socialist Party. The main goal of the Vilnius association was "to draw near and initiate the cooperation between Polish and Belarusian society in the fields of culture, science, history, literature, art, customs […]"[27]. Konstancja Skirmuntt also said in a similar tone, who believed that a lot of emphasis had to be placed on the issue of the Polish language because a significant percentage of Belarusians spoke just that language[28].

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[21] S. Bogorja [S. Maciejewicz], *Białoruś polska*, „Dziennik Wileński" 11.05.1919, no. 19, p. 1.

[22] *Ibidem*.

[23] More broadly, see P. Dąbrowski, *Siła w kulturze, jedność w narodzie. Wileńska działalność społeczno-polityczna Michała, Witolda i Emilii Węsławskich w końcu XIX wieku i pierwszej połowie XX stulecia (do 1930 roku)*, Gdańsk 2011, pp. 162–197.

[24] E. Węsławska, *Niepoprawni*, „Dziennik Wileński" 11.06.1919, no. 43, p. 2.

[25] Cat [S. Mackiewicz], *Wywczasy poselskie*, „Słowo" 19.08.1923 (Wilno), no. 182, p. 1.

[26] More broadly, see M. Tarkowski, *Adwokatura wileńska 1918–1939. Studium historyczno-prawne*, Gdańsk 2014, pp. 36, 55, 58–61, 66–67, passim.

[27] J. O.[bst], *Konsolidacja*, „Dziennik Wileński" 1.03.1924, no. 51, p. 2.

[28] D. Szpoper, *Gente Lithuana, natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934)*, Gdańsk 2009, p. 311, 316.

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JEWISH ISSUE

The Democratic Union of the Eastern Lands (ZDZW) emphasized that among nationality issues "considering the Jewish issue in our conditions as particularly complicated […], [we] do not consider it possible to apply other methods to this issue, such as those which according to the democratic principles stem from the demands of equal rights and equal obligations"[29]. They argued:

> The highest criterion for the actions being the good of the entire Republic, its prosperity and power, ZDZW declares the fight against all actions that are aimed at weakening the power and authority of the state outside, and disorganizing its social and economic life outside, regardless the class, party or tribal groupings that would initiate them[30].

Vilnius National Democracy (*endecja*) spoke in a different tone. The politician and publicist of this camp, Stanisław Kozicki, expressed the hope that the anti-Semitism of *endecja* "resulted from a real assessment of the situation and drawing logical political conclusions from it, and not from election tactics or irritated feelings"[31]. Representatives of the Vilnius democratic movement were afraid that the Jews would unite all forces to prevent the Vilnius issue from being resolved in the Polish national spirit. It was written:

> This is a very serious threat. All the more serious that the Jewish mass will stand together as one man to fight with our postulates, while our national unity is in danger because of political groups that adhere to unrealistic projects[32].

Despite this, they advocated the Polish-Jewish agreement as a guarantee of peace and internal security of the state. A *sine qua non* condition of peaceful co-existence was that Jews should take at least a neutral position towards the aspirations of the Polish state. As emphasized, however, the Jewish community was in favour of incorporating the Vilnius region into Lithuania. It was believed that joining it with Poland would bring greater economic and cultural disaster. Thus, Vilnius – the capital of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, should belong to Lithuania, without ruling by plebiscite or resolution of any particular Constituent Assembly[33].

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[29] *Wytyczne programu Zjednoczenia Demokratycznego Ziem Wschodnich*, Materiały Mariana Świechowskiego, typescript, Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Vrublevskių Biblioteka, Rankraščių Skyrius, sygn. fond 168, folder 14, fols. 93–94.

[30] *Ibidem*, fol. 94.

[31] S. Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej 1907–1927*, typescript, vol. II, [in:] *Papiery dr Stanisława Kozickiego posła i senatora*, vol. I, Jagiellonian Library, ref. fond 25/62, fol. 86.

[32] *Żydzi a sprawa wileńska*, „Rzeczpospolita" 9.09.1920, no. 29, p. 3.

[33] *Żydzi a Litwa i Polska*, „Rzeczpospolita" 24.11.1920, no. 42, p. 3.

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This position was not surprising to the national democrats, who argued that the impossibility of creating Judeo-Polonia led to a turn towards the establishment of Judeo-Lithuania, because "the Jew does not have his homeland and he sees it where he does good business, also longing for Zion platonically". They argued further:

> Let the Jews do what they think is appropriate, but do not let them pull the wool over the eyes. Poland will count its non-Polish population and assess what is harmful and what is beneficial for it. Unwanted care is out of place here[34].

National Democracy claimed this situation resulted in a huge reluctance of Jews to the Polish state, manifested towards anything Polish. They called for prudence and reconciliation with fate, because only then could Jews obtain any civil and political rights[35].

Father S. Maciejewicz, then MP of the Legislative Sejm (1919–1922) was more radical in his views. In his opinion, Jewish deputies in the Legislative Sejm are "most dangerous for their nation". He believed that the Jews in Russia are friends of the Russian government, "they are the head of this government, in other words: for being harassed in the past, they became attached to Russia […]"[36].

Worth noting is that Vilnius Jewish organizations sought to maintain Yiddish as a lecture language in general education. The headquarters of the Jewish Educational Organization (CISZO) issued a document to the Vilnius School District Supervisor Zygmunt Gąsiorowski. It demanded that CISZO be recognized as the managerial authority over secular Jewish schools[37]. Pursuant to the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 16 March 1923[38], the binding force of the decree on compulsory education was extended to Vilnius Region, which, among others, imposed obligations on local self-governments in expenditure on elementary schools[39].

