

# **Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs**

**International Conference Papers**

EDITED BY

ALEŚ ŁAHVINIEC  
TACIANA ČULICKAJA



WARSAW 2013

Editors: Aleś Łahviniec, Taciana Čulickaja

Project manager: Anna Grudzińska

Papers of the conference “Belarus and its Neighbors:  
Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs”.

The conference was held on 9–11 of December 2011 in Warsaw, Poland.  
The conference was sponsored by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Belarus Country Office,  
National Endowment for Democracy and Open Society Institute.

Translation: Vieranika Mazurkievič

Proof-reading: Nadzieja Šakun (Belarusian), Katie Morris (English),  
Adrianna Stansbury (English)

Cover design: Małgorzata Butkiewicz

Publication of this volume was made possible by National Endowment for Democracy.

© Copyright by Uczelnia Łazarskiego, Warsaw 2013

Oficyna Wydawnicza Uczelni Łazarskiego

02-662 Warszawa

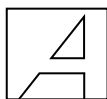
ul. Świeradowska 43

tel. 22 54-35-450, 22 54-35-410

wydawnictwo@lazarski.edu.pl

www.lazarski.pl

ISBN: 978-83-60694-49-7



**Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung**



**OPEN SOCIETY  
FOUNDATIONS**



**National Endowment  
for Democracy**

*Supporting freedom around the world*



Implementation of publishing:

Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA

ul. Inflancka 15/198, 00-189 Warszawa

tel./fax 22 635 03 01, 22 635 17 85

e-mail: elipsa@elipsa.pl, www.elipsa.pl

# Contents

Foreword.....	7
<i>Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński – Quo Vadis, Belarus? Instead of an Introduction .....</i>	11
<i>Andrej Januškievič – Obstacles on the Way to Mutual Understanding: the Effects of National, Historical and Cultural Stereotypes on the Diplomatic Practice between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Muscovite State in the Mid-16th Century.....</i>	17
<i>Hienadz Sahanovič – Attitude of Belarus' Population to the Russian Army in the 17th Century.....</i>	28
<i>Uładzimir Łobač – Images of Neighboring Peoples in the Traditional World Outlook of Belarusians .....</i>	42
<i>Aleh Dziarnovič – Gudas as a Historical Name of Belarusians in the Lithuanian Language: 'Goths' or 'Barbarians'?.....</i>	56
<i>Alaksandr Smalančuk – Krajovaść vis-à-vis Belarusian and Lithuanian National Movements in the Early 20th Century.....</i>	69
<i>Dorota Michaluk – The Four Governments of the Belarusian Democratic Republic in the International Arena in 1918–1920.....</i>	81
<i>Ihar Kuźniacoŭ – The Bolshevik Repressions against the Belarusian National-Democratic Movement in 1920–1930ies.....</i>	95
<i>Zachar Šybieka – Treasures of Small Towns of Belarus: Common Heritage of the Rzeczpospolita .....</i>	106
<i>Siarhiej Čaty – What are the Economic Niches of Belarus in the Region?.....</i>	116
<i>Serge Naŭrodski – Economic Relations between Belarus and Poland Before and After the Crisis .....</i>	121
<i>Alaksiej Łastoŭski – Russocentrism among the Projects of Belarusian Identity: the Role and Prospects in the Modern Belarusian State .....</i>	131

<i>Anaïs Marin</i> – Current Challenges of EU-Belarus Relations: Can the Eastern Partnership Support the Europeanization of Belarus?.....	139
<i>Alaksiej Bratačkin</i> – Recent Trends of the Europeanization Discourse in Belarus.....	153
<i>Nastaśsia Klimovič</i> – Regionalization of EU–Belarus Relations: First Step Towards Europeanization or a Possibility to Bypass the Crisis? .....	162
<i>Ina Ramašeŭskaja</i> – Possible Directions for Public Administration Reform in Belarus .....	174
<i>Maryna Sakalova</i> – E-Government in Belarus: to Overcome the Inertia of Informatization .....	181
<i>Lina Klymenko, Sergiu Gherghina</i> – Citizens’ Perceptions of the Political Regime in Post-Soviet Belarus .....	196
<i>Taciana Šukan</i> – Youth Policy and the Attitude of the Authorities Towards Youth Organizations in Contemporary Belarus .....	204
<i>Natalla Arciomienka</i> – Education Abroad: Brain Drain or Investment in the Future? .....	210
<i>Piotr Rudkoŭski</i> – The Freedom of Conscience in Non-Democratic Environment .....	218
<i>Piotr Kuźniacoŭ</i> – The Role of Social Networks and Other New Media in Shaping Civil Society and Building National Identity in Belarus .....	225

