

Nationalism and Citizenship: The Lithuanian Case, 1988–1993.

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The analysis will be focused on the comprehension of citizenship rights in terms of how citizenship rights were translated into practice and were perceived by its citizens and residents. An analysis of citizenship rights approached within a democratic framework does not only consist of legal mechanisms but also of a political culture which respects diversity between us and them. This type of political culture did not prevail in Lithuania in the period of 1988 to 1993. This was a period which saw the rise of nationalism, the development of nationalistic behaviour towards the national minorities. It, therefore, produces a tension between citizenship as an inclusive principle and nationalism as an exclusive one. It was only after 1993 that finally the more conciliatory policies were introduced towards national minorities.

Key words: CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS, POLITICAL CULTURE, NATIONAL MINORITIES, LITHUANIA

Introduction

The study of national movements and citizenship rights is vital because of their impact on the evolution of both state and society in Eastern Europe. Citizenship became the most salient political issue with the re-establishment of state independence. Whilst citizenship is based on the concept of the individual, the individual is also a member of different communities, and it is sometimes only as a member of the community that the individual is able to claim and exercise his/her rights. Citizenship is a goal which could be best reached through collective action in which all members of society regardless of their nationality, should be able to take part. It is politically determined because the state decides who may or may not be a citizen. However, this decision does not always have a democratic base and excludes people according to their race, ethnicity, religion *etc.*

Both citizenship and nationalism are based on the concept of membership in a community. As such citizenship and nationalism vary according to the inclusive or exclusive nature of their membership. In the newly independent Lithuania there emerged an increasing tension between citizenship and nationalism. Whereas citizenship was defined in inclusive terms, nationalism became increasingly exclusive. The Lithuanian national movement, *Sąjūdis* based its identity on the struggle for independence and on a claim of restoring the “democratic tradition of the inter-war period”. Its struggle for an independent democratic Lithuania was shaped by the affirmation of Lithuanian national identity. This was interpreted by some Russian, Poles and Jews (as well as Lithuanians) not only as contrary to the development of their own national identities but also as a form of exclusion from the fulfilment of citizenship rights which they were given according to the letter of the law.¹

¹ According to the 1989 Population Census there were 20,4% of national minorities in the total population of Lithuania; 9,4% of Russians, 7% of Poles and 0,3% of Jews. For more detailed analysis of Lithuanian national minorities see: V. Popovski (2000) *National Minorities and Citizenship Rights: A Case-Study of Lithuania from 1988 to 1993*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave.

The analysis will be focused on the comprehension of citizenship rights in terms of how citizenship rights were translated into practice and were perceived by its citizens and residents. In other words, citizenship should not only be seen in relation to the state but also at the local level which gives it depth and vitality.² An analysis of citizenship rights approached within a democratic framework does not only consist of legal mechanisms but also of a political culture which respects (if not celebrates) diversity between *us* and *them*. This type of political culture did not prevail in Lithuania in the period of 1988 to 1993. This was a period which saw the rise of nationalism, the development of nationalistic behaviour towards the national minorities. It, therefore, produces a tension between citizenship as an inclusive principle and nationalism as an exclusive one. It was only after 1993 that finally the more conciliatory policies were introduced towards them.

Citizenship, Democracy, Nationalism, National Movement

Citizenship is often viewed as a struggle from below. According to Sidney Tarrow historically, "Citizenship emerged through a rough dialectic between movements – actual and feared – and the national state."³ Our present experience teaches us that this is still very much applicable. Citizenship is not a static notion, it is a relationship between individuals, social groups, civil society and the state. It can also be seen as an attempt to change the existing power relations. Therefore, it could be seen as an important category which provides seeds for a (new type of) democracy. National movements, nowadays, also subscribe to democracy by often couching citizenship in national terms. But this raises the question: could citizenship be comfortable wearing ethnic clothes?

Citizenship rights are enjoyed only if people/members are able to benefit from them comprehensively. The argument that highlights that citizenship rights are enjoyed only if people/members are able to benefit from them comprehensively is important for an analysis of citizenship not only as individual rights but also as collective rights. The issue is whether the members of a community should be defined purely in terms of an individuals or whether they should also be recognised as members of a group. Furthermore, collective rights as the only way to protect some ethnic groups has recently been put on the agenda, especially in the former Yugoslavia. This issue has great relevance to the situation of the Poles, who are mostly concentrated in the south-east of Lithuania, some of whom demanded various forms of collective rights.

In the contemporary period, democracy became "more or less universally popular".⁴ I would argue that democracy in the contemporary period can not be simply seen in terms of government by means of party competition, majority rule and the rule of law, as is usually the case in East European societies. John Keane rightly points out that a new concept of democracy is not simply representative democracy, but it represents a striving to be open-minded, uncompromisingly pluralist, cosmopolitan and historically informed.⁵ Alberto Melucci argues that "It would be illusory to think that democracy consists merely in the competition for access to governmental resources. Democracy in complex societies requires conditions which

² Local level is used in the sense of maintaining autonomy and space within which to pursue new initiative. It means that one has to take into account both a geographic area and social relations which are constituted there. When it comes to ethnic community certain place gets a subjective dimension -it gets a particular value.

