

**BECOMING LITHUANIAN: JEWISH  
ACCULTURATION IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD**

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## Abstract

One of the least acculturated Jewries in Europe, Lithuanian Jewry, stepped into neighboring majorities' independent state as the largest minority and the most culturally distant one. The new state was nationalizing, thus the Jews, along with other minorities had to learn the state language – Lithuanian. Although it stays unclear how well the Jews learned the majorities' vernacular and how often used it, there are indications that by the end of the 1930s most of them were literate in the majority's language.

This slight shift of identity of Lithuanian Jewry, which is heavily under-researched, was also promoted by some groups of the society, mostly by the Jews. The Union of Jewish Soldiers (active 1933-1940) was the most prominent advocator in this field. Their Lithuanian-language weekly “Apžvalga” (en. “Review”; published 1935-1940) became the main public medium in the context of mutual Lithuanian-Jewish recognition. However, as it is shown, even the Union did not internalize Lithuanian language, and thus, using mostly archival sources and the weekly, this thesis argues that even in the most extreme cases of shifting identity of the interwar Jewish community of Lithuania, there was no assimilation, and only to some extent the Jewry was acculturated.

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## Introduction

The establishment of the independent Lithuanian state in 1918, for the first time in history created preconditions for the Lithuanian Jewry<sup>1</sup> to take interest in the culture of the immediate neighbor. Before Lithuanians “owned” a state, with Lithuanian as the state language *de jure* and *de facto*, the least acculturated Jewry of the East Central Europe,<sup>2</sup> was never attracted to the backward society of Lithuanians. However, during over two decades of independence the mutual alienation waned. Even though there were signs of Lithuanians being interested in the Jewish culture, clearly this process was more important and significant for the Jews, thus they involved more actively in the bridging of two communities. They learned Lithuanian language, participated in political and cultural life.

Without any details this process is mentioned in the general historiography that deals with Lithuanian Jewry in the interwar period.<sup>3</sup> However, a forthcoming collection of articles “Mutual Recognition: Discourse of Cultural Links between Lithuanians and Jews”<sup>4</sup> will become the very first attempt to academically take a closer look into Lithuanian-Jewish relations in terms of mutual recognition (not in the very common context of measuring and

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<sup>1</sup> Quite often “Lithuanian Jewry” is equaled to what is in Yiddish called *litvak(e)s*, basically a linguistic group of certain Yiddish dialect, that covered today’s Lithuania and most of Byelorussia. However, within this thesis “Lithuanian Jewry” refers to the Jews living inside the borders of Lithuanian state of 1918-1940, excluding Vilnius’ region controlled by Poland 1920-1940.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (New York: Indiana University Press, 1983), 215.

<sup>3</sup> To name a few: Dov Levin, *Litvaks. A Short History of the Jews in Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2000); Masha Greenbaum, *Jews of Lithuania a History of a Remarkable Community, 1316-1945* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 1995); Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe...*; Solomonas Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias: nuo XIV amžiaus iki XX a. pabaigos* (Vilnius: Alma Littera, 2007).

N.B. Literature and sources that appear in Lithuanian in the references are translated into English in the bibliography list.

<sup>4</sup> *Abipusis pažinimas: letuvių ir žydų kultūrinių saitų diskursas*, ed. Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė (Vilnius, Forthcoming in 2010).

N.B. The publication will appear in English, however the working title is only known in Lithuanian. The provided English translation might not coincide with actual title of the collection.

comparing the level of anti-Semitism, in some cases even as a precondition for the Holocaust).<sup>5</sup> Several articles from this anthology are available.

Mordechai Zalkin contributes to the forthcoming anthology with an analysis of what cultural artifacts were translated to Yiddish and Hebrew and presented mostly in the Jewish press.<sup>6</sup> Before doing that, the author makes several valuable observations, which enables the reader to understand the significance of his research (and the whole collection for that matter). First of all, Zalkin makes it clear that Lithuanian Jews were never drawn to the cultural heritage of their surrounding majority since it was a product of “primeval undeveloped primitive rural society”.<sup>7</sup> Second, he states that:

during the first decade following the establishment of the Lithuanian state this sense of mutual alienation was gradually waned, mainly due to the involvement of Jews in the newly formed political arena; the cultural and educational autonomy granted to the local Jewish community, and, above all, due to the very low rate of local anti-Semitic acts.<sup>8</sup>

This very waning of alienation that author mentions is the historical process, which remains basically untouched in the literature. After analyzing the ways in which Jews were able to learn Lithuanian language, to get to know Lithuanian culture, Zalkin concludes rather carefully, that these efforts “to a certain extent”, “most probably” did not bear any fruits. He goes further by saying, that Jews, historically self-perceiving as “the people of the book,” could have hardly cross this mental and conscious barrier and to turn to Lithuanian culture. Illustratively he notices, that a Jewish student could have seen books by Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Leo Tolstoy, etc. on the shelves of the library next to the works by Lithuanian authors<sup>9</sup> like Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas or Vincas Krėvė-Micekvičius.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> On the influence of knowledge of the Holocaust in writing pre-Shoah history see: Egidijus Aleksandravičius, “Žydai lietuvių istoriografijoje,” in *Vilniaus Gaonas ir žydų kultūros keliai*, proceedings of International Scientific Conference, Vilnius (1999), 9; Michael Stanislawski, “Eastern European Jewry in the Modern Period: 1750-1939,” in *Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 397, 402.

<sup>6</sup> Mordechai Zalkin, “‘On a Bridge of Words’: The Jewish Encounter with Lithuanian Culture in Interwar Lithuania,” in *Abipusis pažinimas...* .

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Unknown to the outside world.

Of particular interest is the contribution of Estonian sociolinguist Anna Verschik.<sup>11</sup> In her study, she notices that the proficiency of the Jews in non-Jewish languages has not been considered in the literature in any details and in this manner she opens up a few important questions:

What did acquisition of Lithuanian mean in the terms of proficiency and use, i.e., how often and with whom was Lithuanian used? ... How large was the segment of Jewish population that mastered Lithuanian in a short time and became highly proficient? ... Were there varieties of Lithuanian, used particularly by Jews (i.e., ethnolects)?<sup>12</sup>

Besides raising questions, the author makes an interesting claim, that “there is evidence that Lithuanian was used also for internal communication in some cases.”<sup>13</sup> After that, the author involves in a long repetition of general historiography and arrives at the main object of her research – “Apžvalga” (en. “Review”), one of the two Lithuanian-language Jewish periodicals in pre-Holocaust Lithuanian Jewish history.<sup>14</sup> This weekly was published in 1935-1940 by the “Union of the Jewish Soldiers who Participated in the (Re)Liberation of Lithuanian Independence”<sup>15</sup> (thereinafter the Union, Union of Jewish soldiers). It is worth noticing, that such a late appearance of the Jewish newspaper is yet another indication of the unacculturation of the Jewry and thus a phenomenon itself.<sup>16</sup> Verschik argues that the Union “was not only loyal to the Lithuanian cause, but extremely patriotic. So was the weekly”.<sup>17</sup> As she noticed, “Apžvalga” went further than promoting Lithuanian and stressed the internalization of the language among Jews. Not only that, she again states that some segments of the young

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<sup>10</sup> This Jewish student is most likely Moyshe Halpern, Mendelsohn’s imagined representative Jew, who was educated in the Russian culture, and at the doorstep of Lithuanian independence found himself totally ignorant of the new reigning language and asked “Where [are] the Lithuanian Pushkins and Tolstoys?”. See: Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 41.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Verschik, “Towards Historical Sociolinguistics: Lithuanian Jewry and the Weekly Apžvalga (1935-1940),” in *Abipusis Pažinimas...* .

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The first periodical published by Jews in Lithuanian was “Mūsų garsas” (en. “Our Voice”) in 1924 and is shortly presented in Chapter 2.2.1.

<sup>15</sup> Lt. “Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjunga“.

<sup>16</sup> Jewish press in Polish, for example, dates back to 1823-1824. See: Chone Shmeruk, “Hebrew-Yiddish-Polish: A Trilingual Jewish Culture,” in *Jews of Poland between Two World Wars*, ed. Yisrael Gutman, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jehuda Reinharz, and Chone Shmeruk (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1991), 305.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Verschik, “Towards Historical Sociolinguistics...”.

generation became active users of Lithuanian among themselves. However important is the research of Vershik, who was the first to analyze the newspaper both as a source and as an object, it does not answer any of the proposed questions and none of her claims are proved. It has to be said though, that there are no answer in other historiography as well.

Zalkin was very reserved in evaluating the success of the Jews turning to Lithuanian culture, while Vershik proclaimed that some groups of Jews even internalized the state language. Who was right? To what extent the Jews learned Lithuanian? Having in mind the great interest in Zionism of the Baltic Jewry, to what extent were the Lithuanian Jewry interested in the majority's culture? What role did the state, with both democratic and authoritarian rule, played in these processes? Many questions occur and none of them are answered.

This thesis aims at contributing to the discourse of mutual recognition between Jews and Lithuanians in the interwar period. Analysis of the process of “becoming Lithuanian” is done from two perspectives. First, showing the nationalizing policies of the state in the education system, where special attention will be given to the teaching of Lithuanian. Second perspective is the voluntary engagement, mostly by the Jews, in the bridging of two communities. Assuming that the mentioned Union was the most important and the most active group that was interested in both, spreading the idea of *Lithuanianness* among the Jews and spreading the knowledge about the Jewish culture among Lithuanians, the utmost interest is taken in the activity of the Union and its weekly “Apžvalga”. In this light, the analysis of the first perspective is very important for the research of the second, i.e. the Jewish youth that learned Lithuanian in very large numbers in the 1920s could have been the readers of the newspaper in the latter part of the 1930s. Although the question of how well Lithuanian was known among the largest minority stays open, there are many indications that by the mid-1930s the vast majority of Jews were able to read the weekly.

This thesis will argue, that even in the most extreme cases of shifting identity of the interwar Jewish community of Lithuania, there was no assimilation, and only to some extent, through the acquisition of Lithuanian language, but by no means internalization as Vershik argues, the Jewry was acculturated. This argument does not negate the fact, that there were assimilated Jews. However, these separate instances are not an indication of general process.

Clearly, operation of such vague terms as “assimilation” and “acculturation” requires some clarification. For the purpose of understanding the argument of the thesis, a simplistic division of “assimilation” and “acculturation” made by Mendelsohn can be used; acculturation is an “adoption of the external characteristics of the majority culture, above all its language,”<sup>18</sup> while assimilation is understood as “the Jews’ effort to adopt the national identity of the majority ... or to abandon their Jewish identity altogether”.<sup>19</sup> In the light of this research, a clear question remains what does the “adoption” mean in the definition of “acculturation”? Because of the complexity of the terminology, these two terms will not be used through the most of the thesis. Instead there will be more concentration on, (1) the analysis of education system from a perspective never used before, and (2) on exploring the history never known before in the case of the Union. The question of level of “adoption” and its connection to “acculturation” will be discussed in Chapter 3.4.

The analysis of the education system of the minorities was done in two doctoral dissertations defended in 2000; Benediktas Šetkus analyzes schools of national minorities in the interwar period<sup>20</sup> and Sada Petružienė deals mostly with the development of Jewish gymnasiums in Lithuania.<sup>21</sup> In a publication on national minorities in Lithuania during the

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<sup>18</sup> Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe ...*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Benediktas Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla Lietuvoje 1918-1940 metais” (diss., Vilniaus Pedagoginis Universitetas, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Sada Petružienė, “Žydų švietimas Lietuvoje: gimnazijų raida ir dabartinė vidurinė mokykla” (diss., Kailpėdos Universitetas, 2000).

interwar period, Saulius Kaubrys devotes a chapter to education as well.<sup>22</sup> He presents very important statistical data on the whole schooling system which helps to understand the outline of this subject.<sup>23</sup> However, the conclusions drawn by Šetkus and Petružienė in the most of cases are not convincing at all, and Kaubrys is only presenting data, restraining himself even from making assumptions.<sup>24</sup> In the mentioned dissertations there are many factual mistakes as well. Nonetheless, all these studies are a good take-off point for this thesis.

The activity of the Union is mentioned in several sentences in a few general works on Lithuanian Jewry.<sup>25</sup> The only more in-depth analysis is the one by Vershik. In this thesis, two valuable sources were used to disclose the history of the Union, namely, the documents of the Union at the Central State Archive of Lithuania<sup>26</sup> and the weekly “Apžvalga”. As the main medium in the promotion of the Union’s ideas, the weekly is considered a valuable and a quantitatively large (over 1700 pages in total) source in analyzing the stance of the organization on many questions and the activity of the Union itself.<sup>27</sup> The archival materials consist of: internal files of the Union of the Jewish Soldiers who Participated in the (Re)Liberation of Lithuanian Independence, files related to the Union in the corpus of (1) Kaunas County Governor’s Administration and (2) the Administration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As many of archival documents that are most likely relevant to this research are in Yiddish, the major shortcoming of the thesis is inability to use them.

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<sup>22</sup> Saulius Kaubrys, *National Minorities in Lithuania: an Outline* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2002), 140-170.

<sup>23</sup> His more extensive study of schools in interwar period – Saulius Kaubrys, *Lietuvos mokykla 1918-1939 m.: galios gimtis* (Vilnius: Statistikos tyrimai, 2000) – will not be analyzed here because of accessibility problems.

<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, his contribution in collecting valuable data from the interwar period in general can not be overestimated in the studies of Lithuanian history.

<sup>25</sup> Levin, *Litvaks ...*, 180; Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 132, 176.

<sup>26</sup> Lt. Lietuvos Centrinis valstybės archyvas. The abbreviation for the references “LCVA“ will be used.

<sup>27</sup> Censorship and possible bias is of course taken into account.

# 1. Identities

In order to understand the importance of the language in the interwar Lithuanian state, there is a need to look back into the history of Lithuanian identity. Similar to many European states, and differently from, e.g. Latvia, Estonia or Finland, Lithuania existed before the discussed period, but consisted of a very different “kind of Lithuanians”. In the strive to distance themselves from Poles, Lithuanians enthroned their language. Jews however, never being interested in Lithuanian culture, knew Lithuanian very scarcely. Thus, at the dawn of independent Lithuanian state, Lithuanian Jewry faced majority defined by a trait unknown to them.