They proposed an amendment to Article 1 of the draft statute on the introduction of compulsory education in Vilnius. The postulated change read: "Teaching in elementary schools is free and in the child's mother tongue". This issue was then resolved at a meeting of the Vilnius City Council, after an earlier debate in the municipal education commission chaired by the mayor of Vilnius, Witold Bańkowski, on 3 August 1922. Forty two councillors participated. Zygmunt Fedorowicz, councillor of the National Democratic camp, announced that this change

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[34] *Nieproszona opieka*, „Rzeczpospolita" 30.09.1920, no. 47, p. 2.

[35] P. Bohusz, *Żydzi wileńscy*, *Wilczy apetyt*, „Dziennik Wileński" 14.05.1919, no. 21, p. 1.

[36] *Z obrad sejmowych. Mowa posła ks. Maciejewicza*, „Gazeta Poznańska" 17.05.1922, no. 112, p. 1.

[37] *Kronika wileńska. O język żargonowy w szkołach powszechnych*, „Słowo" 1.08.1922, no. 1, p. 3.

[38] Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 16 March 1923 on the extension of the binding force of the decree on compulsory education to the Vilnius Land (Journal of Laws 1923, no. 31, item 192).

[39] Decree on compulsory education (Journal of Laws 1919, no. 14, item 147).

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was necessary, however, it overstepped the competencies of the City Council, as it was under the legislative authority. Ultimately, the request of the Jewish fraction, represented by Jakub Wygodzki, Ph.D., concerning the introduction of the amendment, was rejected[40]. The minutes prepared from the proceedings mentioned that the government authorities were called upon to develop appropriate amendments to the decree regulating the aforementioned issues[41].

The representative of the Vilnius conservative community, Tadeusz Dembowski, focusing on the subject matter of the dispute, explained:

> Jewish demands that their children be taught in Jewish, derive from the law recognized by educators all around the world that it is easiest and best to teach a child by speaking to them in their native language. Teaching other languages and in other languages can only be beneficial if the child already speaks their own native language well and can compare the newly acquired words in foreign language with words from their mother tongue easily, both in meaning and scope. In their arguments, they urge us to remember how good we felt when our children were being harassed in Russian and German schools[42].

In the following part, reflecting on the validity of this argument, Dembowski pointed out that the Jewish population could not assimilate in the Polish state through schooling. He claimed:

> Impossible assimilation, even as a proposal, should not be suggested, and not only for reasons more detached from keeping the purity of the race, but for more realistic reasons, those of a moral nature. Assimilated Jews would not immediately become Poles, and getting closer to the Polish society would contribute to that society. Our morality is based on the Gospel and theirs – on Talmud. Let everyone better stand by their side[43].

He thought that any state act leading to forced assimilation would be a harmful and pointless blow, resulting in discouragement, disappointment and dislike of the Mosaic religion. Therefore, it was necessary to ensure that all residents of the Republic of Poland "were satisfied and felt fair protection of all citizens in our homeland. *Iustitia est fundamentum regnorum* [Justice is the foundation of kingdoms]"[44].

Dembowski postulated that Jews be given the right to open schools with their mother tongue, maintained from state funds, coming from taxes also "paid by them", therefore emphasizing the need for equality for all citizens. In his opinion, the hostility of Jewish communities to Poles, described by various political camps, will certainly not decrease after numerous restrictions. He argued:

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[40] *Posiedzenie Rady Miejskiej*, „Słowo" 5.08.1922, no. 5, p. 2.
[41] *Ibidem*.
[42] T. Dembowski, *Trudności kwestii żydowskiej*, „Słowo" 9.08.1922, no. 8, p. 1.
[43] *Ibidem*.
[44] *Ibidem*.

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Just returning what is due cannot be considered a candy that is given to a child for being polite. Justice is a duty, not only towards others, but also towards ourselves. We owe ourselves justice for others, because all injustice perpetuates our own character and revenges us[45].

Thus, not granting Jews the right to a native language of instruction in elementary schools could push them to establish permitted private schools in which aversion towards Poland and Poles would develop. Dembowski also admitted that the poor situation of Jews in Poland was due to two reasons: excessive demands and aggressive temperament. In his opinion, the construction of a "state in a state" could not be allowed, and any hostile speeches had to be suppressed with all ruthlessness[46]. Also Vilnius conservatives, focused around the magazine "Słowo", opposed the assimilation of Jews, as well as their Polonization[47].

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[46] *Ibidem*.

[47] D. Szpoper, *Sukcesorzy Wielkiego Księstwa. Myśl polityczna i działalność konserwatystów polskich na ziemiach litewsko-białoruskich w latach 1904–1939*, Gdańsk 1999, p. 229. At this point, I would like to thank Z. Śleszyńska for help with translating the text.

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STRESZCZENIE

Stanowisko polskich ugrupowań międzywojennego Wilna (w pierwszych latach niepodległości) odnośnie do prezentowanych w niniejszym artykule kwestii było różne. Narodowa Demokracja nie uznawała Białorusinów za samodzielny naród i odmawiała im prawa do niezależnego państwa.

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Demokraci zaś opowiadali się za równouprawnieniem wszystkich nacji i przyznawali Białorusinom prawo do własnej kultury i szkolnictwa. W podobnym tonie demokraci, wraz z konserwatystami wileńskimi, wypowiadali się też w kwestii żydowskiej. Sporo miejsca w swoich wypowiedziach tej kwestii poświęcili przedstawiciele Narodowej Demokracji. W kontekście sporu o Wilno podkreślono, że Żydzi opowiedzą się za Litwą i przynależnością Wilna do państwa litewskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: kwestia białoruska; kwestia żydowska; Wilno; myśl polityczna i prawna

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