## *Krajovaść* vis-à-vis Belarusian and Lithuanian National Movements in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Over the past two decades, academic and public interest in the idea of '*krajovaść*' has noticeably increased. The topic has a rich historiography, including Polish historians, such as Juliusz Bardach, Jan Jurkiewicz, Zbigniew Solak and Dariusz Szpoper, as well as Lithuanian historians, such as Rimantas Miknys and Jan Sawicki.<sup>1</sup> I also analyzed this issue in my research into the Polish national movement on Belarusian and Lithuanian territories during the final 50 years of the Russian Empire, as well as in research on the evolution of the Belarusian national idea. Alaksiej Unučak conducted a comparative analysis of the ideological phenomena of *krajovaść* and *westernrussism*.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, the idea

---

<sup>1</sup> Bardach J. O dawniej i nie dawniej Litwie. Poznań, 1988; Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej w Instytucie Historii UAM w Poznaniu (11–12 maja 1998). Pod redakcją Jana Jurkiewicza. Poznań, 1999; Zbigniew Solak, Między Polską a Litwą. Życie i działalność Michała Romera. 1880–1920. Kraków, 2004; Dariusz Szpoper, Gente Lithuana, Nazione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Gdańsk, 2009; Rimantas Miknys, Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX w // Biuletyn historii pogranicza. 2000. Nr 1; Jan Sawicki, Michał Römer a problemy narodowościowe na ziemiach byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Toruń, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй. Польскі рух на беларускіх і літоўскіх землях. 1864 – люты 1917 г. 2-е выд., дапрац. Спб.: Неўскі прасцяг, 2004; Смалянчук А. Беларускі нацыянальны рух і краёвая ідэя // Бялорускіе зeszty historyczne. 2000, Nr 14. С. 45–53; Смалянчук А. Краёвасць у беларускай

of *krajovaść* has also been covered in the work of Belarusian scholars; it is worth mentioning studies by Ihar Babkoŭ, Alaksiej Dziermant and Andrej Kazakievič.

Historians focused primarily on well-known *krajovaść* leaders, in particular Michał Romer (1880–1945), Kanstancyja Skirmunt (1851–1934), Raman Skirmunt (1868–1939), Edvard Vajniłovič (1847–1928), Tadeuś Urubleŭski (1857–1925), Ludvig Abramovič (1879–1939) and others. The idea of *krajovaść* was examined primarily through the prism of these people's lives and activities; however, a more thorough study is still needed to understand the full range of issues associated with the phenomenon. Among them is the question of the relevance of *krajovaść* to the ideologies of the Lithuanian and Belarusian national movements, which were based on the concept of the ethno-linguistic nation. To what extent did members of these movements accept the *krajovaść* idea? This issue will be central to this article.

## Development of the *Krajovaść* Idea

It is difficult to precisely define *krajovaść*. Consequently, historians tend to use a number of synonymous terms – *krajovaść*, ‘the idea of *krajovaść*’, ‘the *krajovaść* movement’, or ‘the *krajovaść* ideology. While the complexity of the ‘*krajovaść*’ idea, and its interpretation by ideologues and supporters, is apparent, it is often treated as a certain type of ideology of a political nation.

The idea of *krajovaść* was formulated in Belarus and Lithuania in the early twentieth century. Supporters claimed that all natives of historical Lithuania, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural affiliation, were ‘citizens of the region/*kraj*’ and thus belonged to a single nation. A sense of patriotism and self-identification as ‘local’ or a ‘*kraj* citizen’ is the main criterion of such national identity.