³ S. Tarrow (1994) *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 76.

⁴ A. Giddens (1994) *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 104.

⁵ J. Keane (1988) *Democracy and Civil Society*. London: Verso, p. X.

enable individuals and social groups to affirm themselves and to be recognised for what they are or wish to be.”⁶

Bearing in mind this tradition I would argue that democracy as a political system should highlight the following principles; plurality, difference and heterogeneity. If the state is based upon these principles this means that it is ready to acknowledge differences in every-day life, in our case differences among national minorities and majority, as well as differences within national minorities. This also means that the state is able to guarantee an independent space in which civil society can function. This space is important because it allows for collective action to be developed, for different political projects to be put on the agenda and debated openly, according to democratic rules. Civil society is also important because of its influence on the state and its institutions as well as on the market and its institutions. Influence is the critical tool of civil society. Civil society does not have any formal power, although its influence can change power relations. Formal power lies mostly with the state.

Our understanding of citizenship as a dynamic principle highlights the importance of seeing it as a place of struggle for rights. That struggle takes place not only in state institutions but also involves non-state institutions. Civil society is dependent on a state that guarantees the existence of an independent space. Civil society is a place of pluralism, a place which allows different types of non-state activities to blossom. Furthermore, civil society has to evaluate the transparency and accountability of the state, the market and their institutions.⁷ Finally, the functioning of a civil society should not prevent the state from fulfilling its role.⁸ In the case of Lithuania, national minorities were guaranteed rights as individuals. As argued later, they were not satisfied with some parts of Lithuanian legislation as well as with the possibility to exercise their rights. Therefore, they started to form different types of organisations to be able to challenge the Lithuanian legislation. They needed an independent space to learn to formulate their needs and the state had to learn to guarantee that space. In the case of Lithuania, the power relations influenced Lithuanian civil society and as a result the national agenda dominated this space.

The understanding of the state in Eastern European societies can be best described by a logic based on Gyorgy Konrad's analysis of the totalitarian state; to live with the totalitarian state was possible only if one ignored it. In Eastern Europe the very idea of civil society meant exclusion from the state influence. This type of “relationship” based on animosity enables civil society to develop parallel institutions, such as cultural, environmental and religious movements.⁹ Zbigniew Rau goes a step further and claims that this approach to civil society enabled most of the “Easterners” to argue that civil society was founded upon national consciousness.¹⁰ They saw nationalism as encouraging the existence of all different types of social movements ranging from environmentalist to homosexuals, from human rights activists to rock-music fans.

⁶ A. Melucci (1989) *Nomads of the Present*. London, Hutchinson Radius, p. 172.

⁷ I would agree with Jean Cohen, that it is important to highlight that civil society should be seen not only in relation to the state but also to the economy. J. Cohen (1995) *Interpreting the Notion of Civil Society*, in: M. Waltzer, ed., *Towards a Global Civil Society*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, p. 36.

⁸ J. A. Hall (1995) *In Search of Civil Society*, in: J. A. Hall, ed. *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 16.

⁹ See also: R. Dahrendorf (1990) *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*. London: Chatto and Windus, pp. 95-97.

¹⁰ J. Luik (1991) *Intellectuals and Their Two Paths to Restoring Civil Society in Estonia*, in: Z. Rau, ed., *The Emergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, pp. 77-93; M. Ryabchuk (1991) *Civil Society and National Emancipation: The Ukrainian Case*, in: Z. Rau, ed., pp. 95-112.

Two issues are of interest to us. One is connected with the statement that civil society was founded upon national consciousness and the other discusses democracy as the only viable solution for Eastern Europe. Civil society did not exist in the former Soviet Union because, as an intrinsic aspect of the system, the state could not guarantee an independent and public space.¹¹ However, private space was of major importance in opposing the “real-existing socialism”. Opposition groups challenged the existing order but their opinions were silenced by the government. However, the public was aware of their existence, not least because of government reports about “enemies within our own people”. Even if we can not acknowledge the existence of civil society we still have to take into account that elements for its existence were there; people who were prepared to challenge the state and society in which they lived.