## 1.1. Lithuanians

O Lithuania, my country, thou  
Art like good health; I never knew till now  
How precious, till I lost thee. Now I see  
The beauty whole, because I yearn for thee.<sup>28</sup>  
(Adam Mickiewicz, “*Pan Tadeusz*”, 1834)

It is not by accident that in his distinguished work on national awakenings of Eastern Europe,<sup>29</sup> Timothy Snyder starts every chapter on Lithuanian identity with a quote from works of Adam Mickiewicz. The latter is probably the most celebrated poet in Poland, as a Pole, by Poles and yet his writings more often than not are about Lithuania. The biography and work of Mickiewicz can be understood as an encapsulation of the “old” Lithuanian identity, which was rejected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. From a political civilization Lithuanians turned to be a “product of philology”. Although this shift is not exceptional in the contemporary East Central Europe, there is nothing obvious and clear about the Lithuanian case.

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<sup>28</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz or the Last Foray in Lithuania: a History of the Nobility in the Years 1811 and 1812 in Twelve Books of Verse* (Harrow Gate Press, 2006); Translation by Leonard Kress.

<sup>29</sup> Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations. Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereinafter GDL) and later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (hereinafter Commonwealth) were the political civilizations, where Lithuanian language was of mere importance. It was neither the language nor religious affiliation that defined each and everyone. Rather, it was a belonging to the political state, respect to the Grand Duke and the rule of law.<sup>30</sup> As Snyder notices “a nobleman could be “Lithuanian” by origin, “Polish” in politics, and “Russian” (or “Greek”) by religion”.<sup>31</sup> In the legal practice and politics Latin and Chancery Slavonic were used since the 14<sup>th</sup> c. and later Polish surpassed the other two. GDL’s Statute of 1529 was composed in Chancery Slavonic and the acts of Lublin Union in 1569 (which established the Commonwealth) were recorded in Polish only. The last Grand Duke to know Lithuanian was Kazimieras IV (Casimir), who died in 1492.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, considerable part of Polish-speaking nobility defined themselves as Lithuanians. It is not by accident, that in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. Mikołaj Radziwiłł Czarny (Mikolaj Radziwill The Black) spoke Polish in the Parliament when he was harshly advocating the integrity of the GDL, the need to stay unanimous and withstand from the hegemony of Moscow as well as from the Polish Kingdom.<sup>33</sup> Later the importance of Polish in law and politics only grew while Lithuanian was spoken only by peasantry. However, neither was of importance in defining one’s identity.

At the time when the Commonwealth was partitioned (1795), there was no image of a different kind of Lithuania, the one that came into being in the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Therefore, a Lithuanian or even a Pole, who based his/her identity on political ascription to the state, understood the end of Commonwealth as the end of the nation. So did Mickiewicz, who was born three years

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<sup>30</sup> Aleksandravičius mentions that there many accounts referring to this understanding of Lithuanian identity. Moreover, often the sublime Grand Duke of Lithuania is cherished as oppose to despotic tsars of the East. See: Egidijus Aleksandravičius, "LT tapsmas" (lecture, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, February 19, 2009), <http://www.tvdu.lt/node/14> (accessed February 28, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations...*, 24.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> *Lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija*, vol. 9 (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 1982), s.v. “Mikalojus Radvila Juodasis”.

after the dissolution of the Commonwealth, and thus he yearned exactly for that “old Lithuania.”

The shift of identity very slowly began with a work of famous historian and linguist Franciszek Ksawery Bohusz. In the study “On the Origins of Lithuanian Nation and Language” (“*O początkach narodu języka litewskiego rozprawa*“ 1808) he argued that the dissolution of the state does not mean dissolution of the nation. In his view, “nation” is no more than an expression of culture, i.e. everyone who share the same language, common memory, and practice the same customs are objectively members of the nation. He also researched Lithuanian language and correctly claimed that it is a very archaic language, it is not a mixture of Slavonic languages and its origins are Latin. Here Bohusz tried to negate the common understanding of Lithuanian as a language of the peasantry and urged that it can fulfill the needs of national elite.<sup>34</sup>

Even though Bohusz’s work introduced the “new” understanding of the Lithuanian nation and the importance of Lithuanian language grew throughout the century, the idea was widely accepted only by the end of it. It is worth mentioning that during the Uprising against Tsarist rule of 1863, both Lithuanian and Polish participants were not even sure what is their actual goal – whether they were fighting for the reestablishment of the Commonwealth with its old structure or for two separate states. Only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. with the first Lithuanian-language periodical “Ausra” (“The Dawn”), published in 1883-1886, the idea of a language-based nationality began to emerge in the wider population. Elite members of the national awakening movement now had a difficult task to modernize the archaic language. Even the grammar of the first newspaper’s title shows that the language was not really Lithuanian yet; only after the end of publishing “Ausra” the Polish way of using letters “sz” to represent a

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<sup>34</sup> Antanas Kulakauskas and Egidijus Aleksandravičius, *Carų Valdžioje. XIX Amžiaus Lietuva* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 2001), 269-270.

sound written in English as “sh” was changed with a borrowed “š” from Czech (as in “aušra”).

This clash of two Lithuanian identities shortly outlined here was particularly interestingly expressed in one letter by the “old Lithuanian”. In 1906, Mrs. Wojnyłowicz, who lived close to Minsk, wrote in Polish to the daily “Vilniaus žinios” (“Vilnius’ News”):

Dear Editor, from the depths of my aching soul with a clenched heart I am taking a quill to my hand to complain, because wrongful deeds are done in our motherland Lithuania. Because of misunderstood patriotism you have made Lithuania wee ... and Poles happy. ... They have invaded newspapers in Vilnius and are yelling till deafness that those who speak Polish in Lithuania are Poles. It is understandable that Poles consider our geniuses, poets and men of science as their own, because Lithuanians, who speak Lithuanian, kindly offered [this]. ... Has Adam Mickiewicz thought himself to be Polish when he wrote “O Lithuania, my country, thou”? Did Kondratowicz, who wrote “Lithuania, my motherland, my holly land”, did he feel Polish? ... Just as a Swiss calls himself Swiss even though he speaks French ... so we, Lithuanians, will never abandon our nationality no matter that we speak and write in Polish ... We can speak in many languages, but we must all feel as children of the same mother.<sup>35</sup>

By 1918, when Lithuania proclaimed independence, the first indicator of *Lithuanianness* was clear – it was the language. Works of Kondratowicz and Mickiewicz were translated into Lithuanian and were read as written by Lithuanians. However, these pieces of literature or poetry were celebrating the old GDL and were not sufficient for the new identity. Thus, 19<sup>th</sup> c. literature produced by “true Lithuanians” was now at heights. This literature, of course, was concentrated on the life of the roots of the “new” nation, i.e. peasantry.

For the first time in history Lithuanian became a state language. This meant that ethnic minorities were now forced to learn and throughout interwar period increasingly use it. This will be discussed in the second part of this thesis.

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<sup>35</sup> S. Wojniłowiczowa, “Laiškas į “Viln. Žin.” Redakciją” *Vilniaus žinios*, no. 246(546) (November 5 (18), 1906): 1.  
Letter read at: Aleksandravičius, “LT tapsmas”...

## 1.2. Jews

In the Jewish studies field, the issue of identity always seems to be more complex and diverse than elsewhere. Within the limits of this thesis, there is no need to thoroughly define what is a “modern Lithuanian Jewish identity,” an idea of which even every word separately is a challenge to define.<sup>36</sup> Instead, this chapter will draw attention to the Lithuanian Jewry as one of the least acculturated in Europe (*vis-à-vis* immediate surrounding culture, i.e. Lithuanian).

It is very important to understand that while in the Western and Central Europe assimilation was one of the major Jewish experiences in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., in the Lithuanian lands even the term “acculturation” is somewhat hard to swallow up until after the World War One.<sup>37</sup> By all means, experiences of Heine, Börne, Disraeli or even comparatively very late (imposed) identity crisis of Julian Tuwim<sup>38</sup> were unfamiliar to the Lithuanian Jewry.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, “people of the book”, the Jews, throughout six centuries of living next to Lithuanians had no intention of learning their language and becoming consumers of the Lithuanian culture, whatever that implies, let alone contributing to it. Although nineteenth century brought a lot of changes in the understanding of Lithuanian identity, both Lithuanians and Jews sustained the distance and had no intention to get to know each other better. There are many reasons for that and in order to understand this distance between two communities, probably the most

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Oppenheim, who discussed the problem of not having clear-cut definitions in the Jewish identity studies, firstly concluded that “the “singularity” of the subject “modern Jewish identity” masks the real multiplicity of subjects”. See: Michael Oppenheim, “A “Fieldguide” to the Study of Modern Jewish Identity,” *Jewish Social Studies* 46, no. 3/4 (Autumn 1984): 220.

<sup>37</sup> Similar situation was in the *kresy* lands in Poland. For a simple account on the levels of acculturation in case of Poland and other states in the region see: Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe...*, 18, 20, 64, 87-88, 133, 140-142, 158, 160, 175, 176-177.

<sup>38</sup> Among others, for a recent account on Julian Tuwim see: Joanna B. Michlic, “The Culture of Ethno-Nationalism and the Identity of Jews in Inter-War Poland,” in *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry*, eds. Richard I. Cohen and Jonathan Frankel, Stefani Hoffman (Portland, Or.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Although mentioning of Heine, Börne and Disraeli besides other things refers to the conversion, the latter will not be discussed here. One reason for it being very scarce historiography, the other – small number of conversions. In his study on apostasy in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Russian Empire Stanislawski drew attention to various shortcomings of the available data on the issue. Nonetheless, it is clear that the number of conversions in Lithuanian consistory is counted only in hundreds. See: Michael Stanislawski, “Jewish Apostasy in Russia: a Tentative Typology,” in *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, ed. Todd M. Endelman (New York/London: Holmes and Meier, 1987), 189-205.

reasonable question to ask is if there was a reason for the Jews to become closer to Lithuanians?<sup>40</sup>

Almost until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. various communities of multicultural and multiconfessional empires occupied certain place in socio-economic relations with very limited social mobility. In this light, Lithuanians and Jews met almost exclusively in a market place.<sup>41</sup> Even if intensity of the contacts in one case or another increased, the Jews could hardly find anything attractive in the backward, peasantry-based Lithuanian society and culture.<sup>42</sup> Yiddish and increasingly important Hebrew cultures should probably be considered far more developed than that of Lithuanian. Strong Yiddish tradition<sup>43</sup> as well as world-famous rabbinical teaching of *yeshivot* in Telšiai (yid. Telz<sup>44</sup>) or Slabada (yid. Slobodka, today a part of Kaunas, yid. Kovne),<sup>45</sup> not to mention *yeshivot* in Lyda and Volozhin (today Byelorussia), were the reflections of strong Lithuanian Jewish identity. If, however, the modernity was there to urge the Jews to move towards any other culture, Lithuanian Jewry turned to Russian culture, not to Lithuanian.<sup>46</sup> It was an obvious choice for various reasons, beginning with rich Russian culture lead by Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky or Tchaikovsky, and ending with clear pragmatism – it was Russian empire, ruled by Russians. This whole situation was well encapsulated by Mendelsohn:

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<sup>40</sup> The opposite question if Lithuanians had any inclination to turn to Jewish culture is just considered irrelevant.

<sup>41</sup> Šarūnas Liekis, “Žydų padėtis Lietuvoje ketvirtajame dešimtmetyje,” in *Lietuvių-žydų Santykiai. Istoriniai, Teisiniai Ir Politiniai Aspektai, Balandžio 23, 1999*, proceedings of Seminar-discussion, [http://www.genocid.lt/GRTD/Konferencijos/lietuvi.htm#Šarūnas\\_LIEKIS](http://www.genocid.lt/GRTD/Konferencijos/lietuvi.htm#Šarūnas_LIEKIS) (accessed December 2, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Not only that, the Lithuanian cultural elite was somewhat anti-Semitic, as, e.g., in Motiejus Valančius case with his “Paaugusių žmonių knygelė“ (en. “Adolescent People’s Book”)(1868).

<sup>43</sup> On the highly celebrated Yiddish tradition of Lithuanian Jewry see: Joshua Fishman, “Vilniaus Gaonas ir jidiš kalba,” in *Vilniaus Gaonas Ir žydų Kultūros Keliai*, proceedings of International Scientific Conference, Vilnius (1999), 17-24; Dovid Katz, “Religinis Gaono prestižas ir pasaulietiškas Lietuvos žydo jidiš kalbos prestižas. Pasakojimas apie subtilias sąsajas,” in *Vilniaus Gaonas ir žydų kultūros keliai*, 175-187.

<sup>44</sup> Names of the Lithuanian towns in Yiddish are provided here according to Levin’s translations. See: Levin, *Litvaks...*, 268-281.

<sup>45</sup> M. Gertz, “The Old Man of Slobodka,” in *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe*, ed. Lucy S. Dawidowicz (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 179-185.

<sup>46</sup> The turn to Russian culture and, more importantly, the usage of Russian language among the Lithuanian Jews became one of the reasons of the hostility towards them, which will be discussed more in Chapter 3.3.2. For more on the shift to the Russian culture see: Aušra Pažeraitė, “Žydų kultūrinių ir politinių orientyrų pokyčiai Aleksandro II laikais,” in *Žydų klausimas Lietuvoje XIX a. viduryje*, ed. Vladas Sirutavičius and Darius Staliūnas (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Instituto Leidykla, 2004), 53-84.

By the late nineteenth century many Jews wished to transform themselves into Russians and Poles, but hardly any wished to be Belorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, or Ukrainians, even if they knew that such nations existed.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, these contacts or rather non-existence of them is much more complicated than it is outlined here. What is important for this thesis, however, is just to show that up until the creation of independent Lithuanian state there was no other period in history when the Jews had any intention to acculturate to a weak culture of immediate neighbor.

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<sup>47</sup> Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 38.

## 2. State-imposed and voluntary contacts

This part of the thesis will discuss two different kinds of contacts between the Lithuanians and the Jews. First type, state-imposed contact, was basically the education system in which Jews, along with other minorities, were increasingly subjected to the learning of the state language. The second type of contacts was initiated and implemented by separate persons or groups. The goal of this movement, to say it in the most generalized way, was to raise mutual understanding between the two communities, to bring closer these two cultures, religions, language groups or anything that determines identity of either of these two groups, in order to reduce hostility. Most of this “project” was carried out in what could be simplistically called “cultural field”.

### 2.1. Nationalizing policies in education

The First World War broke out mainly between multinational, multilingual and multiethnic empires and ended up with the ideas of nation-states. The *new Europe*, delineated with a number of lines never seen before, was supposed to be the cradle of nation-states. Nonetheless, as one British authority wrote, it is ironic

that a settlement supposed to have been largely determined by the principle of nationality ... have produced a state like Czechoslovakia, with minorities amounting to 34.7 per cent of its population ... Poland was not much better off with minorities amounting to 30.4 per cent, or Roumania, with 25 per cent.<sup>48</sup>

According to some calculations, there were around twenty-five million national minorities in the East Central Europe, which was one fourth of the whole population.<sup>49</sup> The three Baltic States were not that diverse in their national structures, however there were almost a million of minorities in total and it was almost twenty percent of the whole

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Chaszar, *The International Problem of National Minorities* (Toronto: Matthias Corvinus, 1999), 5.