*Krajovaść* ideology emerged within the social environs of the Lithuanian nobility, who often had to change their allegiance to different

---

і літоўскай гісторыі // Беларускі гістарычны агляд. Т. 4, сшытак 1-2(6-7). 1997. С. 56–67; Унучак А. Беларуская нацыянальна-дзяржаўная ідэя ў канцы XIX – 1917 г. // На шляху станаўлення беларускай нацыі. Гістарыяграфічныя здабыткі і праблемы // Яноўская В. ды інш. Мінск: Беларуская навука, 2011.

identities. Juliusz Bardach described the *kraj* inhabitants mind-set as follows: “By their cultural orientation they were Polish; however, in determining their nationality, the sense of having particular *kraj* features prevailed, which led to the subordination of the Polish public interest to the interest of the whole region (*Kraj*) [...] They were old Lithuanians in a historical sense. It determined their position in political life”.<sup>3</sup>

*Krajowaść* was based on the historical memory that Belarusian and Lithuanian lands were part of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. By asserting a shared historical destiny of all peoples of the former Duchy of Lithuania, *krajowaść* supporters sought to preserve the territorial integrity of ‘historic’ Lithuania.

One of the main goals of *krajowaść* was the reconciliation of particular local or national interests to common interests – i.e. to the good of the Fatherland: historic Lithuania. The latter required cooperation between nations based on civil equality. Moreover, as Jan Jurkiewicz correctly noted, this cooperation was not only a precondition on the way to the common goal, but also the goal in itself.<sup>4</sup> *Krajowaść* supporters hoped that the *krajowaść* identity could be combined with the modern national identity.

*Krajowaść* can also be viewed as a feature with which a section of society on Belarusian-Lithuanian lands identified itself. There is reason to believe that the spread of the *krajowaść* idea was facilitated by the so-called ‘*tutejśaść*’ of local people. Researchers often treat it as a lower degree of ethnic self-identification, but such an opinion is superficial. It is no accident that at the beginning of the twentieth century Kanstancyja Skirmunt defended the notion of *tutejśaść* from the ridicule of the Polish National Democrats: “*tutejśaść* is allegiance to the native land, it is patriotism”.<sup>5</sup>

J. Bardach rightly observed: “In the countryside, especially in Belarus, where there are clashes between different languages and religions and influences from different cultures, *tutejśaść* constituted a form of denial-the reluctance to admit affiliation to one or another ethnic group. There

<sup>3</sup> Bardach J. O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie. S. 217–218.

<sup>4</sup> Jurkiewicz J. Koncepcja krajowa a przemiany stosunków narodowościowych na Litwie i Białorusi w początkach XX w. (do 1918 r.) // Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu... S. 119.

<sup>5</sup> Kurier Litewski. 1906. № 214.

was a fear that such a choice could disrupt traditional forms of living and lead to conflict».<sup>6</sup> And indeed, in some sense *tutejšaść*, was identical to the *krajovaść* of the so-called ‘silent majority’ of the population of historic Lithuania.

Aleh Łatyžonak quite aptly defined *krajovaść* as ‘ideological *tutejšaść*’. In his opinion, *tutejšaść* can be considered as self-consciousness, while *krajovaść* constitutes a worldview.<sup>7</sup> Of course, this ideological *tutejšaść* contributed to the strengthening of national identification processes. It was an explosion of nationalism that spawned the *krajovaść* idea, and, looking ahead, we can say that the same factor turned *krajovaść* into a marginal phenomenon.

At the end of the 19th century, the Lithuanian movement was the most powerful national movement across the Belarusian-Lithuanian region. It proposed a new (modern) understanding of the nation, based on defining elements such as the language, folklore, customs, folk culture and historical memory. The understanding of the nation as a political category that brought together representatives of the nobility remained in the past. Allegiance to an ethnic and cultural (ethno-linguistic) community, rather than a historical or political community, played an essential role in developing identity. This is the Lithuanian national movement that formulated in the early XX century the objective of ethno-political division of the historic Lithuania and Poland.