Glasnost (a policy introduced from above) entailed the opportunity to go a step further and allow for the possibility of forming a space in which social movements would be able to exist. However, it has to be recognised that *glasnost* did not financially support social movements. Furthermore, the Communist Party supported socialist views which did not undermine the existence of communism. Therefore, it created conditions for a possibility of “movement surrogacy”.¹² In Lithuania, for example, the anti-nuclear movement worded its opposition to the nuclear power station Ignalina, in environmental terms. What is even more interesting for our argument is that “Though the *Zemyna* club continued to exist and participate in anti-nuclear activities, most of its active members shifted their attention to *Sajudis*, and it was *Sajudis* that organised future mass actions against the Ignalina station.”¹³ This should not be interpreted in terms of as there being a lack of genuine interest in the environment. The environment was seen in natural terms as well as in national terms. Environmental activists called the Lithuanian population to protect their own identity and their own nation. Ideas around nationhood and statehood infused movements which were given, though not guaranteed, a space to challenge the state on non-political issues. As a result civil society which, in theory, should be open to each individual was shaped by anti-Soviet and Lithuanian national ideologies. Nijole Lomaniene argues that social reality turned into a highly ritualised space.¹⁴

The second issue involves statehood understood as a demand for a democratic as well as independent state. Within Lithuanian society, there was considerable interest in events in Western Europe and the USA whose governments celebrated their own liberal democracies and proclaimed the “end of history”. In the West there has been a constant dialogue between political scientists who defend and those who oppose liberal democracy. Even those who oppose this system argue that “We must admit, following Bobbio, that only a liberal state can guarantee the basic rights without which the democratic game cannot take place. We should also agree with Bobbio that the struggle for democracy is the struggle against autocratic power in all forms.”¹⁵ The major problem with the liberal tradition is that it sees the citizen as an abstract individual and no account is taken of sex, race, ethnicity *etc.*

¹¹ E. Gellner (1994) *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals*. Penguin.

¹² J. I. Dawson (1996) *Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity in Russia, Lithuania and Ukraine*. London: Duke University Press, p. 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 51. The *Zemyna* Club was founded in the late 1987 and described itself as an “independent environmental association”. *Zemyna* is the Goddess of the Earth in the Lithuanian pagan mythology. The chairperson of the *Zemyna* Club, Zigmantas Vaisvila, became the Chairperson of the Ecological Committee of *Sajudis* in June 1988.

¹⁴ N. Lomaniene (1994) *On Lithuanian Nationalism: The Movement and the Concept*, in: N. Lomaniene and M. P. Saulauskas, eds., *Social Change*, vol. 1. Vilnius: Independent Institute for Social Research, p. 29.

¹⁵ Ch. Mouffe (1995) *Pluralism and the Left Identity*, in: M. Waltzer, ed., *Towards a Global Civil Society*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, p. 296.

The western neo-liberal system clearly pointed out that the free-market economy can represent a danger to solidarity, social justice and autonomy. That model, in its different variations, was implemented in Eastern Europe and also in Lithuania. In Lithuania it definitely did not encourage solidarity, social justice and autonomy. In conjunction with nationalism, sponsored by the state, it fuelled hatred, especially against Russians. I would often hear the following sentence, "Whilst we fought for independence, Russians withdrew into the economic sphere and now run our economy." Needless to say there was no solidarity with Russian workers when the large-scale factories were closed down and Russians made redundant.

Therefore, it is important to analyse how a national movement relates to proposals for equal citizenship, political democratisation, social justice, respect towards different types of groups, including national minorities.

Different theories of nationalism share an understanding of the importance of self-governance or independence. In Eastern Europe this claim for independence is based upon understanding that each single nation shares: "(i) a 'memory' of some common past, treated as a 'destiny' of the group-or at least of its core constituents; (ii) a density of linguistic or cultural ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group beyond it; (iii) a conception of equality of all members of the group organised as a civil society."¹⁶ The issues of memory, language and equality have been vital issues in Eastern Europe. Memory is oriented towards the past but its main purpose is to enter into the present and future. Language (of the majority nation within a state) is a vital ethnic marker which distinguishes *us* from *them*. Equality is a civic marker and the result of the commitment to democracy. However, this commitment (like the other two issues) can have boundaries. As a result one's remembering is selective and chooses only certain events from the past or certain interpretations of these events. Language is often defined in relation the language of the *other* or *others*. Equality relates to respecting an individual as a member of a community but the community could be defined in ethnic terms. Even when it is legally defined in civic terms the lack of democratic political culture can unable the implementation of the letter of the law.

The Rise of *Sajudis*

Alan Touraine argues that national movements are characterised by the feature of "setting an alternative agenda of historical action".¹⁷ Their aim is to re-organise the state structure and gain control over a certain territory to be able to fulfil their agenda. For a national movement to be successful, the following processes should take place: a crisis of legitimacy linked to social, moral and cultural strains, vertical social mobility among non-dominant ethnic group, high level of social communication including literacy, schooling and market relations and nationally relevant conflict of interests.¹⁸ I understand national movements as a challenge to the existing order, even when they do not define themselves in political terms of secession and independence. To understand national movements, organisational structures have to be analysed-the leadership and the core members, the larger segment of sympathisers, the movement-produced organisations, and the organisations and institutions externally supporting the movement and/or pursuing related goals.¹⁹

¹⁶ M. Hroch (1993) From National Movements to Fully-Fledged Nations. *New Left Review*, no.198, p. 5.