<sup>49</sup> Calculation is made by Inis L. Claude, Jr., see: *Ibid.*

population.<sup>50</sup> The Jews were the largest minority of Lithuania, numbering over 150 thousand and constituting approx. 7,6 percent of total population.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the numbers of minorities, all new states in the Eastern and Central Europe were created as nation-states and, as Rogers Brubaker argues, all were nationalizing states.<sup>52</sup> The reason for such state policies, he claims, is the “tendency to see the state as an “unrealized” nation-state, as a state destined to be a nation-state, the state of and for a particular nation, but not yet in fact a nation-state (at least not to a sufficient degree)“.<sup>53</sup> In Lithuania there were at least two sections of public life where nationalizing policies were clearly implemented, namely education and economics. The latter case will be shortly discussed in Chapter 3.3.3.

As it was already discussed, the key element of the “new” national identity of Lithuanians was the language. More or less, this was also the case for the most of minorities living in Lithuania, in other words, Poles were Poles because they spoke Polish, Russians were Russians because they spoke Russian, etc.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, in order to assimilate national minorities the first step was to teach them Lithuanian. Of course, assimilation of the Jews and turning them into Lithuanians was out of the question as it was in Poland.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, command of Lithuanian, a language which for the first time in history became *de jure* and *de facto* the state-language, was mandatory.

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<sup>50</sup> Based on: *Lietuvos gyventojai. Pirmojo 1923 m. rugsėjo 17 d. Visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys* [bilingual: *Population de la Lithuanie. Données du premier recensement du 17 septembre 1923*]; Bruno Martuzāns, “Ethnicities in Latvia. Statistics,” [http://www.roots-saknes.lv/Ethnicities/ethnicities\\_statistics.htm#1920](http://www.roots-saknes.lv/Ethnicities/ethnicities_statistics.htm#1920) (accessed January 3, 2010); *Demographics of Estonia*, available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Estonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Estonia), accessed on 3 January, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> *Lietuvos gyventojai...*, XXXVI.

<sup>52</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 83.

<sup>53</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “National Minorities, Nationalizing States and External National Homelands in the New Europe,” *Daedalus* 124, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 114, [http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/12\\_National\\_Minorities.pdf](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/12_National_Minorities.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> Religion, another important trait differentiating, e.g., Poles and Russians or Lithuanians and Russians, was not as important as language in the structure of national identity.

<sup>55</sup> Yisrael Gutman, “Polish Antisemitism between the Wars: An Overview,” in *Jews of Poland...*, 100-101.

### 2.1.1. Legislation and curricula

“What! You don't mean to say they do not understand the language of the country they live in?”<sup>56</sup>

Ezra Mendelsohn reminds<sup>57</sup> us of the question of a perplexed nobleman about a melamed and a Rabbi in “Meir Ezofowicz”, which to some extent encapsulates the situation of Jewish language usage in modern Eastern Europe. The quoted amazement of the nobleman *happened* in Poland, however Lithuanian lands would have been even more marvelous to him. According to the census of 1897, 99.3 percent of Lithuanian Jews<sup>58</sup> considered Yiddish as their mother-tongue.<sup>59</sup>

The importance of education in the process of (re)building Lithuania's statehood was understood quite early on. Even though the first legislation regulating the education system was issued only in 1919,<sup>60</sup> one has to take into account the conditions, i.e. ongoing wars with three different aggressors. It is illustrative that education-related laws were published along with the laws on mobilization and sequestration in the very same issue of the governmental periodical.<sup>61</sup> The provisional laws of 1919 were very general, however they ensured schooling in the native tongue curricula for the national minorities. According to these documents, elementary schools could be established by the municipalities of cities' and counties', communities and associations, funded by the municipalities;<sup>62</sup> meanwhile higher education schools could be founded and funded by the Ministry of Education, public institutions and private persons. Higher schools established by public institutions were eligible to receive

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<sup>56</sup> Eliza Orzeszko, *Meir Ezofowicz* (London: GREENING &, 1899), <http://polishwriting.net/obscure.html> (accessed May 02, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, 7-8.

<sup>58</sup> Those who lived in Vilnius, Kaunas and Gardinas/Grodno gubernias.

<sup>59</sup> Glenda Abramson, *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 794.

<sup>60</sup> Provisional Charter on Elementary Schools (lt. “Laikinieji pradžios mokyklų įstatai“ as quoted in: Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 17); and Provisional Charter on Higher Comprehensive Schools under Ministry of Education, see: “Laikinieji įstatai aukštesniosioms bendrojo lavinimo Švietimo Ministerijos mokykloms,” *Laikinosios Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 12 (October 1, 1919): 4-6.

<sup>61</sup> *Laikinosios Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 12 (October 1, 1919).

<sup>62</sup> Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 17.

governmental funding as well.<sup>63</sup> The curriculum was supposed to be regulated by separate acts issued by the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, in both laws it was stated that in schools with other than Lithuanian language curriculum, Lithuanian had to be taught as a separate mandatory course and the number of hours of this course could not be less than in Lithuanian-curriculum schools.<sup>64</sup>

After over a year of discussions<sup>65</sup> the new Elementary Education Law<sup>66</sup> was passed in 1922. Among other things,<sup>67</sup> these discussions were fuelled by the question whether there should be a separate law regulating the schooling system of national minorities. Finally it was agreed that a separate law would imply restrictions or privileges for the minorities' education *vis-à-vis* Lithuanians'.<sup>68</sup>

Despite several changes made by the authoritarian government, this law was active until the education reforms in 1936, and thus it is the most important for the purposes of this research. According to this law, elementary schools could be established by the Ministry of Education, municipalities, public and confessional organizations and by any Lithuanian citizen (Article 2), and not more than one school per population of at least 500 (Article 5). The duration of studies in elementary school was four years (Article 4) and the attendance for 7-14 year old children was mandatory (Article 7). The schools maintained by the Ministry and municipalities were free of charge for the pupils (Article 14); municipalities' received allowances to fund the building and restoration of their schools, to pay salaries for teachers and buy teaching materials (Article 46). Schools, established by public or confessional

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<sup>63</sup> Notably, the schools established by private persons were not able to receive funding. See: "Laikinieji įstatatai aukštesniosioms...", Article 1.

<sup>64</sup> For primary schools see: Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla ...," 17; for higher education schools, see: "Laikinieji įstatatai aukštesniosioms bendrojo lavinimo Švietimo Ministerijos mokykloms," Article 4.

<sup>65</sup> Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla...", 18.

<sup>66</sup> "Pradžios mokyklų įstatymas." *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 117 (November 23, 1922): 1-3.

<sup>67</sup> E.g., questions of who should be eligible to establish, maintain, control and sponsor the schools, what mandatory curricula should include (especially the question of teaching religion), etc. See: Kazys Jokantas, "Pradedamosios mokyklos įstatų sumanymas," minutes of Constituent Assembly of Lithuania, session I, sitting 77, 5th of April, 1921, in: *Steigiamojo Seimo darbai*, Sąs. 16, 1921, 899-900.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 900.

organisations and Lithuanian citizens, were provided with money to pay the salaries (Article 47). This law also mentions Jewish schools, stating that the “old Hebrew language” can be used for instruction there (Article 12). Šetkus provides data from the Jewish Ministry, showing that in 1920, 28 percent of Jewish pupils attended state-run schools, 30 percent private schools and the rest (42 percent) were not attending schools. This, the author argues, changed very rapidly. Although he uses different data, i.e. not the percentage of pupils, but the funding sources of schools, his argument retains credibility. Šetkus states that in 1925 municipalities ran and funded 100 schools (out of 118), the Ministry of Education 1, and communities and associations 21.<sup>69</sup> In 1928, 115 out of Jewish 144 schools were supported by the municipalities.<sup>70</sup> The system of free and compulsory elementary education was operated throughout the period of independence despite some changes in the 1930s.

Compared to the Provisional Law, the permanent law drew more attention to the teaching of Lithuanian in non-Lithuanian curriculum schools. Now the separate mandatory course of Lithuanian language was to be taught starting from the second grade and there had to be no less than one lesson per day (Article 11). It is important to notice, that a number of Lithuanian language classes was regulated by parliamentary legislation, while the quantity of other disciplines was a matter of agreement between particular school and the Ministry of Education.

Šetkus provides an example of an elementary school curriculum from 1924, which shows that non-Lithuanian students had to take six Lithuanian language classes per week starting from second grade and two fewer classes of their mother-tongue in the second grade. The data also shows the great importance of teaching both Lithuanian and minority children in their vernacular.

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<sup>69</sup> Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 40.

<sup>70</sup> Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 146.

Table 1. Mother-tongue and Lithuanian language classes per week in Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian elementary school in 1924.<sup>71</sup>

	<b>Lithuanian school</b>	<b>Non-Lithuanian school</b>	
	Mother-tongue	Mother-tongue	Lithuanian
<b>1 grade</b>	10	10	-
<b>2 grade</b>	9	7	6
<b>3 grade</b>	6	6	6
<b>4 grade</b>	4	4	6

The Elementary Education Law was effective until 1936, however some changes concerning the interest of this research were made. After the census in 1923 it was noticed that the Polish population in Kaunas was a mere 4.5 percent; nonetheless almost one fourth of elementary schools were Polish, i.e. with Polish as an instruction language. An even more disturbing fact for the government was that almost half of the pupils in these schools were Lithuanians. Minister of Education Bistras asserted that the state can not “denationalize the majority just because it does not want to denationalize the minorities”.<sup>72</sup> Thus, in 1925 an amendment was passed, stating that the schools with other than Lithuanian instruction language can accept students only of the corresponding nation.<sup>73</sup> Although this basically does not concern the Jewish minority, because of the presumable unwillingness of Lithuanians to attend Jewish schools, it clearly shows the nationalizing stance of the government.

Šetkus also mentions another instance of what could have been an implicit nationalizing move of the authorities. The question of Lithuanian language expertise was not only reserved to students. The government was concerned about the teachers’ inability to speak the majority’s language as well. At the end of 1923, the Departments of Primary, Secondary and Higher Education issued circulars that teachers of non-Lithuanian language schools have to learn Lithuanian by the beginning of 1924, and obtain a certificate that they passed the language exam.<sup>74</sup> However, this should not be taken as a nationalizing policy out of hand.

<sup>71</sup> Taken from: Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 40.

<sup>72</sup> Lt., “[valstybė] nenorėdama ištautinti mažumas, negali leisti ištautinti savo daugumą“, cited in: Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> “Pradžios mokyklų įstatymo pakeitimas.” *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 200 (August 5, 1925): 6.

<sup>74</sup> Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 22.

Bistras noticed that only a few years earlier he could not make himself understood to the directors of minorities' schools<sup>75</sup> and so it could have been more of an administrative measure rather than a sign of nationalizing policy.<sup>76</sup>

The authoritarian government took these steps further. In 1930 Minister of Education Konstantinas Šakenis ordered the use of Lithuanian in any school-related documentation and left a possibility to use another language only as a translation from Lithuanian.<sup>77</sup>

In 1925 the Law on Secondary and Higher Schools<sup>78</sup> was adopted. Higher school here meant eight years of study and if it was divided by two terms of four years, the school of the first four years was called secondary (Article 6).<sup>79</sup> Although the schools were supported by government funding (Article 4), the students had to pay tuition fees (Article 44), which constituted a major part of a school's budget. The authorities of these schools had an option to waive the tuition fee for the 15 percent of the poorest students (Article 45).

In higher schools two foreign languages were mandatory as well as Latin in certain grades. Secondary and higher schools with other than Lithuanian as the instruction language could only use the language of the minority that was attending school; the number of mother-tongue lessons can not exceed Lithuanian language lessons (Article 10). It is worth noticing, that not only is there no prohibition on Lithuanians to attend minorities' schools, which by that time is the case in elementary schools, but the language of instructions has to be the one of the minority, that is minorities can not use Lithuanian as an instruction language.<sup>80</sup> However, the Kaunas Jewish gymnasium with Lithuanian as the language of instruction was established in 1933, which means that there had to be changes made in the law.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> There is of course a possibility that Bistras' notion is just a cover story to base nationalizing policies. However, there are no proofs and one should not engage in speculative discussion.

<sup>77</sup> Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla..." 22.

<sup>78</sup> "Vidurinių ir aukštesniųjų mokyklų įstatymas." *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 190 (April 23, 1925): 1-5.

<sup>79</sup> Thus, the whole schooling system can be understood by formula 4+4+4, i.e. each school – elementary, secondary and higher – was of four years term. The higher school was also called gymnasium the secondary – pro-gymnasium.

<sup>80</sup> This legislation is somewhat troubling, because it seems to be opposite to general policies. Unfortunately, there is no explanation in the historiography.

The discussion on the need for reforms in the education system started in the early 1930s. The main concerns here were the duration of higher education and its curriculum. In 1934 the duration of higher education was changed to seven years, hence one concern was resolved.<sup>81</sup> Two years later the rest of the reform was encapsulated in the new laws on Elementary<sup>82</sup> and Secondary Education.<sup>83</sup> A meticulous analysis of the education laws of the 1920s is not necessary in the case of the new legislation, because many changes of the reform are beyond the focus of this research. However, some novelties regarding national minority schooling were made and are of great importance to overview, especially because these changes sparked the discussion in “Apžvalga“. (See Chapter 3.3.2.)

It is clear that by 1936 the stance of the government became more *Lithuaniannizing*. To start with, two articles appeared in the Elementary Education Law which stated that one of the goals of the education system was to teach the pupils to love Lithuania (Articles 1, 12). An article from the amendment of 1925, stating that the language of instruction and minority learning has to correspond, was repeated and taken further by asserting that if one of a child’s parents is Lithuanian, s/he has to attend Lithuanian school (Article 28). An entirely new regulation regarding the establishment of a minority school was introduced. Article 26 states that only in the county/parish where there are no less than 30 children of some particular non-Lithuanian nationality can a school be established with an instruction language of that minority. .Also, there had to be at least 20 minority children in the school in order for them to have their language lessons as a separate discipline (Article 14). Furthermore, it is ruled that starting from the third grade, courses of knowledge of homeland, history and geography has

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<sup>81</sup> Petružienė, "Žydų švietimas Lietuvoje..." 52.