Analyzing the life of the main ideologue of the liberal-democratic version of *krajovaść* by M. Romer, Zbigniew Solak paid attention to his contacts with Lithuanian national organizations. In particular, when studying in Paris, M. Romer attended meetings of the Lithuanian society “Želmuo”, and later the Association of Lithuanian students “Lithuania”, founded by Juozas Petrulis (1877–1958).<sup>8</sup>

The Lithuanian movement, of course, also influenced representatives of the conservative *krajovaść* wing. Here we speak about Kanstancyja

<sup>6</sup> Bardach J. Polacy litewscy a inne narody Litwy historycznej. Próba analizy systemowej // Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine. The foundations of historical and cultural traditions in East Central Europe. Internacional Conference Rome, 28 April – 6 May. Lublin–Rome, 1990. S. 366.

<sup>7</sup> Łatyszonek O. Krajowość i „zapadno-russizm”. Tutejszość zideologizowana // Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu... S. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Solak Z. Między Polską a Litwą... S. 44–53.



Skirmunt, whose national consciousness was defined by Dariusz Szpopper as *gente Lithuane, natione Lithuane*, and Raman Skirmunt, whose first book *Nowe hasła w sprawie odrodzenia narodowości litewskiej (New slogans in the case of the Lithuanian nation revival)* (Lwów, 1904) was inspired by Lithuanian nationalism.

The development of the Polish national movement also played an important role. During the early twentieth century, the Polish movement took two forms in the public life of the Belarusian-Lithuanian region. While the Polish national democrats proclaimed the absolute supremacy of the Polish national idea in its ethnic and cultural understanding, the Socialists tried to combine it with an attractive social program. As a result of the rise in Polish nationalism, the majority of Poles on historical Lithuanian lands gradually began to identify themselves with modern Poland in cultural and ethno-political terms. However, identification with the historical Lithuania remained fairly strong. A proportion of local Poles perceived it as a true homeland. Analyzing the activity of *krajovaść* ideologues and the extent of its expansion, R. Miknys developed the idea about a new nation rising, namely the nation of 'Lithuanian Poles'.<sup>9</sup>

In every case, at the beginning of the twentieth century both the worsening of Polish-Lithuanian relations and the lack of unity among the local Polish community was evident.

## Versions of *Krajovaść* Idea

Scholars agree that there were two versions of the *krajovaść* idea in the early twentieth century: liberal-democratic and conservative. The first developed in the newspaper «Gazeta Wileńska» (1906). Its de facto leader was Michał Romer. The leading conservative ideologues were Raman and Kanstancyja Skirmunt and Bałasłaŭ Jaławiecki.

How did the two strands differ? Rimantas Miknys argues that the main difference lay in attitudes to how national movements should be treated.<sup>10</sup> The Lithuanian historian believes that the liberal *krajovaść* supporters accepted the national emancipation of the Lithuanians and

<sup>9</sup> Miknys R. Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich...

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, s. 27.

Belarusians (except the most radical demands in the cultural field). Representatives of the conservative wing did not support this kind of emancipation. They seemed to not recognize the concept of the ethno-cultural nation, supported the idea of a common political history and the nation ('nation of historic Lithuanians' or Litvins) as a democratized version of the old political (nobility) nation.

Such claim can only be partially shared. Michał Romer and his colleagues in the "Gazeta Wileńska" really tried to reconcile the peoples of *Kraj* on the basis of a politically defined democratic nation. Romer saw national democratic movements (Belarusian and Lithuanian) as factors of civil society development. He treated the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a common homeland of several peoples and did not see the possibility of their separation in a civilized way. Territorial conflicts in this case seemed inevitable.

The situation was more complex within the conservative wing. The example of Raman Skirmunt, who in 1907 tried to create a Regional (*Krajovaja*) party by uniting Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian party organizations, demonstrates that at least some representatives of this trend accepted the idea of ethno-cultural (ethno-linguistic) nations and national movements. It seems that R. Skirmunt himself was confident in the possibility of combining *krajovaść* consciousness with the modern nationalism.

The latter is also proved by R. Skirmunt's attitude to the Belarusian national movement. Its development during the first Russian Revolution greatly affected the political activity of this native of Paleśsie. In particular, Skirmunt no longer used the terms 'Lithuania' and 'Ruthenia', and began to apply the concept of 'Belarus', describing himself as 'Belarusian' in an interview with a correspondent of the Polish national democratic newspaper "Dziennik Kijowski". In late 1916, he headed the Belarusian Society of War Victims, a role which went far beyond charity. In fact, Skirmunt openly joined the Belarusian movement and began to act as one of its leaders.