¹⁷ Quoted in: R. Szporluk (1989) Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism, *Problems of Communism*, vol. 38, no. 4, p. 35.

¹⁸ M. Hroch (1993), p. 12.

¹⁹ R. J. Dalton, M. Kuechler and W. Buerklin (1990) The Challenge of New Movements; in: R. J. Dalton and M. Kuechler, eds., *Challenging the Political Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge, Polity Press, pp. 3-20.

It could be argued that *Sajudis* was an umbrella organisation which was founded by the Lithuanian intelligentsia. It attracted people and movements with different agendas who were ready to give up their immediate concerns in the struggle for Lithuanian independence. Therefore, for the purposes of our analysis, I would argue that there are two important issues: the relationship of ethnic groups towards the state and the efforts of these ethnic groups to re-organise the state. Ethnic groups see themselves as being culturally distinct from other groups within the same state. They also argue that their distinctiveness is not acknowledged. Therefore, they demand that the state needs to be re-organised along the lines of cultural autonomy which could lead towards federation or confederation and towards secession, in the case where ethnic groups live in a compact territory. In the case of Lithuania, *Sajudis* claimed that Lithuanian identity was suppressed during the Soviet era. This led them to demand sovereignty for Lithuania in 1988 and was responsible for the *Sajudis* willingness to let the Lithuanian Freedom League challenge the Soviet Lithuania with a demand for independence. The movement looked for the support of the national minorities of Lithuania, and was indeed given support by some members of these communities. In Eastern Europe the aim of the majority of nationalist movements was a nation-state. The nation-state is not only a territorial organisation (with defined and fixed boundaries) but it is also a membership organisation.²⁰ National movements define this membership in ethnic or civic terms.

Citizens of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania were invited “onto the stage of history” by the Lithuanian national movement, *Sajudis*, but the movement turned nationalistic especially after its Second Congress in April 1990, and as a result the *praxis* of citizenship was not encouraged. Individuals saw themselves or were forced to see themselves as Lithuanian, Polish, Russian *etc.* Citizenship is, in the last instance, a result of a political decision and that decision in Lithuania was based on the “zero-option” or on the inclusive principle. Citizens of Lithuania were guaranteed equal rights but citizenship is not only, as argued above, about rights. Whilst important to begin with, citizenship is a dynamic principle that should entail learning to live with differences and provide for them. Citizenship needs institutional support which teaches tolerance towards different cultures. This institutional support did not exist always in Lithuania.²¹

Sajudis was, at the beginning, a movement which united Kaunas nationalists, Vilnius liberal intellectuals and reform communists.²² Its aim was Lithuanian independence, although it used the language of sovereignty.²³ Therefore, it behaved like an umbrella organisation, embracing all those who were in support of their main goal. This goal was achieved just a month before the Second Congress of *Sajudis*. According to the participants, the atmosphere in the congress corridors began to be increasingly nationalistic. *Sajudis* had created a conflict around the question: who is a real, proper Lithuanian? Furthermore, it claimed that it knew the answer, which consisted of uniting under the national flag for the sake of a “brighter” future. This congress made a considerable number of Vilnius liberal intellectuals and reform

²⁰ R. Brubaker (1992) *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. XI.

²¹ V. S. Vardys and J. B. Sedaitis (1997) *Lithuania: The Rebel Nation*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, p. 221.

²² Interview with A. Juozaitis, 11 December 1992. He was a philosopher who left *Sajudis* in 1991 to form the Future Forum (together with other well known former members of *Sajudis* such as, for example, Kazimiera Prunskiene), a political association which was vocal in its critic of. The so-called Kaunas faction in the struggle for independence against the Soviet rule, pushed for Kaunas to be given again the status of Lithuanian capital because it is “the pure home of the race”.

²³ N. Lomaniene (1994), p. 28.

communist leave the movement.²⁴ They felt uncomfortable with policies that divided the population into 'patriots' and 'communists'. This meant that Sajudis was now made up predominantly of right-wing Kaunas nationalists.²⁵ Their rhetoric turned more and more nationalistic.

This shift towards a nationalistic attitude had major implications for the national minorities.²⁶ In relation to national minorities, *Sajudis* argued that the Poles in the South-East of Lithuania were manipulated by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and it was this that lay behind their demand for autonomy in September 1989. This demand was interpreted as an attempt to secede and join the Soviet Union in May 1990. Anti-Soviet attitudes began to involve into anti-Russian and anti-Polish attitudes. *Sajudis* argued that the Soviet blockade, which was enforced in April 1990, showed that the communists were prepared to reverse the pace of change and negotiate with Gorbachev.²⁷ Kazimiera Prunskiene, the Prime Minister, was prepared to talk to Gorbachev and persuaded Landsbergis to implement a moratorium on independence on 23 June 1990.