<sup>82</sup> "Pradžios mokyklų įstatymas." *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 541 (July 29, 1936): 1-4.

<sup>83</sup> "Vidurinių mokyklų įstatymas." *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 541 (July 29, 1936): 4-8.

to be taught in Lithuanian. One positive element in the system was that education was free (Article 5) and remained so until the occupation of the state.<sup>84</sup>

In the Secondary Education Law the same article on who can attend the schools with other than Lithuanian instruction language was repeated (i.e. the corresponding minority. Article 7).<sup>85</sup> However, with the permission of the government there was a possibility to run a non-Lithuanian language school to which children of all nationalities could go. As was the case with elementary schools, some disciplines were to be taught in Lithuanian disregarding the instruction language. These were: Lithuanian language, Lithuanian literature, history, geography of Lithuania, physical education and military training (Article 6). The mentioned circular that the documents must be in the state language now also became part of the law (Article 8).

In 1939 the last changes were made in the education system and they again demonstrate that the state was becoming more and more nationalizing. The minimum number of students for the establishment of a national minority school was increased from 30 to 50; the minimum number of students for instruction in a minority vernacular in Lithuanian elementary schools was raised from 20 to 32.<sup>86</sup>

The education system of the interwar period Lithuania was regulated by several laws and subordinate legislation which were increasingly pro-Lithuanian. The education system was *Lithuaniannized* first by stressing the teaching and use of language, second by enforcement to have any school-related documentation in the state language, then by creating obstacles to establish minority schools and learn their vernacular, and finally by forcing minorities to study several disciplines in Lithuanian.

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<sup>84</sup> Of course this helped in the process of *Lithuaniannizing* the Jews, thus the evaluation of such policy as positive could be also questioned.

<sup>85</sup> Kaubrys mentions that some organizations of national minorities interpreted this as an obvious violation of their rights and gives as an example a memorandum to the Minister of Education by Polish minority. However, he also points out that memorandum by "Tarbut" organization to the same minister does not mention Article 7 at all.

See: Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 161-162.

<sup>86</sup> Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla..." 24.

Even though the government-imposed learning of Lithuanian was stressed more and more throughout the discussed period, it is not known how successful was this part of *Lithuanianization* politics, i.e. how good was the command of Lithuanian among graduates of schools or in general public of national minorities or the Jews in particular. Few notions in historiography and in sources can be found that refer to the answer.

One possible way to understand the level of this success would be to analyze the results of the graduation exams. However this is not yet done. Kaubrys mentions that occasionally a negligent attitude towards teaching Lithuanian language could be observed. “It is not by accident that in 1924 of 108 graduates of non-Lithuanian schools 45 failed the Lithuanian language exam.”<sup>87</sup> The exams, on the other hand, were rather challenging. Preparatory questions for the Lithuanian language and literature exam used in 1928 at Ukmergė “Šviesos” [en. “Light”] organization’s Hebrew gymnasium are available for analysis. One question during the exam was related to the literature and the second – grammar. All literature-related preparatory questions could be divided into three sections. The first was related to early writings in Ruthenian (Chancery Slavonic), Statutes of Lithuania,<sup>88</sup> yearbooks (annuals) of the GDL, influence of the Protestant Reformation to Lithuanian literature,<sup>89</sup> etc. The second section included the literature produced mostly by 19<sup>th</sup> c. authors, the key figures of the national awakening. The last section involved the most prominent contemporary patriarchs of literature. In total, graduates had to be familiar with up to twenty authors and answer rather

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<sup>87</sup> Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 159.

<sup>88</sup> Three codified legislative documents of the GDL and later the Commonwealth effective from 1529, 1566, 1588. The inclusion of this topic is not surprising, because the Statutes are generally valued as a sign of progressive legal regulation, thus Lithuanians, as well as the minorities living in Lithuania, should be proud of them.

<sup>89</sup> This most likely means the publishing of the first book in Lithuanian, compiled by reformer Martynas Mažvydas in 1547. It was a Christian Catechism.

in-depth questions related to their personalities and their work; besides that, knowledge about very early writings of GDL, even not in Lithuanian, had to be decent.<sup>90</sup>

In 1924 there was a commandment passed by the Ministry of Education stating that there must be “measures taken to promote the interest of Lithuanian language among the pupils.”<sup>91</sup> This happened when an audit of schools showed that language knowledge is not sufficient.<sup>92</sup> Kaubrys cites schools’ inspector Miškinis, who in 1939 wrote: “the Jewish schools were making progress in mastering the Lithuanian language. Just several years ago Jewish students were unable to conduct a conversation in Lithuanian nor write”.<sup>93</sup> Similar notice was already done ten years ago in the official newspaper<sup>94</sup> “Lietuvos aidas” –

A few years ago it was difficult to find a Jew who could speak fine Lithuanian and was acquainted with Lithuanian literature, but now we can see among the Jews young philologists who easily compete with young Lithuanian linguists.<sup>95</sup>

Atamukas (born in 1918), most likely relying on his own memories, says that the command of Lithuanian was increasingly better throughout the interwar period and reached very high level especially among younger generation.<sup>96</sup> This goes in line with various remarks made in “Apžvalga“. (see Chapter 3.3.2.)

To answer the proposed question more research has to be carried out. The few notions referring to the answer were provided here, however they should not be taken as a characteristic of the overall situation.

### **2.1.2. Schooling system in numbers**

Before trying to discuss the schooling system from a quantitative perspective, it has to be said that historiography on this matter is still not satisfying. First of all, the data presented

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<sup>90</sup> *Lietuvių kalbos mokytojo A. Biliūno sudaryta Ukmergės “Šviesos” draugijos hebrajų kalbos gimnazijos baigiamųjų lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros egzamino programa ir bilietų santrumpos*, Izidorius Kisinis Fund at The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Fund 166, File 92, Pages 1-3.

<sup>91</sup> As cited in: Petružienė, “Žydų švietimas Lietuvoje...,” 48.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>94</sup> Published basically by the authoritarian government.

<sup>95</sup> Zalkin, ““On a Bridge of Words’...”

<sup>96</sup> Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 166-167.

by many authors are often conflicting and very random; for example providing the number of higher schools or students of, say, Jewish minority in a particular county during a specific year.<sup>97</sup> Second, if Kaubrys is reluctant to draw any conclusions from the data he presents, the ones that Šetkus provides are very poorly based, fail to consider many circumstances or are entirely non-academic. For example, it is not enough to show that the attendance of minorities' elementary schools was relatively the highest among the Jews and therefore claim that as a group this minority had the most favorable conditions for education.<sup>98</sup>

However, from the available data some generalizations can be made. Kaubrys carried out an extensive research and presented very important data on elementary schools and pupils. Several tendencies of growth and decline occurred during the period in question. Firstly, at the very beginning of the independent period, Lithuanian elementary schools were highly dominant, i.e. 903 elementary schools constituted over 87 percent of all such schools (see Appendix 1). The number of Polish and German schools dropped noticeably during the first years of independence. Kaubrys makes clear that this data does not include Klaipėda region, however he does not mention Vilnius, and does not explain this rapid decline. One can assume that this drop is due to the loss of Vilnius region or migration.

The number of both Lithuanian and Jewish elementary schools grew constantly until 1928 and the growth of Jewish schools was more rapid.<sup>99</sup> One simple explanation, besides others, could be the vast remigration of the Jews from Russia.<sup>100</sup> However, for the next seven years there was a decline in the number of Jewish schools, as was the case with most of the other minorities' schools.

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<sup>97</sup> The given example is just a model for the purpose of explaining the mentioned randomness of the data. Actual examples of random data, see: Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 156-157; Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 140-166; Greenbaum, *The Jews of Lithuania...*, 262, 268-269; Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla..." 42, 46; and elsewhere.

<sup>98</sup> Šetkus, "Tautinių mažumų mokykla..." 46.

<sup>99</sup> Lithuanian schools: from 903 in 1918-1919 to 2117 in 1928; Jewish schools in respective years: from 49 to 144. See Appendix 1.

<sup>100</sup> Petružienė, "Žydų švietimas Lietuvoje..." 57.

The dynamics of the numbers of pupils highly corresponds to the changes in the numbers of schools, i.e. there is growth until the end of the 1930s and then decline. What is left unexplained in the historiography is the fluctuation of the number of Jewish pupils up until 1927. (see Appendix 2).

What is more important here is the percentage of Jewish children attending schools, thus learning Lithuanian. In order to calculate this, taking 1923 is rather convenient for several reasons. First, the rapid growth of schools and pupils by that time became steadier. Second, a census was carried out that year, providing accurate numbers of the child population by age and nationality (see Table 2). Third, the elementary school pupils are potential readers of “Apžvalga“ starting from 1935, and this is important for this research. If one assumes that the most of the children attending primary schools were of age 7-10, there is a chance to compare the total population of this age group of a particular minority (or Lithuanians) to the numbers of pupils (see Appendix 2) and get the percentage of children attending particular minority (or Lithuanian) schools.<sup>101</sup>

Table 2. Proportion between the 7-10 years old population and pupils attending elementary schools by nationality in 1923.<sup>102</sup>

	<b>Lithuanian</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Polish</b>	<b>Russian</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Latvian</b>	<b>Belarusian</b>
Total population of age group of 7-10	130697	11726	5256	4101	2137	984	363
Number of pupils on Jan. 1, 1923 in schools of national groups	99952	10176	2852	636	1698	581	58
Percentage of the age group attending schools	76,5	86,8	54,3	15,5	79,5	59,0	16,0

However, this is only to show that the Jewish offspring were attending schools in major numbers, especially compared to any other national group. Because the number of, for example, Jewish children attending schools is not known (only the number of pupils in Jewish

<sup>101</sup> This calculation is not to represent the whole interwar period, because of already discussed fluctuation in numbers there would be rather different results.

<sup>102</sup> Table 2 was drafted using data from: Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 145; *Lietuvos gyventojai...*, 54-55.

schools), one should not draw far reaching conclusions from this calculation. Not all the pupils in Lithuanian schools were Lithuanians, or Poles in Polish, etc.<sup>103</sup> If it is very likely that Jewish schools were attended almost exceptionally by Jews, it is clear that a considerable part of ethnic minorities attended Lithuanian schools.<sup>104</sup> By 1935-1936 the number of Jewish pupils in Lithuanian and other schools reached 3483, which was 20.4 percent of all Jewish children in elementary schools.<sup>105</sup>

Analysis of elementary schooling is more advanced than higher education. This might be due to the fact that most of the elementary schools were in a hand of the state and with one exception, III Kaunas' Polish gymnasium, all higher-education minority schools were private, thus the sources of elementary schools are more available and most likely more abundant. However, by presenting more or less random data, there is a possibility to outline some aspects as well.

The numbers of Jews in higher education was also comparatively higher than that of any other national group. At the beginning of 1921 Jewish children constituted 27.5 percent of all pupils enrolled in higher education.<sup>106</sup> On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924, there were 4,168 Jewish pupils in higher Jewish schools, while in total there were 22,823 pupils in Lithuania.<sup>107</sup> Having in mind the Jewish population of 7.6 percent, there is a clear overrepresentation, because Jewish pupils only in Jewish schools made up over 18 percent of the total schoolchildren. In non-Jewish schools there were another 878 Jewish pupils; 412 in two Russian gymnasiums and around 400 in Lithuanian schools.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> To some extent this can be illustrated by the fact that “in 1927 of 1535 secondary schools graduates only 900 were Lithuanians and 600 were of other nationalities”. In: Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 154.

<sup>104</sup> In 1921-1922, 954 Jewish children attended Lithuanian or other schools. See: *Ibid.*, 144.

If presented number was similar in 1923, this would add almost another 10 to the 86.8 percent of all children attending Jewish schools, thus showing that almost all Jewish children attended elementary schools.

<sup>105</sup> Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 154.

<sup>106</sup> Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...,” 51.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1927 there were 118 higher schools, 30 of them Jewish. This shows that more than 25 percent of all schools were Jewish. Furthermore, it is known that there were 21,552 pupils in Lithuania at that time, and there were 4,440 Jewish pupils in total. This shows that over 20 percent of all pupils were Jewish.<sup>109</sup> In 1930-1931 Jewish gymnasiums made up 28.8 percent of all Lithuanian gymnasiums; Lithuanian gymnasiums constituted 61.6 percent. In 1935-1936 Jewish higher schools made up 19.7 percent and Lithuanian ones 66.6 percent.<sup>110</sup> Again, having in mind that Lithuanian majority was over 80 percent, the relative predominance of Jewish schools is clear. The vast majority of the Jewish youth went through the state education system and had a possibility to do that.

### 2.1.3. *Materials used to learn to speak and to love*

An important material usually used in the process of learning any language is a textbook. Žukaitė was the first to try to examine the Lithuanian language textbooks used to teach the Jews and other minorities of the interwar Lithuania.<sup>111</sup> She lists in total 23 textbooks that were available for research and mentions several others that are known only by the title. For the purpose of this research, however, it is more important to look into the contents of several textbooks and try to grasp what is *Jewish* and what is *Lithuanian* in them.

The textbooks of Lithuanian language grammar dedicated to the national minorities<sup>112</sup> do not reveal anything of particular interest. They could not be regarded as an instrument of

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>110</sup> Petružienė, “Žydų švietimas Lietuvoje...,” 57, 64.

<sup>111</sup> Veronika Žukaitė, “Bandymai mokyti žydus lietuvių kalbos tarpukario Lietuvoje: mokymo priemonių tyrimas,” in *Abipusis Pažinimas...*

<sup>112</sup> J. Kaplanas and L. Dambrauskas, *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika nelietuvių pradinėms mokykloms. III-jam skyriui*, vol. 1 (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1937); J. Kaplanas and L. Dambrauskas, *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika nelietuvių pradinėms mokykloms. IV-jam skyriui*, vol. 2 (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1937); J. Kaplanas and L. Dambrauskas, *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika nelietuvių pradinėms mokykloms. V-jam pradinės mokyklos skyriui*, vol. 3 (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1938); J. Kaplanas and L. Dambrauskas, *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika. Sintaksė. VI-jam pradinės mokyklos skyriui*, vol. 4 (Kaunas, 1938); Ig. Malinauskas and S. Vainbergas, *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika nelietuvių pradžios mokykloms*(Kaunas: G. Gutmano knygynas, 1937); Pranas Vikonis, *Lietuvių kalba. Vadovėlis skiriamas nelietuviams (II-is pataisytas leidimas)*, (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1928).

nationalizing politics of the state, because apart from the use of Lithuanian names<sup>113</sup> for characters in the short stories told, or mentioning of Lithuanian towns there is nothing particular *Lithuanian* in them.