*Krajovaść* representatives of both wings demonstrated commitment and support to the requirements of the Lithuanian and Belarusian national movements. There were a number of reasons behind such commitment, but even in declarative form, it contributed to an increase in tolerance. The problem was how to reconcile the Belarusian and Lithuanian national

revivals with the preservation of traditional neighborly relations between the peoples of historical Lithuania and the political neutralization of linguistic and religious issues.

All *krajowaść* supporters sought to limit the political ambitions of the Polish community, and emphasized the necessity of considering the interests of Belarusians and Lithuanians. This was the main reason for their decisive opposition to the Polish national democrats. The Polish *endecja*<sup>11</sup>, rather than the leaders of the Lithuanian or Belarusian national movements, were seen as the main opponents of *krajowaść*.

Representatives of the democratic *krajowaść* wing supported the social and national emancipation of Lithuanians and Belarusians. They also emphasized their own allegiance to Poland and the right to develop Polish culture. They considered the concepts of nationality and citizenship to be complementary. One of the editorials in “Gazeta Wileńska” declared, that “we are the sons of the Polish people in the cultural and national sense, but our social, political and economic actions are guided by the interests of historic Lithuania”. *Kraj* community, which was believed to have certain attributes of the political nation, had to subordinate the interests of own national groups to the interests of *Kraj* in general. At the same time, ‘Lithuanian Poles’ were seen as one of the *Kraj* nations.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that leaders of the Lithuanian and Belarusian movements had more contacts with the democratic than the conservative *krajowaść* wing, which was critical of the social programs of the Lithuanian and Belarusian movements. This was the case despite the fact that the princess Maria Magdalena Radziwiłł, Raman Skirmunt, Edvard Vajniłovič and others financially supported many cultural programs. Landowners were suspected of trying to preserve their dominant social position. The decisive factor was the commitment of the democratic wing to take into account the social ambitions of Lithuanians and Belarusians.

<sup>11</sup> National Democracy (Polish: *Narodowa Demokracja*, also known from its abbreviation *ND* as “**Endecja**”) was a Polish right-wing nationalist political movement active from the late 19th century to the end of the Second Polish Republic in 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Jurkiewicz J. Koncepcja krajowa a przemiany stosunków narodowościowych na Litwie i Białorusi w początkach XX w. (do 1918 r.) // *Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu...* S. 122-123.

## Contacts between *Krajovaść* Representatives and Leaders of the Lithuanian and Belarusian National Movements

One of the most interesting manifestations of these contacts were the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian-Jewish meetings, which began even before the Revolution in 1905–1907. In April and May 1905, they turned into international congresses. Participants at the meetings discussed the autonomy of the Belarusian-Lithuanian territory. The idea of autonomy was in principle accepted, but understood in different ways. Ethnic Lithuanians insisted on the autonomy of ‘ethnographic Lithuania’ with ‘surrounding territories’. Belarusians, Lithuanian Poles and Jews associated the future autonomy with the borders of the historic Lithuania. Consensus was not achieved in this regard. But all sides agreed on the need to guarantee equal rights for all nations in the future autonomous Lithuania.<sup>13</sup>

In May 1905, this unique club of autonomists ceased to exist. One of the key reasons was the deterioration of the Polish-Lithuanian relations. Nevertheless, contacts between democratic elements in the national movements and *krajovaść* supporters were not totally severed. This is evidenced, for example, by the participation of representatives of the democratic *krajovaść* wing, the Jewish Bund, the Polish Socialist Party in Lithuania and the Belarusian Social Hramada in the Great Lithuanian Sejm (November 1905).<sup>14</sup>

The press of the city of Vilnia also provided a platform for cooperation. Thus, there was a so-called ‘Lithuanian department’ in the editorial team of “Gazeta Wileńska”, consisting of Mykolas Biržyška, Jurgis Šaulys and Pavilas Višynskas. Cooperation was also developed through publication of the newspaper “Kurier Krajowy” (1912–1914). It was an extraordinary project: a Belarusian newspaper publication in Polish. The ideological leaders and active members of this newspaper were the Łuckievič brothers, who were actively supported by Michał Romer. In November 1913, as the newspaper went through a strong financial crisis, Lithuanians

<sup>13</sup> Michał Römer, *Litwa. Studium odrodzenia narodu litewskiego*. Lwów, 1908. S. 348–352.