The moratorium again fuelled the right-wing section in *Sajudis* to maintain their distinction between *us* and *them*, 'patriots' who are for independence and 'communists' who are ready to negotiate with Moscow. Prunskiene was "charged" with having connections with the KGB during the Soviet era. In autumn 1990 there was a reshuffle in the Soviet Government which brought hard-liners to power. This fuelled nationalistic rhetoric even further. People whom I interviewed even referred to this in term of 'hysteria'. On 11 January 1991 Gorbachev ordered the Soviet troops to take over Lithuania. In the second part of January, Lithuania was united, but only temporarily. Prunskiene and Arvydas Juozaitis joined forces and formed the Future Forum in April 1991, together with quite a few former members of *Sajudis* and members of the LDDD, such as Gediminas Kirkilas. This was an attempt to generate an opposition to Landsbergis and *Sajudis*. Its meetings were attacked not only verbally but also with petrol bombs and stones. The failed August 1991 coup brought international recognition to Lithuania but the nationalistic attitude stayed. It was regenerated by the opening of the KGB archives, which occurred in spite of the fact that the leader of the right-wing section of *Sajudis*, Virgilijus Cepaitis, was the first individual to be found "guilty".²⁸

In the months before the Third Congress, held in December 1991, all the attention was turned towards Landsbergis.²⁹ He saw himself as the 'Father of the Nation', a title that had been used by Lithuanian inter-war president Antanas Smetona. Present was oriented towards

²⁴ Interview with L. Bielinis, 6 November 1992. According to my interviews 13 out of 35 members of the National Council elected in 1988 withdrew from politics up to the period of the Second Congress of the *Sajudis* mostly because they were not satisfied with its nationalistic orientation. Bielinis was a member of the Party of the Centre and a political scientist.

²⁵ It is difficult to judge if Landsbergis changed because of the pressure from the right or because he himself realised that the right-wing ideology could fulfil his ambitions. I would agree with Lieven that right-wing ideology could allow him to fulfil his ideal to be the Father of the Nation.

²⁶ I base my analysis of these events on my interviews. See also: A. Lieven (1994) *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 214-263. V. S. Vardys and J. B. Sedaitis (1997) *Lithuania: The Rebel Nation*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, p. 152.

²⁷ The Soviet blockade was imposed on Lithuania in April 1990 as a result of the Lithuanian decision to declare independence. Lithuania was sealed off and its economy suffered. See: V. S. Vardys and J. B. Sedaitis (1997), p. 166.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, (1997), 195.

²⁹ "A Lithuanian Army officer grumbled: On Monday, you turn on the television – Landsbergis. On Tuesday, you turn on the radio – Landsbergis. On Wednesday, you open the newspaper – Landsbergis. On Thursday, you are afraid to open a tin of fish!" A. Lieven (1994), p. 258.

past and the past was turned into a myth highlighting the importance of one man, who was seen as Father of the Lithuanian Nation and State. Landsbergis was always surrounded with Lithuanian national symbols and this symbolism reached its peak during the Congress. The Third Congress of *Sajudis* is officially remembered as being Landsbergis' attempt at restitution of the presidency.³⁰ Juozaitis argued that "great *Sajudis* turned into a pioneer organisation of the old Soviet times".³¹ This Congress is also remembered for Landsbergis's refusal to outline a programme. "Stressing certain priorities will be similar to a programme. These should be honest work, family and native land."³² Again when it came to congress corridors and the backstage, there was a constant attack on the former communists and, in relation to this, national minorities.³³ The De-Sovietization Law was discussed with the aim of driving all former communists out of power. It was especially aimed against Brazauskas. The 'hysteria' against communism and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) reached its peak at this time. Foreign relations with CIS were non-existent. "If *Sajudis*' first phase was academic anti-communism, this was the phase of militant anti-communism."³⁴ Juozaitis called the latter phase "national socialism".³⁵ If *Sajudis*' three congresses were seen as three steps backward by the LDDP Deputy Leader, the 20th Communist Party Congress in December 1989 was seen not as a step forward but as a step out of the entrenched circle defined by the Soviet communist ideology.³⁶ Despite losing the 1990 elections and, in the period 1990-1992 33 out of 40 MPs,³⁷ the LDDP consolidated itself and began to oppose the *Sajudis* policies of conflict and differentiation. As a result, it won the 1992 elections. According to Ozolas, one explanation for the LDDP popularity and the 1992 election victory was the widely felt need to avoid conflicts.³⁸ National minorities differed in their approach to the LDDP victory as it is analysed later.³⁹ Some of them were happy to see the demise of *Sajudis* and argued that the current situation could not get any worse. Others were ready to wait and see what the LDDP would do for Lithuanian national minorities.