The first Lithuanian language textbook specifically dedicated to the Jews was written and compiled by Avraomas Šulmanas (Avrom Schulman) and published in 1923.<sup>114</sup> The book comprises ten lessons and each of them has an explanation in Yiddish. It also includes some exercises and short vocabularies in each of the lessons.<sup>115</sup> There are two poems written by Lithuanian poets printed in this textbook<sup>116</sup> and some dialogues. The contents of the poems and the dialogues are quite indifferent and do not refer to any particular group, i.e. they can not be regarded neither *Jewish* nor *Lithuanian*.

In 1928 another textbook appeared particularly dedicated to the Jewish pupils.<sup>117</sup> This textbook was to be used by the pupils in early elementary grades, thus the words and expressions provided in order to learn the alphabet and sounds of letters are distinctly simple.<sup>118</sup> They are also distinctly *Jewish*. One short story goes: “My father is Jewish ... My parents’ homeland is Palestine. Palestine is beautiful.”<sup>119</sup> The names of the characters in the simple short stories are, e.g., Šlomas (Shlomo), Dovas (Dov), Rivka, Jakovas (Jakov), etc.<sup>120</sup> The stories told also clearly presents Jewish culture or Judaism, e.g., a story of a Jew who is asking money from Moses in order to build a synagogue.<sup>121</sup> The textbook ends with a

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<sup>113</sup> E.g. Petras (en. Peter), Onutė (en. diminutive form of Ann), Aldona.

<sup>114</sup> A. Šulmanas, *Lietuvių kalbos vadovėlis. Sistemingos pamokos žydų kalba skiriamos lietuvių kalbos mokslui*, vol. 1 (Kaunas: Licht (Šviesos) leidykla, 1923).

<sup>115</sup> Žukaitė, “Bandymai mokyti žydus lietuvių kalbos...”

<sup>116</sup> A. Šulmanas, *Lietuvių kalbos vadovėlis...*, 27, 53.

<sup>117</sup> A.I., *AB žydų mokyklai* (Marijampolė: "Dirvos" B-vės spaustuvė, 1928).

<sup>118</sup> E.g. mama (en. mother), kála (en. to hammer), lapas (en. leaf), lопас (en. patch), etc.

<sup>119</sup> A.I., *AB žydų mokyklai*, 32.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, 23, 35, 34.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

shortened version of the traditional Passover song “Echad mi yode'a” / “ver ken zogn ver ken redn”<sup>122</sup> translated into Lithuanian as “What is one?”<sup>123</sup> (see Appendix 3).

After the education reforms of 1936, which, among other things, aimed more at *Lithuaniannization* of national minorities, a series of new textbooks appeared to be compliant with the new laws and instructions.<sup>124</sup> Two of these were printed in one book; the first is a reader for Lithuanian language classes<sup>125</sup> and the second, a textbook for the course of knowledge of the homeland<sup>126</sup> (lt. *tėvynė*). The pro-Lithuanian trait of these textbooks is unquestionable.

Most of the texts presented in the reader for Lithuanian language discipline are general morals teaching justice, equality, friendship, etc. These texts do not refer to any particular *national culture* and the whole book does not mention any of the minorities. There are, however, quite a few readings that evidently promote *Lithuanianness*. To start with, various poems, written by Lithuanian authors, praise Lithuanian history, culture or nature, e.g. Maironis’ “Kur bėga Šešupė”<sup>127</sup> (en. “Where Šešupė Flows”) or Vytė Nemunėlis’ “Graži tėvynė mano” (en. “My Beautiful Homeland”). There are tales from Lithuanian folklore, such as “Eglė žalčių karalienė”<sup>128</sup> (en. “Eglė the Queen of Serpents”). But the most peculiar are the non-literature readings that are most probably written only for the purpose of publishing them

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<sup>122</sup> A part of the song presented in the textbook: “Who knows one? I know: one is Our God who is in the heavens and on earth. Who knows two? I know two: two are the tablets of the commandments, one is Our God who is in the heavens and on earth. Who knows three? I know three: three are our forefathers, two are the tablets of the commandments, one is Our God who is in the heavens and on earth. ... who knows seven? I know seven: seven are the days in a week, six are the orders of the  *mishnah*, five are the books of the torah, four are our matriarchs, three are our forefathers, two are the tablets of the commandments, one is Our God who is in the heavens and on earth.”

This translation is from Hebrew by George Jakobovits, see: "Echad Mi Yodea/Who Knows One," Hebrew Songs, <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/song-echadmiyodea.htm> (accessed May 18, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> A.I., *AB žydu mokyklai*, 47.

<sup>124</sup> Žukaitė, “Bandymai mokyti žydus lietuvių kalbos...”

<sup>125</sup> J. Ambraška, *Mano knygelė. Skaitymai pradžios mokykloms III skyriui*, vol. 2 (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1938).

<sup>126</sup> J. Kurliandė and P. Punerienė, *Tėvynės pažinimas* (Kaunas: A. Ptašeko knygynas, 1938).

<sup>127</sup> J. Ambraška, *Mano knygelė ...*, 130.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-97.

in the textbook.<sup>129</sup> If it is in fact the case, this shows that the readings do not just happen to be pro-Lithuanian, but are intentionally coined like this for the very purpose of *Lithuanianization* of national minorities.

A couple of examples are noteworthy. The text „Lietuva mūsų tėvynė“ (en “Lithuania Our Homeland”) is the first of such a kind.

Every man has his own homeland – town or city, where he was born and grew up. However there is also our common homeland: that homeland is called Lithuania. Our parents, their parents and our ancestors were born and grew up in Lithuania. Just how everyone love and cherish their homeland, so we have to love and cherish our native land Lithuania. ... in the old days Lithuania was ruled by Russians. ... Russians wanted Lithuanians to forget their language and to become Russians.<sup>130</sup>

Besides its pro-*Lithuanianness* this text is also interesting because of mentioning “Russians”. Naming the enemy not in the form of a state, but in the form of the people – Russians – is rather controversial, especially having in mind that Russian pupils might have also used this book.

Next comes a reading about Vilnius.<sup>131</sup> The author of the text does not stop after presenting its history and address the issue of the time:

Today Vilnius also stands beautiful and big. However on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1920, Poles took Vilnius away from Lithuanians. ... The 9<sup>th</sup> of October is a day of mourning. In every town and city people now raise flags on that day and tie a black ribbon on them, because black is the color of mourning and sorrow.<sup>132</sup>

This highly politicized piece also disregards any political correctness and does not talk about two states or their governments; it talks about people, Lithuanians and Poles. Again, Polish pupils were also very likely to learn Lithuanian from this textbook.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> This assumption is made because of the simplicity of these texts, i.e. the construction of the sentences and the way ideas are expressed shows that it is written for a very young reader.

<sup>130</sup> J. Ambraška, *Mano knygelė...*, 29-30.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>133</sup> It is noteworthy that however unethical this seems today, during the interwar period the worldview on this matter might have been rather different, i.e. association of the state with the people might have seemed more obvious and unquestionable. Also, one has to understand the political rhetoric of the time, which was far more

The last textbook that is available and worth mentioning is written for the course on knowledge of homeland.<sup>134</sup> This book covers a variety of topics that are irrelevant to this research, such as money, surface of the Earth, the difference between a drawing and a blueprint, the theater, post office, the water supply system in the city, how to use a compass or sundial, etc. The largest and the most sightworthy is the last chapter entitled “Country”. It starts with a reading “About a Nation and a State” (lt. “Apie tautą ir valstybę”).

A lot of people live on our earth, but they are not all the same: some are Lithuanians, others are Jews, Russians, Germans, Poles. All Lithuanians constitute the Lithuanian nation, Jews the Jewish nation, Russians the Russian nation. Some of the nations live on one large piece of land and constitutes a state. Such a state is Lithuania as well. The largest population is Lithuanian, but there are Jews, Poles, Russians, Germans. They are all Lithuanian citizens. ... [In the long run Lithuanians created a state] ... For long years Russians ruled Lithuania. Lithuanians suffered and patiently waited for better times.<sup>135</sup>

A simple and tautological explanation of what is a nation (the group of people of the same nationality) at the very beginning of the chapter, that by and large presents Lithuania, is probably a sign of attention to the primary readers, that is the national minorities. It is not by accident that the mentioned nations are the ones that constituted the most numerous national minorities in Lithuania at that time. Again, referring to the period of Russian Empire rule of Lithuania “Russians” are mentioned.

“Bad deeds of Poland” were not forgotten as well. The reading titled “Lietuvos dydis ir jos ribos” (“Size of Lithuania and its Borders”) explains that the “territory of Lithuania was more than 80,000 square kilometers. About one third of that territory Poles took away (lt. atėmė) in 1920.”<sup>136</sup> In the same page there is a short reading explaining what a capital is.

Every state has its own capital. This is a city, where the president and ministers live. ... Lithuania’s capital is Vilnius. However, since Poles took away Vilnius in 1920, the temporary capital is now Kaunas.<sup>137</sup>

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direct and not too sugar-coated. And finally, not to justify the style of the reading, during the interwar period Poland indeed was the arch enemy of Lithuania.

<sup>134</sup> J. Kurliandčikas and P. Punerienė, *Tėvynės pažinimas*.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

Next follows a long text about Kaunas.<sup>138</sup> After presenting the history of the city, the author turns to contemporary situation and talks about institutions, trades and industry in Kaunas. At the end of this text the authors acknowledge a large Jewish minority in the city:

There are 140,000 people living in Kaunas. Mostly they are Lithuanians. There are around 40,000 Jews in Kaunas. ... The largest newspapers of Lithuanians are published here. Also several Jewish newspaper are published here. Prominent Jewish writers like A. Mapu and Dr. Elyashev (Ba'al-Machshoves) lived here. Two streets in Kaunas are named after them.<sup>139</sup>

The final interesting piece is about Vilnius.<sup>140</sup> It starts with a clear, however false, statement that Vilnius is the capital and the largest city of Lithuania. It presents the legend of creation and the history of the city, briefly mentions the “taking away” by Poles (after which, noticeably, the city “stopped developing”<sup>141</sup>) and ends with considerable account on “Jewish Vilnius”.

There are many Jewish monuments in Vilnius. In the so called Jewish street there is a synagogue square, where a few old synagogues are, and in between of them the largest: the Old Synagogue of Vilnius. ... There are the headquarters of world Jewish scientific institute [YIVO]. In its basements one can find many old and valuable writings, books, documents. ... There are several famous Jewish libraries and theatres in Vilnius. ... Many prominent Jewish writers and activists are from Vilnius.<sup>142</sup>

The book ends with a short biography and portrait of President Smetona and the map of Lithuania, of course, including the Vilnius region and the Eastern border that never existed.<sup>143</sup>

The materials used in the education process of national minorities in general were highly politicized, mostly through the “Vilnius question”. Right-wing authoritarian government, needless to say, tried to indoctrinate the youth. Considerable amount of artifacts of Lithuanian culture was also present. Nonetheless, materials show, especially earlier ones, that Jewish minority had *Jewish* textbooks when learning Lithuanian language.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 71-77.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 75-77.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 81-83.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 104-105.

## 2.2. Voluntary contacts

Nationalizing policies of the state were an outcome of political situation of a newly-born state, which was not an exception elsewhere in the contemporary Eastern Europe. These policies were also more unidirectional, i.e. minorities had to come closer to the Lithuanian language and culture. But there were also voluntary acts of some intellectuals, who aimed to create mutual understanding and, as it will be shown in this chapter and in the third part of the thesis, the Jewish side was more active in bridging the two communities.

### 2.2.1. *Introducing one's culture*

In her already mentioned forthcoming publication,<sup>144</sup> besides other things Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė analyzed several known instances when Jews or Lithuanians tried to cross the borders of suspense by presenting their own culture or researching the one of the *other's*. Although these instances were vaguely noticed by several other historians as well,<sup>145</sup> this chapter will be heavily based on Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė's very recent findings and insights, since her work serves the purpose of outlining the attempts of bringing the two communities closer very well.

The creation and spread of awareness of the *other* community's culture among the members of *our* community was seen as an effective, and probably for a long time as the only, tool for the mutual understanding. Besides the two institutionalized attempts to do the latter (among other things) by the Association for Cultural Cooperation and the Union of Jewish Soldiers (analyzed thereafter), there were also rather chaotic efforts to present bits of these two cultures.

At the 9<sup>th</sup> summit of the Lithuanian Science Institute in 1915 Augustinas Janulaitis read a paper titled "From Jewish History in Lithuania until 18<sup>th</sup> c". This was probably the first

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<sup>144</sup> Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, "Žydų bei lietuvių abipusio pažinimo ir kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo atspirtys: intencijos, priemonės, rezultatai," in *Abipusis Pažinimas...*

<sup>145</sup> Levin, Atamukas.

objective and somewhat positive public utterance made by a Lithuanian about the Jews.<sup>146</sup> Janulaitis' speech, in which he dismissed the common stereotypes and remained objective, was published in at least two Lithuanian newspapers. In 1922 he also published the first book about Lithuanian Jewry, which was of great importance throughout the interwar period and after the Second World War. As Janulaitis claimed in a couple of articles, the main goal of the book was to spread the knowledge about the Jews among Lithuanians. Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė interestingly argues that Janulaitis' and others' approach in the understanding of the conflict between the two communities was not to ask why Lithuanians are hostile to the Jews, but who are "those Jews" that Lithuanians do not like.

Besides contribution of Lithuanians in the projects initiated by the Jews, Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė does not mention any other Lithuanian actively and voluntarily involving in the bridging of the two communities (disregarding the institutionalized form of this movement that will be discussed later). Only later in 1938 F. Daugis published a book titled "Mightiness in Unity" (lt. "Vienybėje galybė"), where he claimed that the support of the Jews is very beneficial for the state.

It seems that there were more efforts to get closer from the Jewish side than from the Lithuanian. In 1914 the first issue of later irregularly published almanac "Lite" appeared. The goal of this almanac was to discuss the life of the Lithuanian Jewry and to expose the issues that the Jews have to deal with. Next to the praises of Lithuania written by Jews there were also translations to Yiddish of works written by Lithuanians. This approach was new altogether. In later volumes of "Lite" this work was carried on with clearer goal, which was to raise acquaintance with the Lithuanian culture among the Jews and propose cultural cooperation. Urija Kacenelebogenas (1885-1980), widely known researcher of *litvakes'* and

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<sup>146</sup> As an example Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė mentions six books with mostly anti-Semitic content published before 1915. See: Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, "Žydų bei lietuvių abipusio pažinimo ir kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo atspirtys..."