<sup>14</sup> Motieka E. *Didysis Vilniaus sejmas // Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*. T. 11. Vilnius: Saulabrolis, 1996. S. 322.

Jonas Vilejšis, Jurgis Šaūlys and Sciaponas Kajrys joined its editorial board, as along with democratic *krajovašč* representatives, J. Sumarok, J. Bukoūski and M. Romer.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted that at the same time, the Łuckievič brothers, maintaining a certain level of secrecy, began to publish a liberal-democratic newspaper in Russian. “Večierniaja Gazeta” (1911–1915) positioned itself as an outlet for ‘Russian progressives’, while in fact it was another Belarusian publishing initiative.

“Kurier Krajowy” was also a Masonic project. The Vilnia Masonic lodge became the most important cooperation platform between democratic *krajovašč* supporters and Lithuanian and Belarusian leaders. One of the key ideas of Vilnia Freemasonry was the search for international understanding.

Vilnia Freemasonry was revived in the spring of 1911. Before the First World War there were already four lodges – “Unity”, “Lithuania”, “Belarus” and “Diligent Litvin”. The first three, in fact, brought together *krajovašč* supporters and the Łuckievič brothers, V. Łastoūski, Lithuanian leaders Mykolas Sleževičius, brothers Mykolas and Vaclovas Biržyskas, Feliksas Bugajliškis, Jurgis Šaūlys, Jonas Vilejšis, Andrius Bulota and others.

M. Romer noted in his diary: “We do not act as a proper Masonic organisation, but in many cases it is among us that directives are produced and initiatives are launched. Our lodges have a great impact on strengthening the *krajovašč* position in the minds of our brethren”.<sup>16</sup> According to Zbigniew Solak, the decision to nominate Bronisław Krzyżanowski as a candidate to the IV Russian Duma was taken at Masonic meetings.<sup>17</sup> The lodge also contributed to the publication of the previously-mentioned Belarusian “Kurjer Krajowy” and the Polish “Przegląd Wileński” (1911–1915).

In 1915, Jurgis Šaūlys, trying to save Freemasonry from decay, initiated the creation of the lodge the “Grand Orient of Lithuania”, which is directly connected with one of the most recent attempts to define the future of *Kraj* in the accordance with *krajovašč* idea. On December 19

<sup>15</sup> Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй... С. 283.

<sup>16</sup> Адзел рукапісаў Бібліятэкі Акадэміі навук Літвы. Дзённяк Міхала Ромэра. Том IV. S. 404.

<sup>17</sup> Solak Z. Między Polską a Litwą.... S. 190.

1915, the ‘Universal’ of the Provisional Council of the Confederation of the Great Duchy of Lithuania was published in the Belarusian, Polish, Lithuanian and Yiddish languages. The document reported on the establishment of the Belarusian-Lithuanian-Polish-Jewish Provisional Council, which would sought that “Lithuanian and Belarusian lands that have long belonged to the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and are now occupied by German troops, under the new historical conditions would constitute an inseparable body based on the independence of Lithuania and Belarus, as an integral state, guaranteeing equal rights to all nations within its territory”.<sup>18</sup>

In February 1916, the Universal was amended by a decree in which the Council of the Confederation proclaimed the establishment of an independent state on Lithuanian-Belarusian lands with the Diet in Vilnia, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, and with its main goal as the guarantee of full rights to all peoples of the. The territory of this independent state was to include Koūna and Vilnia provinces, the Belarusian and Lithuanian part of Harodnia and Suvałki provinces, the Lithuanian part of Courland and the part of Minsk province, “connected to the Vilnia center”. The Vilnia Diet was to determine and adopt the form of government and Constitution of the “future free Lithuanian-Belarusian state unit”. In conclusion, the decree urged people to work together for the future of *Kraj*: “Let’s stop quarrels and conflicts, which affect the whole region. Think together and be honest about the future of this land, because we all, except for a handful of strangers, are the sons of our land – our Lithuania and Belarus”.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly, the ideological platform for cooperation between the democratic *krajovaść* wing leaders and the Lithuanian and Belarusian movement was the already well-known thesis of the joint (*‘kraj’*) of citizenship in the form of harmonious inter-ethnic cohabitation. This was interpreted as a prerequisite for optimal development of all peoples of the historic Lithuania. *Krajovaść* supporters still accepted the national emancipation of the Lithuanians and Belarusians, which was not seen as contradictory, but complementary to *krajovaść* consciousness.