The 1992 election result should not only be seen as a LDDP victory but also as a judgement on the *Sajudis* reign. Both Lithuanians and national minorities hoped that the LDDP would tone down the nationalistic rhetoric. The Poles acknowledged that the LDDP had made positive first steps in implementing legislation concerning minority rights, especially the use of minority languages in public offices. The majority of Russians I interviewed were disappointed because in their opinion LDDP did not have a policy on national minorities. All of them admitted that there was less pressure on the minorities after the 1992 elections but

³⁰ FBIS-SOV-91-241, 17 December 1991, p. 36.

³¹ *Golos Litvi: Zerkalo Litovskoi Presi*, 11-17 November 1992, p. 4.

³² A. Lieven (1994), p. 258.

³³ According to V. S. Vardys (1965) it should be pointed out that the percentage of Russians in the Lithuanian Communist Party was, in the 1960s, two times higher (20 percent) than the percentage of Russians in the population of Lithuania (9 percent). In: *Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of the Nation, 1940-1965*. London: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, p. 243. In 1989 30 percent of the members of the Lithuanian Communist Party were non-Lithuanians. V. S. Vardys (1990), p. 77.

³⁴ Interview with L. Bielinis, 6 November 1992.

³⁵ Interview with A. Juozaitis, 11 December 1992.

³⁶ Interview with G. Kirkilas, 23 November 1992. He was Deputy Leader of the Lithuanian Democratic Party (LDDP).

³⁷ A. Lieven (1994), p. 239. V. S. Vardys and J. B. Sedaitis (1997), p. 155.

³⁸ Interview with R. Ozolas, 27 November 1992. He was a founder and Leader of the Party of the Centre, a philosopher and publisher.

³⁹ In the 1992-1996 Lithuanian Parliament there were 6 Poles, 3 Russians and 1 Jew. From a document Breakdown of Deputies by Nationality, given to me in November 1992 in the Lithuanian Parliament.

at the same time there was still no dialogue. The Jews were satisfied with the willingness of the LDDP government to address the issue of the Holocaust. However, the only forum in which minority issues were raised was in the Government.⁴⁰ Otherwise there was “silence”. The national minorities were not prepared to collaborate against this silence. They argued that their circumstances differed and that there was a need to raise awareness about specific issues amongst their respective communities.

Responses from National Minorities

The majority of Russians who stayed in Lithuania wanted to continue living there.⁴¹ They were becoming increasingly aware that it was their responsibility to find their place and role within the new Lithuanian state and civil society. They were slowly becoming actively involved in identifying their problems, proposing solutions and raising money to finance their activities. However, they also wanted more support from the Lithuanian authorities towards their specific needs as a national minority. The Lithuanian legislation did not grant collective rights to national minorities.⁴² Citizens were only able to exercise rights as individuals. In Will Kymlicka’s terms, Russians wanted “polyethnic rights” to be put into practice and respected.⁴³ However there were differences among Russians as to how these rights were interpreted, as individual or collective rights. Some of them, defining themselves as a disadvantaged group primarily because of the way the legislation was implemented, argued that only through a group would they be able to “amplify their voices”.⁴⁴ This was made clear by a group of Russians from Visaginas who wanted “their difference to be acknowledged”.⁴⁵ Neither group of Russians supported the other types of rights discussed by Kymlicka (“self-government rights” and “special representation rights”⁴⁶) because they argued that there was no need for them because they were widely scattered throughout Lithuania, mostly in urban centres.

The Poles indicated, in Kymlicka’s terms, that they needed “polyethnic” and “special representation rights”. They needed these rights as a group, not only as individuals. They were afraid that the bias towards the Lithuanian language and culture would undermine po-

⁴⁰ O. Norgaard et al. (1996) *The Baltic States After Independence*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, p. 187.

⁴¹ According to the 1989 Census 49.7 percent of Russians who lived in Lithuania were born there, 37.6 percent in Russia, 3.1 percent in Belarus and 3 percent in Ukraine and 6.7 percent in other republics of the former Soviet Union. Lietuvos respublikos gyventoju demografinė statistika (tautiniu aspektu). Vilnius: Valstybinis nacionaliniu tyrimu centras, 1992, p. 59.

⁴² Tamara Resler argues that emphasis on multiculturalism should be regarded as guarantees of rights of national communities. T. J. Resler (1997) *Dilemmas of Democratisation: Safeguarding Minorities in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, p. 101.

⁴³ “Polyethnic rights” are understood as legal protection and financial support for cultural and educational purposes. W. Kymlicka (1995) *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 30

⁴⁴ Between 1990 and 1995 the formulation of international standards regulating state conduct towards national minorities was a priority for European organisations. They agreed that minority rights should be based in an individual. The only exception was the 1992 Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. See: J. J. Preece (1997) *National Minority Rights vs. State Sovereignty in Europe: Changing Norms in International Relations*. *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 345–364.

⁴⁵ Interview with E. Petrov(as), 25 June 1993. He was Russian, a member of *Sajudis* and its MP in the period 1990–1992.