Lithuanian cultures as well as a prominent promoter of mutual understanding,<sup>147</sup> contributed probably the most in the translation from Yiddish to Lithuanian and *vice-versa*.<sup>148</sup>

Another Jewish intellectual Izidorius Kisinis published an anthology of the classics of Lithuanian literature in Hebrew, while Chackelis Lemchenas translated short stories of Schalom Aleichem and Icchok Leib Percec from Yiddish to Lithuanian (later used in “Apžvalga” as well).

This rather disordered introduction to several instances where Lithuanians and Jews worked in the field of mutual understanding is here to show that the possibilities of getting acquainted with the culture of the *other* were existing, but rather scanty. One more effort to “let Lithuanians into the inner life of the Jews”<sup>149</sup> is left to mention. In 1924-1925 a Zionist Jewish newspaper in Lithuanian “Mūsų žodis” (en. “Our Word”; later “Mūsų garsas“, en. “Our Voice/Sound”) was published. It was the first Jewish newspaper published in Lithuanian. Skimming through only 21 issues of the biweekly, which later became monthly, creates an impression that this newspaper has a clear goal, that is to draw attention to the dissolution of the cultural autonomy that Jews were granted. To make such claim more research has to be done and it is not that important here. Besides newspaper’s possible agenda, in almost every issue it also published works written by Jews about Lithuania or Lithuanians, presented other bits of Jewish culture or published speeches by such people like already mentioned Kacenelebogenas, in which they promoted the idea of mutual understanding. For now it is impossible to measure the successes and failures of this effort, because of lack of research done. Maybe the only indicator that “Mūsų žodis” was not that successful is the number of issues 21 (each 4 pages long).

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<sup>147</sup> Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 42, 70-71.

<sup>148</sup> More on his work, see: Zalkin, ““On a Bridge of Words’...”

<sup>149</sup> “Mūsų Uždaviniai,” *Mūsų žodis*, no. 1 (January 22, 1924): 1.

### 2.2.2. Association for cultural cooperation

The promotion and implementation of various ideas through associations was a very common practice in the interwar Lithuania (e.g., at the beginning of 1939 there were 220 Jewish associations).<sup>150</sup> One of the two organizations that this research will analyze is the “Association for Cultural Cooperation of Lithuanians and Jews”<sup>151</sup> (the other being the already mentioned Jewish Soldiers’ Union). This organization is briefly discussed in the mentioned forthcoming publication by Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė.<sup>152</sup> The author notices that there is no possibility, at least for now, for in-depth analysis of the activity (or rather inactivity as will be shown) of the Association because of a lack of sources.

The Association was established in June 1928 by a group of prominent Lithuanians and Jews of the time. Chairman of the Board of the Association throughout its period of existence was Mykolas Biržiška (1882-1962). Besides his life-long activities to ease the clashes between Lithuanians and Jews in social, cultural, political or economic spheres, he was also an elite member of Lithuanian society. Biržiška was expelled from gymnasium and university several times, because of pro-Lithuanian activities, and was exiled to Siberia by the Tsarist government for activity in a group of social-democrats. Later he was an editor of several newspapers and journals, one of the twenty signatories of the Act of Independence of Lithuania, the Minister of Education,<sup>153</sup> and the professor and rector of Vilnius University.<sup>154</sup> This short biographical outline is presented here to stress the high social stance of the head of the Association. Other founders were no less celebrated personalities. Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, a prominent Lithuanian writer, novelist, poet, and philologist. Jonas Vileišis, long-time mayor of Kaunas, Minister of State Security (1918-1919) in the second and

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<sup>150</sup> Liudas Truska, *Antanas Smetona ir jo laikai* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1996), 304.

<sup>151</sup> Lt. “Lietuvių ir žydų kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo draugija”.

<sup>152</sup> Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, “Žydų bei lietuvių abipusio pažinimo ir kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo atspirtys...”

<sup>153</sup> In 1919, when Vilnius was occupied by Polish troops he refused to move to Kaunas and lost his position in the government.

<sup>154</sup> *Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija*, vol. 3 (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2003), s.v. “Mykolas Biržiška.”

Minister of Finances (1919) in the fourth governments.<sup>155</sup> From the “Jewish side” there were two lawyers, Levas Garfunkelis and Jokūbas Robinzonas.<sup>156</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that the mentioned prominent Lithuanians, besides their dedication to the “Lithuanian cause” during the interwar period and before, are also known as leftists, at first involved in the activity of social-democratic parties and later, as in Krėvė-Mickevičius’ case, even taking part in the “puppet-government” after the Soviet occupation in 1940.

The statute of the Association states that its main goal is to “bridge Lithuanian Jews and Lithuanians in cultural cooperation”.<sup>157</sup> In the process of achieving this aim, the organization was ready to use various methods: throwing parties, organizing concerts, plays, exhibitions, excursions, discussions, presenting reports and lectures on “the societal, scientific, artistic and historical life of those two nations”.<sup>158</sup> Radio, newspapers, books and other means of communication were to be used for promotion of what “brings two nations together and for negation of what interferes in the building of cohesion.”<sup>159</sup> There were also plans to establish branches of the Association in various towns in Lithuania.

The gumption with which the Association was founded had to be quite promising. The first and the foremost factor that provided credibility to the organization was its founders, i.e. elite members of both Lithuanian and Jewish societies. Presumably, these people were not eager to diminish their social stance by failing to pursue their noble and far-reaching intentions of the first institution of this kind. And at the outset of activity the Association lived up to the expectation. “At the beginning [the founders] embarked on energetic work.

<sup>155</sup> "LR Vyriausybės – Laikotarpis 1918-1940," LR Vyriausybė, <http://www.lrv.lt/lt/vyriausybe/apie-vyriausybe/ankstesnes-vyriausybes/laikotarpis-1918-1940/#2kabinetas> (accessed May 24, 2010).

<sup>156</sup> Krėvė-Mickevičius, Vileišis, Purickis, Garfunkelis and Robinzonas are mentioned as the founders of organization in: Jonas Aničas, “Lietuvių ir žydų kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo draugija,” *Lietuvos Jeruzalė*, no. 8 (34) (August 1992): 2.

<sup>157</sup> “Lietuvių ir žydų kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo draugijos įstatai”, *Kauno miesto ir apskrities viršininko byla. Lietuvių ir žydų kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo draugijai*, LCVA, F. 402, Ap. 4, B. 578: 2-3

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

The Board convened several meetings, during which the reports were read on various culture-related questions.”<sup>160</sup>

However, good intentions have to be put aside, because there is more to be said about the failures of the organization rather than the achievements. The above quote from the third issue of the periodical “Apžvalga” was actually written not to praise the Association, but to express a complaint about its inactivity. Eight years after the establishment of the organization the Jewish newspaper’s editorial reads:

Soon the organization dozed off, froze up. For more than two years there is nothing known about the organization. The Board is not meeting and keeps off any announcements ... This can not be anymore ... It is time to clear this question out. We wish the Board to finally wake up from the lethargic sleep.<sup>161</sup>

Almost a year later there was another complaint in “Apžvalga”. Three Jews were falsely accused of rape and blood-libel in Telšiai (Telzh) and the Association stayed silent on this matter. “We know that this organization ... basically exists more on paper than in reality. However, it could have shown a sign of life and Lithuanian members of it could have done something about [the false accusation].”<sup>162</sup> These references not only show the inactivity of the “Association for Cultural Cooperation of Lithuanians and Jews”, but also provide the stance of another organization that will be analyzed in this research, namely, the Jewish Soldiers’ Union.

There were no branches of the organization established and the whole palette of instruments to promote ideas reserved to the reading of a few lectures, sometimes not even in public. The topics of organized public lectures show that the main concern was the raising

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<sup>160</sup> “Jau laikas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 3 (June 30, 1935): 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> J. Temidzonas, “Kur jūsų žodis?” *Apžvalga*, no. 32 (February 9, 1936): 2.

knowledge of the Jews among Lithuanians,<sup>163</sup> with no intentions to do the same in the opposite direction.<sup>164</sup>

It is sort of a paradox that the most telling document about the activity of the Association is the one that announced its closure. In December of 1937, Biržiška addressed the Governor of Kaunas' County:

... I declare that the "Association for Cultural Cooperation of Lithuanians and Jews" had no assets, has not levied any donations or membership dues. [The Association] presented a few public and free of charge lectures in total... The expenses [of lectures] were covered by the members of the Board, usually Garfunkelis and Biržiška ... [Association] faded by itself, because Lithuanian society have not shown the needed maturity to understand and feel its aims.

Grounding her arguments on scarce, but trustworthy archival materials, Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė states that in the context of the Association's activity only Jewish intellectuals used the opportunity to spread knowledge about their culture. Further she proposes some reasons for the inability to achieve more:

There was also a lack of a human factor, i.e. for the Lithuanians the goals of the Association were not that appealing and the Jews joined alternative Jewish associations with similar aims. ... It seems that although the known members of the organization were distinct and influential personalities of society ... they were more sympathetic to the idea of Lithuanian-Jewish cultural cooperation than they actually had possibilities to work in this field.<sup>165</sup>

Furthermore, the author says that even in the perception of the members of the organization there was a thin line between the ideas of cultural cooperation and *Lithuanianization* of the Jews. A member of the Association, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, one of the most prominent Lithuanian writers, a Catholic priest and a social activist, visited an event dedicated to the Lithuanian literature in Hebrew held at a Jewish gymnasium. Later he expressed his appreciation and furthermore said:

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<sup>163</sup> Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, "Žydų bei lietuvių abipusio pažinimo ir kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo atspirtys..."

<sup>164</sup> Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė notes that the "disproportion between the need of Lithuanians to know the Jews and the need to popularize its own culture ... was common throughout the ... interwar period". See: Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

... no less I enjoyed that the Jews looked deeper into Lithuanian language and the literature written out [*sic*] in this language, once they saw that even in this literature there is something interesting to be grasped [*sic*]. God bless should you [speak out?] in Lithuanian and become even closer to the autochthons.<sup>166</sup>

Disregarding the failure of the Association, it is clear that this organization was the first of such kind. Although only nominally, it institutionalized various forms of cultural contacts between the majority and the largest minority.

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<sup>166</sup> As quoted in: Ibid.

### **3. Furthest in the strive to “become Lithuanian”**

During the interwar period and in the history of Lithuanian Jewry altogether, the Union of Jewish Soldiers was probably the most active group of people in trying to reduce hostility through mutual understanding. This is not certain however, since as it was mentioned, the interwar period Lithuanian-Jewish relations were never researched from the perspective of mutual recognition. Therefore, historiography only in a few sentences mentions all the activists discussed above, the Association for Cultural Cooperation as well as the Union, and one can not be sure that it is not excluding something or someone more important. Thereby, even though it might not be the case, the Union in this research is understood as the most active and the most successful proponent in the process of “becoming Lithuanian”. This part will try to answer why.

#### **3.1. The Union of Jewish Soldiers**

Lithuania proclaimed its independence on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 1918. “Proclamation of independence”, however celebratory it sounded later on and does today, then basically meant twenty intellectuals signing the document<sup>167</sup> and posing for photos, while German army and administration was an actual power in the territory. At the end of 1918 Bolsheviks (Red Army) invaded what was to become Lithuania’s territory, meanwhile the fight with another force, Bermontians (West Russian Volunteer Army), was not yet over. During these fights Vilnius city and region changed hands almost ten times until the Treaty of Suvalkai on 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1920 was signed, according to which the region had to stay in the hands of the new Lithuanian state. Two days later the Treaty was violated by Polish military troops that occupied Vilnius. Recognition of the state was not to come for another year after these events. All these military maneuvers are generally known as the Wars of Independence.

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<sup>167</sup> Original of which is missing up until today.

The creation of Lithuanian army, which fought these wars, was clearly one of the failures of the new government. Several proposals were made on how it should be created, however none were used, because of their myopic view on international situation and underestimation of aggressors' intentions. Only on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1918, an announcement inviting to join the army was issued. It was printed in four languages, namely, Lithuanian, Polish, Byelorussian and Jewish (Yiddish).<sup>168</sup> In January next year the mobilization of higher ranks officers was announced<sup>169</sup> and a month later new recruits were mobilized.<sup>170</sup> The new Lithuania's state army was not exceptionally Lithuanian. Atamukas provides the number of 3000 Jewish soldiers who fought in the Lithuania's army in 1918-1923.<sup>171</sup> These are the people who later on were the founders and members of the "Union of Jewish Soldiers who Participated in the [re]Liberation of Lithuania Independence".

The Union of Jewish Soldiers was established in June, 1933.<sup>172</sup> Throughout the period of activity the chairman of the organization was lawyer, reserve lieutenant Jakovas Goldbergas.<sup>173</sup> In a handwritten account titled "Meaning of our Union" he mentions that the idea to unite Jewish soldiers was born several years ago. In 1927 a group of reserve soldiers met to discuss the foundation of such organization and soon the statute of the Union was prepared. However, they were not legalized, because of "technical issues and formalities". Unfortunately, no information is yet available to know why it took another six years to overcome those "technical issues and formalities", whatever that was.

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<sup>168</sup> Vytautas Lesčius, *Lietuvos kariuomenė, 1918-1940* (Vilnius: Vilspa, 1998), 66-82.

<sup>169</sup> "Karininkų Mobilizacija," *Laikinosios Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 2-3 (January 16, 1919): 1.

<sup>170</sup> Jonas Vaičenonis, *Lietuvos karių uniformos ir lengvieji ginklai XX amžiuje* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2004), 21.

<sup>171</sup> Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 132.

<sup>172</sup> Jakovas Goldbergas, "Mūsų sąjungos reikšmė", *Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos dokumentai*, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 397.

<sup>173</sup> In the beginning of July, 1940, Golbergas, along with several other famous lawyers was arrested, but the Union continued its activity. See: Juozas Čivilis, "Lietuvos advokatūra ir advokatai Lietuvoje," *Lietuvos advokatūra*, no. 4 (29) (2008): 9, <http://www.advoco.lt/getfile.aspx?dokid=82a15c88-7575-4f4e-8a12-4ff033cdb3e9> (accessed May 26, 2010).

### 3.1.1. Members of the Union

The statute of the Union described who can be active<sup>174</sup> members of the organization:

All former Jewish soldiers and riflemen, who contributed to the (re)liberation of independent Lithuania or participated in Klaipėda Revolt of 1923,<sup>175</sup> can become active members [of the Union].<sup>176</sup>

Since the members of the Union were unified by two criteria, namely being Jewish and participating in particular warfare, it created somewhat peculiar organization. The Union included people with various political views, levels of education,<sup>177</sup> from the whole spectrum of socio-economic strata, etc. As the head of the organization wrote:

...one can not look at the Union as it is common to look at other organizations. To the least, its organizational structure with clearly defined number of members ... it differs at the roots from all the other Jewish organizations. Meanwhile other organizations, be it political or economic, mostly include members of one caste (sic) and are concerned only with the issues of that caste, former Jewish Soldiers Union comprises of all social strata.<sup>178</sup>

As an outcome, in order to fulfil the expectations of all members the organization had to stay apolitical and objective (e.g. Union's "Apžvalga" did not take stance in the clash between Yiddish and Hebrew).