---

<sup>18</sup> Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй... С. 312–313.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 313.

## The *Krajovašć* Idea and National Movements

Activists in the Belarusian national movement collaborated very actively with proponents of *krajovašć*. Moreover, the *krajovašć* idea was widely presented in such Belarusian newspapers as “Viečierniaja Gazeta” (1911–1915) and “Kurjer Krajowy” (1912–1914). Belarusian *krajovašć* supporters (the Łuckievič brothers and V. Łastoŭski) even opposed the Belarusian nationalism while promoting the *krajovašć* idea; however, they used pseudonyms or cryptonyms to sign their articles.

Why did the *krajovašć* idea find such strong support among Belarusians? There is no clear answer to this question yet. One might assume that the Belarusians used *krajovašć* to expand the social base of the Belarusian movement. The publication of newspapers with *krajovašć* and Belarusian national ideas both in Polish (“Kurjer Krajowy”) and Russian («Viečierniaja Gazeta») was a definite attempt to ‘convert’ the russified and polonized population to the Belarusian idea. *Krajovašć* also meant increased contacts with the Lithuanian Poles and the representatives of the democratic part of the Lithuanian national movement. In this way, they tried to strengthen the Belarusian national Renaissance.

It could be argued that the Łuckievič brothers turned to the *krajovašć* idea via the Belarusian movement, while Raman Skirmunt, on the contrary, turned to the Belarusian idea from *krajovašć*. Both cases are a bit mysterious. Obviously, one of the ideologists of the conservative *krajovašć* wing used this idea as a platform to reconcile various social interests within the Belarusian movement. It is an established fact that Skirmunt held meetings with Belarusian Socialists at the house of Maria Magdalena Radziwiłł. In March 1917, he even became the head of the Belarusian National Committee, which was socialist by nature. However, *krajovašć* did not help overcome socialist’s distrust towards the landlord Skirmunt. Accordingly, Ściapan Niekraševič referred to Skirmunt in an article as ‘a mysterious Sphinx’. Skirmunt did not fit into the traditional mentality of proponents of the Belarusian renaissance movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

One can also assume that Belarusians’ “commitment to *krajovašć*” was conditioned by the need to define the national idea. The ethno-cultural version of nationalism, successfully used by Lithuanians and Poles, did not find popular support among Belarusians. For inhabitants

of the Belarusian village, the main object of the national renaissance endeavors, attempts to promote both the native language and culture, were not sufficiently attractive as they lacked social prestige. The leaders of the Belarusian movement could not fail to see this. Probably the promotion of *krajovaść* was a careful attempt to alter the *Naša Niva*<sup>20</sup> canon by those who actually had created it.

The leaders of the Lithuanian national movement were less active in what was *krajovaść* activity. They also tried to use contacts with Belarusians and 'Lithuanian Poles' in order to strengthen their positions in a multinational *Kraj*. But the Lithuanian idea, unlike the Belarusian one, already enjoyed mass support at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, active use of the *krajovaść* ideology could only weaken the influence of the Lithuanian idea.

In conclusion, it should be noted that *krajovaść* neither theoretically nor in practical politics opposed the Belarusian and Lithuanian national movements. This concept of a new type of political nation, where the main criterion for national identity was to be a 'citizen of the *Kraj*', contributed to the quest for ethnic harmony. It clearly opposed any aggressive nationalism. It can be argued that in the era of nationalism, it was a noble utopia, but it should be acknowledged that in an extremely difficult period in the histories of Belarus, Lithuania and Poland, it essentially contributed to the normalization of inter-community relations.

---

<sup>20</sup> *Naša Niva* is one of the oldest Belarusian weekly newspapers. It was founded in 1906 by members of the Belarusian Socialist Union (Hramada) and was a center of the Belarusian national movement at that time.