⁴⁶ “Self-government rights” are understood as granting a certain form of autonomy to national minorities. “Special representation rights” are understood as a demand to guarantee a certain number of seats in legislature to members of disadvantage and marginalised groups. W. Kymlicka (1995), pp. 27–30 and pp. 31–33.

litical and economic support for their language and culture. As a result, they would be disadvantaged and would opt to assimilate into the dominant culture. According to the Lithuanian laws, they were granted "polyethnic" rights as individuals. However, the laws did not always work in practice. For example some among the Poles argued that, whilst they had a right to be educated in Polish, the state was not ready to invest in Polish schools.⁴⁷ As a result, the level of education continued to be low and some Poles chose to send their children to Lithuanian schools. However, the last statement contradicts the data which points out that both the number of Poles attending full time general education and the number of schools were growing.⁴⁸ With regard to "special representation rights", according to the 1992 Electoral Law, the national minority parties did not need to satisfy the threshold of 4 percent.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Poles fought against the proposed changes of electoral boundaries for two reasons; firstly, they wanted their opinion to be at least heard if not "amplified" and secondly, they did not want to belong to the city of Vilnius. Because the city was growing so fast, they would only be able to claim 0.2 hectares of their land back.⁵⁰

Their argument for these two types of rights followed the argument put forward by Iris Young⁵¹ and Kymlicka. The Poles argued that the state supported the majority culture. They believed that cultures should be treated equally and fairly. If their language and culture were not protected they would not be able to exercise their rights as individuals. They felt vulnerable, firstly, because their language and culture were not adequately acknowledged and sometimes threatened, such as in the case where they were described 'Polonised Lithuanians'. Secondly, they did not have their own intelligentsia and did not see how, under contemporary circumstances, it could be formed. They saw the intelligentsia as a vital element in continuing their life in Lithuania.

What is interesting is that the Jews did not discuss Lithuanian legislation in relation to their community. The discussion always took place on a more abstract level. In the course of my interviews, they expressed a general satisfaction with the legislation.⁵² They were focused much more on Jewish problems, which were universally Jewish rather than Lithuanian Jewish such as anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. The reasons for this were perhaps that, firstly, they saw themselves as being too small a group to effect any change, secondly, they thought it was not the right time to push for changes and thirdly, they did not see their future in Lithuania. Except for a small number of them they were not willing to participate in Lithuanian affairs.

Lithuanian political parties, in general, were not only satisfied but also proud of the Lithuanian legislation. However, they insisted on their different perspectives. The right-wing parties saw Lithuanian legislation as proof, not only of their democratic tradition and orientation, but as concessions which they have had to make because of their undemocratic Soviet

⁴⁷ Interview with A. Skakowska, 5 December 1992. She was in charge of the Department of Culture of the Union of Poles.

⁴⁸ Lietuvos statistikos metraštis, 1996. Vilnius: Metodinis leidybinis centras, 1997, p. 478. Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik Litvi, 1992. Vilnius: Department statistiki Litvi, 1993, pp. 25-126. Lithuania's Statistics Yearbook, 1991. Vilnius: Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 1992, p. 117. National Minorities in Lithuania. Vilnius: Department of Nationalities of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 1992, pp. 19-22.

⁴⁹ This law was changed for the 1996 elections and the threshold of 5 percent was introduced for all political parties. See: K. Henderson and N. Robinson (1997) *Post-communist Politics: An Introduction*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, p. 330.

⁵⁰ A. Lieven (1994), p. 168.

⁵¹ I. M. Young (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁵² Interview with S. Alperovich, 14 December 1992. He was a member of the Board of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, a lawyer.

past. The left-wing parties saw the legislation as proof that they were on the road towards democracy.⁵³

Conclusion

The national minorities felt that the question of how to define a true Lithuanian also had relevance to themselves. They had to find an answer to the question of who was a real Russian, Pole or Jew. This issue was also important in relation to their duty towards the "Fatherland". Although the majority of members of the national minorities felt that Lithuania was their homeland, they wanted Lithuania to be a multicultural society. The obsession of the Lithuanian national movement with Lithuanian history did not embrace the minorities' histories on the territory of Lithuania. They were seen as endangering the existence of the Lithuanian state, and this was particularly true of Polish culture. The Lithuanian national movement felt uncomfortable with what they saw as the dominance of Polish culture, the association of Russians with rulers and especially Soviet might, and finally the perceived insulation of the Jewish community. Minorities' histories in this land, throughout centuries, were different. Therefore, there were different responses, demands and answers raised by the national minorities. An irony is that this perception of Polish culture, Soviet might and Jewish closeness were all linked into the past. There were hardly any Jews left in Lithuania. The Poles stressed the view that Polish culture had been destroyed in Soviet Lithuania. The Soviet might threatened independent Lithuania up to 1991. However, despite the past nature of these features, the Lithuanian national movement did not try to gain the support of its minorities. On the contrary, its rhetoric became increasingly nationalistic. However, this rhetoric made the differences within the Lithuanian community more visible. Even more importantly, some of them expressed opposition against the nationalistic rhetoric and this was, needless to say, welcomed by minorities.