The Union had 2300 members and 43 branch organizations in 1936-1938. These numbers provided by Atamukas are based on the mentioned publication "Skydas" and articles in "Apžvalga". However, there is reason to think that the number was even higher. A note from Joniškis (yid. Yanishok), mentions that there were more than 50 sections of the Union and over 3000 members.<sup>179</sup> Although there is no date on the document, because of archiving

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<sup>174</sup> Passive members were the donors of the Union.

<sup>175</sup> Military maneuver of Lithuanian forces to establish authority in Klaipėda (Memel).

<sup>176</sup> "Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos įstatai", *Vidaus reikalų ministerijos Administracijos departamentas*, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 17v.

<sup>177</sup> To become a member of the organization, a former soldier had to fill in an application form. In some towns there were many application forms printed only in Yiddish and a lot of them filled only in Yiddish. Most likely this shows illiteracy in Lithuanian of the applicants. E.g. see: "Įstojamieji pareiškimai", *Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos dokumentai*, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 17: 9, 12, 28, 47.

<sup>178</sup> Goldbergas, "Mūsų sąjungos reikšmė", LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 398.

<sup>179</sup> *Žydų karių ... sąjungos dokumentai*, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 430.

system of the time, it is reasonable to think that it dates not earlier than 1939. These data show that organization was growing almost throughout the period of activity as more and more soldiers joined and new branches were established. Time and again, however, scores of members were removed from the organization for not paying the member's fee. As early as in October, 1934, the board members of the Union instigated its members to be more dutiful in paying the fee<sup>180</sup> and already next April excluded 88 members from the Union.<sup>181</sup>

A list of members from Kaunas' branch of the Union is available for analysis.<sup>182</sup> Undated document lists 391 people. The list includes name of every member, date of birth and occupation. The last column shows that in 1930s none of the members were soldiers and more or less represented occupational areas practiced by the Jews at that time. Craftsmen, tradesmen and state servants dominate the list. The dates of birth of the members show that roughly half of them (198) in 1919 were 17-19 years old. Having no possibility to compare this data to the age structure of the whole army of that time, it is hard to say whether the Jews as a group were comparatively younger at that warfare. If this was actually the case, it could open a possibility for speculations or even research why it was so.

The oldest member of Kaunas section of the Union by 1933 was 52 years old; the youngest two were 27, which mean that they were 13 in 1919.<sup>183</sup> Average age of the members in Kaunas was 36 when the Union was established in 1933. Young age of the members could have also contributed to the success of the Union. However, this is only an assumption.

It is established in general historiography, that the Jews wilfully joined the army and fought for the independent Lithuanian state.<sup>184</sup> This notion is very important for the research,

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This number is also the same as of Jewish soldiers who fought in Independence Wars presented by Atamukas.  
<sup>180</sup> "Protokolas Nr. 9. 1934 spalio 7", *Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos dokumentai*, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 4.

<sup>181</sup> "Protokolas Nr. 37. 1935 balandžio 30", LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 36-37.

<sup>182</sup> "Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos Kauno skyriaus narių sąrašas", LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 111-113v.

<sup>183</sup> They, however, can also be participants of Klaipėda revolt, which would mean that they were 17 at the time of fighting.

<sup>184</sup> E.g. Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 132; Levin, *Litvaks...*, 117.

because the willingness of the Jews to fight the war might be an answer to the Union's patriotism more than a decade later. One has to consider several circumstances in order to understand the attitude of the Jews during the Independence wars.

Lithuania fought with three aggressors, two of them representing, simplistically speaking, Russia and one representing an obvious enemy – Poland. For the Lithuanian Jews, or more importantly *litvakes*, on one hand the recent past of the Russian rule of over a hundred years was clearly uninviting.<sup>185</sup> On the other, wave of pogroms in Poland right after its independence (1918) and highly nationalistic sentiment of the Polish population was without a doubt distasteful. To the dismissal of the wish to join any of the aggressors, there has to be two positive attitudes towards independent Lithuania added. The first one was based on the past – the Jews here called themselves *litvakes* with a clear connotation of historical attachment to Lithuania. The second, a strong will to establish the “East European Switzerland,”<sup>186</sup> was projected into the future. It was an idea to create a tolerant state of nations rather than a nation-state, which would have been possible had highly multinational Vilnius was incorporated into the state.<sup>187</sup> The control of Vilnius was especially relevant for the Lithuanian Jewry because of the historical importance of the city and the high Jewish population.<sup>188</sup>

This short outline referring to the possible position of the Lithuanian Jewry in the face of the Independence Wars goes in-line with the established position in the historiography. However, application forms to join the Union suggest more complexity. One of the questions in the application form is whether the former soldier joined the army voluntarily or was drafted. Only 25 out 193 applicants to join the Kaunas branch of the Union stated that they

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<sup>185</sup> This is a generalization, because a number of left-oriented Jews would gladly welcome the Bolshevik army. However, this is not a trend and for this research it is not as important.

<sup>186</sup> Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe...*, 218.

<sup>187</sup> Vilnius' region at that time was imagined larger, with the borderline further in today's Byelorussia.

<sup>188</sup> In 1931 there were over fifty thousand Jewish inhabitants in Vilnius, which made up almost a third of the total population. See: Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe...*, 23.

entered the army voluntarily. Moreover, as it was mentioned the mobilization started in February, 1919. The same applications show, that only 27 soldiers were mobilized that year, and in the years 1920-1923, respectively numbers were 49, 30, 26, 24.<sup>189</sup> All this data shows, that at least those 193 soldiers living in Kaunas could not claim their willingness to join the army, since they were not too eager to join voluntarily and even in the face of mobilization it took a while. Of course, data from Kaunas' branch can be considered representative for Lithuanian Jewry.

It would be rather interesting to measure the "determination" of the Jews to fight for the independent Lithuania should there be a possibility to compare the numbers of the Jewish and Lithuanian soldiers participating at certain stages of the war, the numbers of volunteers and draftees, as well as total numbers of soldiers in proportion to the total population. Unfortunately many of these data are at least yet unavailable.

### ***3.1.2. Activity of the Union***

"Always and everywhere the Union went ... filled with statehood awareness and love for the fatherland"<sup>190</sup>

The Union was far more productive than the discussed Association for Cultural Cooperation. Although both organizations had similar goals, the Union of Jewish Soldiers was far more numerous and clearly achieved more. The statute of the Union written in 1934 begins with a clear statement that the organization is apolitical. The aims of the Union were:

a) to unite all Jewish soldiers who contributed to the restoration of Lithuania's independence in one union; b) to develop the love for the Fatherland and statehood awareness among the members and Lithuanian Jewish society; c) to take care of cultural and economic issues of the members; d) to promote the idea of cultural cooperation between Lithuanians and Jews.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Įstojamieji pareiškimai, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 2. See Appendix 4.

<sup>190</sup> Goldbergas, "Mūsų sąjungos reikšmė", LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 399.

<sup>191</sup> "Žydų karių ... sąjungos įstatai", LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 17.

The aims of the organization are already very telling. There are many things that such union could be concerned with (as aim “c”), and yet, one of the main goals is organizational-technical (a), and two are directed towards “love for the fatherland”, “statehood awareness” and “cooperation” (b, c). There is nothing obvious and clear in the choice of these aims. If one admits the general tendency to think of those soldiers as very pro-Lithuanian during the wars, then these aims established considerably later are not that surprising. Equally or even more possible is that the founders of the Union reacted to the worsening relations with the majority.

To achieve its aims the Union intended to use a variety of measures: to establish branches in cities and towns, to maintain reading-rooms, bookshops, clubs, to organize lectures, excursions, sports and cultural circles, to publish books and newspapers, to popularize the idea of regaining Vilnius region. Besides other things, the Union also planned to establish economic enterprises, to take care of the members and assist them on legal issues and health care.<sup>192</sup> These are the measures that are more or less important for this research, however the list does not end here.

Starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 1935, the Union organized courses of Lithuanian language.<sup>193</sup> At first free-of-charge<sup>194</sup> the courses later were two Litas per month.<sup>195</sup> They were extensively advertised in “Apžvalga”.

Besides its long-living periodical, in 1935 the Union also published an almanac “Skydas” (“Shield”). This publication contained a lot of accounts on the manoeuvres of

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<sup>192</sup> “Žydų karių... sąjungos įstatai”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 17.

<sup>193</sup> “Žydų karių, dalyvavusių Lietuvos neprikl. atvadavime s-gos lietuvių kalbos kursai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 12 (September 1, 1935): 8. Lithuanian language courses in various locations in Lithuania were also organized by mostly Jewish organization “United Union of Craftsmen of Lithuania ” as well as by the “Union of National Jewish Banks” See: “Lietuvos suvienytos amatininkų sąjungos Centro Valdybos rezoliucijos”, *Apžvalga*, no. 29 (January 17, 1936): 2; “Žydų Liaudies Bankų Atstovų Suvažiavimo Rezoliucijos,” *Apžvalga*, no. 46 (May 24, 1936): 1.

<sup>194</sup> “Protokolas Nr. 25. 1935 sausio 22”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 20.

<sup>195</sup> “Protokolas Nr. 17. 1935 gruodžio 24”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 19: 4-4v.

For comparison, the price of one issue of “Apžvalga” was 25 cents (0,25 Litas); the subscription of the weekly “Darbininkas” (“Workman”), the largest periodical of social-democrats, for the year 1935 was 3 Litas. See: “Darbininkas kaštuoja,” *Darbininkas*, no. 804 (May 11, 1935): 4.

Jewish soldiers during the war and mentioned honours they received for them from the Lithuanian state.<sup>196</sup>

The organization was also trying to exercise endowment for the members. In 1940 the Union decided to ask for money from the “Ezro” union to support the members before the “Easter”.<sup>197</sup>

However, there is no information or any clues that the Union managed to maintain bookshops, clubs, let alone the economic enterprises. The estimated budget of Kaunas branch of the Union for the year 1939-1940<sup>198</sup> shows that expenses were basically used for administration and does not provide any information about possible income or expenses related to economic activity.<sup>199</sup>

The puppet-government of the Soviet Union closed the Union on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, 1940.<sup>200</sup> Very abstract paragraph of the “Organizations’ Law”, which was signed by the authoritarian Lithuanian government in 1936 and used as a reason to close the Union, could not have been more convenient for the new regime:

The minister of the Internal Affairs can suspend any organization ... or close it for the sake of security of the state or the nation, or for the sake of any other needs of the state or the nation.<sup>201</sup>

During the seven years of activity (1933-1940) the Union managed to become the main public advocate of the Jews in the social, economic or cultural clashes with the majority. It presented Jewish culture, history, Judaism and the issues of the contemporary Jewish world to any Lithuanian-speaker who was willing to accept the information. Being very patriotic and pro-Lithuanian-state organization as it was, the Union also promoted learning of the

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<sup>196</sup> Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias...*, 132.

“Skydas” is not available for this research.

<sup>197</sup> “Protokolas Nr. 18. 1940 balandžio 2”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 19: 93.

<sup>198</sup> Fiscal year then started on the 1st of July.

<sup>199</sup> “Protokolas Nr. 4. 1939 liepos 26”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 19: 81v.

<sup>200</sup> “Nutarimas uždaryti Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungą su visais jos skyriais”, *Kauno apskrities viršininko administracija*, LCVA, F. 402, Ap.5, B. 276: 1.

Lithuania was occupied by the Red Army in June, and annexed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1940.

<sup>201</sup> Article no. 48, of the “Organizations’ Law”. See: “Draugijų įstatymas,” *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 522 (February 1, 1936): 3.

Lithuanian language among the Jews, becoming closer to the Lithuanian culture, but meanwhile sustaining Jewish identity through religion and ethnicity. Most of this was done through the medium of the weekly “Apžvalga”, which will be discussed at length later in this part.

### 3.2. Overview of “Apžvalga“

At the beginning of 1935, the Union, “being convinced that many misunderstanding are raising because of distance between the Lithuanians and the Jews”,<sup>202</sup> decided to start publishing a weekly in Lithuanian titled “Apžvalga“ (“Review”).<sup>203</sup> Although this was not the first Lithuanian-language Jewish newspaper, its success *vis-à-vis* already mentioned the first such periodical “Mūsų žodis“ is beyond comparison. It is not at all an exaggeration to say that in the public sphere “Apžvalga“ became the main medium between the two communities. Throughout five years (1935-1940) of publishing, 221 issues of “Apžvalga“ appeared,<sup>204</sup> in which the Union announced its new, covered the main events in Lithuania and abroad (mostly grim news from Germany and Poland), discussed Jewish-Lithuanian relations, inner debates of the Jewish community and the problems it is facing, fought anti-Semitism, presented Jewish and Lithuanian cultures, promoted support for the “Weaponry Foundation” (lt. “Ginklų fondas“), idea of regaining Vilnius region, and in general *Lithuanianness*.

“Apžvalga“ was published by the Kaunas’ branch of the Union. The circulation of the periodical was relatively large. At the beginning the Union planned to print 5000 copies,<sup>205</sup> but it is known that in 1939 the circulation reached 6000.<sup>206</sup> This number is similar to largest

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<sup>202</sup> Goldbergas, “Mūsų sąjungos reikšmė”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 4: 400.

<sup>203</sup> “Protokolas Nr. 25. 1935 sausio 22”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 20v.

<sup>204</sup> The last issue of 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1940, is numbered as 223<sup>rd</sup>, however, throughout the publishing years there were several mistakes in numbering the issues and actually there are 221.

<sup>205</sup> “Pareiškimas Vidaus reikalų ministrui”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 14.

<sup>206</sup> For comparison: largest and the main (governmental) daily “Lietuvos aidas” (en. “Echo of Lithuania”) – 32000 copies, daily “Lietuvos žinios” (en. “Lithuanian News”) – 16800; Jewish newspapers “Das Vort” (in

newspapers in Yiddish, as well as it is one of the biggest newspapers in Lithuania in general. Having in mind the common practice to share expensive newspapers, it is clear that the circle of readers of “Apžvalga“ was considerably wide.<sup>207</sup> Unfortunately, it is difficult to grasp the division of Lithuanian and Jewish readers. It is only an assumption, that the Jews, not knowing the Lithuanian well enough, and having the wide variety of periodicals in Hebrew and Yiddish, chose to read the Jewish-language newspapers.