A small number of the national minority population felt that during the Soviet era their national identity was neglected because it was under the pressure of Sovietization. The Lithuanian national movement forcefully introduced the rest of this population to the nationality question, which insisted on preserving differences among national groups. Therefore, all of them had to face the question of who they were. This question was a painful issue for the majority of the national minority population especially because it was raised against a background which concentrated on celebrating the Lithuanian nation. The celebration of a collective ideal was a familiar process to these people but this time it was not the working class but the nation which was elevated on a pedestal. Minorities were not included in this celebration. Furthermore, Russians were addressed as "occupiers", Poles were often called "Red Poles" and Jews as well were reminded of their communist past. Ethnic differences were not appreciated. The majority of national minorities were taken aback and confused. They did not know how to approach the question of who they were. Most of the members of the minority groups withdrew from public life and were passive. Passivity must be seen in relation to the Soviet era as well as the result of the rise of Lithuanian nationalism. In both cases, passivity was imposed on the minorities because they were marginalised by the majority. Those who got involved, organised themselves into different types of organisations. Their choice of organisation was determined by their support for independent Lithuania and how they envisaged their cultural and economic future in this country.

In assessing the years from 1988 to 1993, one can see that this was a turbulent time for national minorities in Lithuania. There was less and less respect for diversity and there was a

⁵³ I use the terms "right-wing" and left-wing parties" because my respondents themselves used them.

tendency towards homogeneity. Whilst at the beginning of 1988 important steps towards the establishment of the civil society had been established, from early 1990 onwards nationalist rhetoric became more conspicuous and impeded such developments. People had been learning the language of civil society and had entered the space which was no longer covered by the "big brother". However, new cards were asked to be shown at the door; this time not of the Communist Party but of national affiliation. In August 1993 the Soviet Army left Lithuania. "Lithuania will be finally independent." I heard from quite a few of my interviewees. As my research pointed out, although the Lithuanian legislation complied with international regulations, national minorities still had grievances which prevented them from becoming active citizens.

Many of the issues raised by the national minorities continued to exist after 1993. However, they were no longer seen as conflicts but as matters which could be settled. Of course, some conflicts have occurred, especially between the Poles and the two Lithuanian Governments (1992-1996 and one elected in 1996). However, they have not captured the attention of the minority communities and Lithuanians on the same scale as they did in the late 1980's and early 1990's. I would argue that this is primarily related to the mellowing of nationalistic rhetoric. An important achievement of the LDDP Government was the policy of avoiding conflicts as far as possible. As a result, the Russians have been increasingly integrating into Lithuanian society. It is important to notice that before and during the impeachment process to President Ronaldas Paksas, "Russia more than ever emerged as a threat to Lithuanian sovereignty in the eyes of the political establishment and cultural elite."⁵⁴ However, this approach was not any longer extended to the Russians as it used to be in the past. The Jews still raise the issue of the Holocaust but are ready to take a more active part in Lithuanian society. The Poles continue to argue that their grievances concerning the land reform and the expansion of Vilnius have not been dealt with. However, they agree that the LDDP Government made attempts to improve education in Polish. The period 1993 onwards has been a period in which both the Lithuanian authorities and minority population have been learning the language of democracy,⁵⁵ which has entailed the coming to terms with differences and the question of how to live with them. As Lauras Bielinis pointed out recently one can talk about "two Lithuanias" but they are not any longer divided along ethnic lines but social.

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⁵⁴ Egdunas Raciuis (2004) Lithuanian's New Cold War. *The Baltic Times*, 8-14 July, p. 18. "Six months after his inauguration, members of his team were accused of having ties with Russian criminal elements and it was alleged by the Lithuanian State Security Department that Russia's secret Services had been preparing ground for their eventual influence on the president's decision."

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NACIONALIZAM I DRŽAVLJANSTVO: SLUČAJ LITVE, 1988–1993.

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Fokus analize je na razumijevanju građanskih prava u praksi, kako su bila percipirana od građana i ostalih stanovnika. Analiza građanskih prava unutar demokratskog okvira ne sastoji se samo od legalnih mehanizama nego i od političke kulture koja poštuje razlike između "nas" i "njih". Taj tip političke kulture nije bio razvijen u Litvi u periodu od 1988. do 1993. To je bio period rasta nacionalizma i nacionalističkog ponašanja prema nacionalnim manjinama i zbog toga je proizveo tenzije između građanskog principa kao inkluzivnog i nacionalizma kao ekskluzivnog principa.

Ključne riječi: DRŽAVLJANSKA PRAVA, POLITIČKA KULTURA, NACIONALNE MANJINE, LITVA