The editorial of the first issue claims that primary audience of the newspaper is Lithuanian Jews, who “live here and abroad, know Lithuanian [language], love Lithuanian language and their culture”.<sup>208</sup> According to the article, this periodical aims to publish objective Jews-related news that should be of interest to Lithuanian reader, who is usually exposed only to biased media.<sup>209</sup>

The aims of “Apžvalga“, as presented to the Minister of Internal Affairs, were:

To bridge the Jewish community with Lithuanian language and Lithuanian culture and art; to introduce the problems of Jewish life to Lithuanians and to cover economic and political life of Lithuania; to cover the economic, political and cultural life of the Jewish nation abroad; to cover the problems of the Jewish nation in Palestine.<sup>210</sup>

Compared to the goals of the Union itself, these aims seem very reasonable and throughout the publishing years they were very obvious in the pages of the paper. Although, at it was already discussed, the Union was very diverse in its structure, was apolitical and did not take sides in the battles within Jewish community, the last aim of the newspaper seems to be somewhat Zionistic. However, having in mind high level of Zionism in Lithuania (as well as

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Yiddish) – 6000, “Folksblat” (in Yiddish) – 4200; largest Polish newspaper in Vilnius “Kurier Wileński” – 15000; largest Polish newspaper in Kaunas “Dzień Polski” – 2200.

<sup>207</sup> This assumption is based on economic logic: if there were not enough readers to publish 6000 copies, the Union would have reduced this amount. However, in the strive to promote their ideas, the Union might have given away some of the copies, and receivers might have not been interested in reading.

<sup>208</sup> “Mūsų tikslas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 1 (June 16, 1935): 1.

<sup>209</sup> “Our weekly will also enable Lithuanians to get to know the problems of our inner life, to take a glance of our inside world, which is closed to the most of Lithuanians <...>. We do not have any secrets and do not intend to decorate our house and brag that everything is fine with us”. See: Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> “Pareiškimas Vidaus reikalų ministrui”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 14.

in Latvia and Poland) publishing news related to Palestine could be understood as a mere reflection of reality.

The circumstances of publishing the weekly never drew the attention of scholars, thus the information presented here is based on scarce and also random archival findings. Of all those, few more things are worth discussing.

Few days before the publication of the first issue, the editor of “Apžvalga“ resigned and a new editor was appointed. The change of editors and co-editors was quite often. From what is known, there were five editors throughout 1935-1940, who rotated several times, and in November, 1939, the editor changed twice within few days.<sup>211</sup> Without additional information, it is difficult even to speculate why these changes occurred time and again. It might have been only administrative measures, but it is also likely that there was something more to that.

In 1940 “Apžvalga“ along with many other newspapers faced some problems. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of February a decision issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs instructed all publishers to reduce the number of pages of their periodicals by one third, while 18 periodicals including “Apžvalga“ were to be suspended for three months.<sup>212</sup> The head of the Central Committee of the Union, Goldbergas, then addressed the minister with a letter arguing why the weekly should continue to be published:

The aim of “Apžvalga“ ... is twofold: to foster statehood awareness (sic)<sup>213</sup> among Jewish society, especially the youth, to spread the statehood idea of Lithuania and to

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<sup>211</sup> “Abraomo-Izaoko Livšico sutikimas būti “Apžvalgos” redaktoriumi”, LCVA, F. 402, Ap. 6(2t), B. 2: 2; “Leidimas Izaokui Livšicui”, LCVA, F. 402, Ap. 6(2t.), B. 2: 14; “Leidimas Samueliui Subockiui būti “Apžvalgos” redaktoriumi”, LCVA, F. 402, Ap. 6(2t), B. 2: 16; “Pareiškimas dėl redaktoriaus pareigų atsisakymo”, LCVA, F. 402, Ap. 6(2t.), B. 2: 6; “Pranešimas apie Mykolo Bramsono sutikimą redaguoti “Apžvalgą”” LCVA, F.402, Ap. 6(2t), B. 2: 15; “Raštas dėl Arono-Vulfo Melamedo paskyrimo Apžvalgos redaktoriumi”, LCVA, F.402, Ap. 6(2t), B. 2: 7; “Raštas Kauno apskrities viršininkui”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 13.

<sup>212</sup> “Vidaus reikalų ministro nutarimas”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 5: 4.

The Ministry based its decision on the 39 Article of the “Press Law”, which sounded basically the same as the cited Article from the “Organizations’ Law”, i.e. the newspaper was to be suspended for the sake of the nation and the state. See: “Spaudos įstatymas,” *Vyriausybės žinios*, no. 510 (November 16, 1935): 4.

<sup>213</sup> Lt. “valstybiškai auklėti“. Today this expression would be equaled to “creating civil society”.

bridge the Jews with Lithuanian language, Lithuanian culture and with social and national aspiration of the Lithuanians.<sup>214</sup>

Interestingly, there is no talk of getting Lithuanians acquainted with the Jewish life and culture. Further Goldbergas numbers six reasons why “Apžvalga“ should exist. Rhetoric used here is again pretty much the same as cited several times; bridging the nationalities living in Lithuania, raising knowledge between communities, promoting Lithuanian language among the Jews, etc. What is not usual is the claim that the newspaper is widely known abroad, and its suspension would result in negative reactions towards Lithuanian state. Probably the most interesting for this research is the outcome of this intention to suspend the weekly and the effort of the Union to continue the publishing. On the same type-written letter by Goldbergas there are few hand-written notes. The most interesting is the one written by someone who is, presumably, the first reviewer of such letters at the Press Department of the Ministry:

Needed for further review, deadly serious. Possibly [we can] allow [to publish] at least twice a month, if not at the previous frequency.<sup>215</sup>

A week later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, there is another hand-written note stating that the Minister allowed publishing the newspaper twice a month. “Apžvalga“ resumed publishing after a month of the suspension.<sup>216</sup>

Clearly, the arguments that Goldbergas made were at least somewhat appealing and relevant for the government. Not only the actual act of letting the weekly to become bi-weekly while many other newspapers were suspended or closed, but the usage of words “deadly serious” in reaction to the arguments is quite revealing. It is worth drawing attention here, that by the 1940 larger part of Vilnius’ region including the city was given back to Lithuania by the Soviet government, and thus now there were additional approx. 70000 Jews, which might have influenced the decision of the Minister.

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<sup>214</sup> “Memorandumas “Apžvalgos” uždarymo reikalu”, LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 3. See Appendix 6.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> No issues appeared between 29<sup>th</sup> of February, and 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1940.

The last issue of the periodical appeared ten days after the occupation of the Baltic States, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1940. The editorial was entitled “Jewish Society Congratulates the New Government”. The presentation of that new government followed, with an exceptional attention to the new Minister of Health Care Leonas Koganas,<sup>217</sup> who was Jewish. There were also translations of the reactions to the new government printed in other Jewish newspapers. In general, the praise of the new government and the mockery of the old regime was very openly expressed, while less than a month ago “Apžvalga“ was the same as years ago, i.e. pro-Lithuanian-government and state. Without a doubt, there were members of the Union who truly congratulated the new government, but most likely the last issue of “Apžvalga“ was compiled with a “helping hand” from outside. Basically no documents were found in this research that would indicate any circumstances of closing the newspaper, neither are there any hints in the last issue. Only one very interesting document is known, but again, without any other information it is almost impossible to understand it. It is a note to the publisher of “Apžvalga“ by some executive at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, that reads “...the Minister of Internal Affairs extended the deadline to submit an application for continuing the publication.”<sup>218</sup> Whether the editor of the periodical applied for a permission to continue publication or not, the newspaper ceased to exist.

### 3.3. Stances on various question

As it was already mentioned several times, the development of relations between Jews and Lithuanians was a clear goal of the weekly “Apžvalga”. From an overview of all issues of the newspaper, it is obvious that its publishers imagined, properly or not, that disclosure of fallacies of anti-Semitic ideas and racism, opposition to Lithuanian anti-Semitic press and advocacy of spread of Lithuanian language and culture among Jews, would suit their

<sup>217</sup> M. Gl., “Pasikalbėjimas su Sveikatos ministru Dr. L. Koganu,” *Apžvalga*, no. 223 (June 25, 1940): 3.

<sup>218</sup> “Raštas “Apžvalga” leidėjui”, LVCA, F. 402, Ap. 6 (2t.), B. 2: 19.

intentions the best. Besides these topics, covered quite extensively throughout the publication, the Union also constantly drew attention to the very sensitive “Vilnius question”, which was an obsession for basically all media of the time as it was also the main interest of Lithuanian governments. Considerable part of the pages of “Apžvalga” was also occupied by the news from Nazi Germany, Poland, the United States, Palestine and elsewhere.

Several topics will be discussed in this part of the thesis, providing the background of events and processes of the time and will analyze the stances that the newspaper took in addressing these issues.

### ***3.3.1. Conversations with elite***

One of the measures that publishers chose was an actual discussion about the state of Lithuanian-Jewish relations, analysing the reasons of the decline of situation in 1930s and the ways to implement it. Among other articles devoted to this public discourse of the time, there are over 20 accounts of prominent Lithuanian elite members (thereinafter Elite) revealing their opinion on this matter. These opinions of the Elite were very similar, representing the official stance of the authoritarian government led by the President and also fulfilling the need of periodical “Apžvalga“.

To get a sense who were these Elite members here are some names and positions held: Mykolas Romeris, lawyer and politician, member of Lithuanian Supreme Court, professor and rector of University of Lithuania; Leonas Bistras, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister, Minister of Land Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Education; Kazys Grinius, politician, the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of Lithuania (served in 1926); Steponas Ruseika, Minister of Internal Affairs; Julius Indrišiūnas, Minister of Finances; Prelate Adomas Jakštas-Dambrauskas, philosopher, theologian; etc. To the extent of this paper there is no need to

clarify what particular positions the Elite held at the moment of the interviews analyzed, because here it is more important that they were loyal to the authoritarian regime despite their official position. It is worth noticing however, that most of the respondents to the periodical were politicians.

The question of loyalty to the regime arises very soon when analyzing the ideas stated in the researched articles. Not only do the opinions of absolute most of the respondents coincide, but also they go in-line with the official stance of the authoritarian government. Even having in mind that some of the Elite members were part of that authoritarian government, it is not that easy to explain why they are even using the same expressions when trying to discuss the problems of Lithuanian-Jewish relations.

The official stance of the government in interwar Lithuania, shaped primarily by spearhead political and moral authority of the time president Antanas Smetona, rests on few pillars of belief, for e.g. that Lithuanians and national, religious or ethnic minorities lived in peace for centuries, that all citizens of the Lithuanian state are equal, that the idea of superior and inferior nations is dismissed from the very root, that anti-Semitism is a disgrace to humanity, etc.<sup>219</sup> However different was the worldview of lay Lithuanian society (which will be shortly discussed thereafter) the stance of the Elite on the Jewish-Lithuanian relations is clearly based on the mentioned pillars. “There can be no question of antagonism between Jews and Lithuanians, because such antagonism does not exist at all”<sup>220</sup>, states Benediktas Grebliauskas, the founder and the leader of organization “Young Lithuania”.<sup>221</sup> “I do not see

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<sup>219</sup> E.g. Smetona’s speeches reprinted in the same “Apžvalga”, See: “Valstybės vairininkų žodis,” *Apžvalga*, no. 121 (January 9, 1938): 1; “<...> the party [“Lietuvos tautininkų sąjunga”/“Lithuanian Nationalists’ Union”] was never anti-bourgeois or anti-intellectual since many of its members came from these two groups. Formally, the LTS was never anti-Semitic”, see: Romuald J. Misiunas, “Fascist Tendencies in Lithuania,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 48, no. 110 (January 1970): 99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4206165> (accessed February 16, 2010).

And many accounts on the personality of Smetona.

<sup>220</sup> J. Sidabrinis, “Kaip gali būti pagerinti lietuvių-žydų santykiai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 3 (June 30, 1935): 1.

<sup>221</sup> “Young Lithuania” was an auxiliary organization to the “Lithuanian Nationalists’ Union” – the party lead by Antanas Smetona.

any organic antagonism between Lithuanians and Jews, because it does not exist”<sup>222</sup>, nine months later but almost identically says Julius Čaplikas, Minister of Internal Affairs. Later on, Minister of Finances Indrišiūnas answers a question about the rise of antagonism by saying “as I mentioned before, such antagonism does not exist in Lithuania”<sup>223</sup>. These are only few examples of common claim, which appears in almost every single article analyzed here, that relations between the majority and the largest minority of interwar period Lithuanian state are in general good. Not only that, this is an example of use of *common language* while expressing one’s opinion.

Another discourse discussed by most of the members of the elite is enduring Lithuanian tolerance and recent unnatural anti-Semitism, or say, origins of it in the Lithuanian society. Here the general claim is that Lithuanians have a characteristic of a very tolerant nation and anti-Semitism of recent days is an “imported product”<sup>224</sup>. These ideas are presented in almost all of the opinions analyzed here; in some cases more tacitly, while in others very directly and again using almost the same combinations of words or expressions.<sup>225</sup> If tolerance as a trait of Lithuanian nation is hyperbolized, the rise of anti-Semitism in 1930s is analysed more objectively.<sup>226</sup> The reason for the growth of tension is first of all socio-economic. During the interwar period constant migration of Lithuanians to the larger towns and cities with a goal to

<sup>222</sup> “Žydų-Lietuvių santykiai buvo ir turi pasilikti nuoširdūs,” *Apžvalga*, no. 16 (September 29, 1935): 1.

<sup>223</sup> J. Sidabrinis, “Kaip valstybės tautinės daugumos, taip ir visų mažumų klausimas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 29 (January 17, 1936): 1.

<sup>224</sup> Without actually mentioning the states where this import comes from, the references are given to Nazi Germany and Poland.

<sup>225</sup> E.g. “Prof. Roemeris apie žydų lietuvių santykius,” *Apžvalga*, no. 1 (June 16, 1935): 1; “Priešžydiška nuotaika nėra lietuviškas padaras,” *Apžvalga*, no. 2 (June 23, 1935): 1; J. Sidabrinis, “Užsienio lietuvių veikėjai žydų lietuvių santykių klausimu,” *Apžvalga*, no. 11 (August 25, 1935): 1; J. Sidabrinis, “Supraskime vieni kitus logingai ir objektyviai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 28 (January 10, 1936): 1; J. Sidabrinis, “Lietuvių-žydų bedradarbiavimas yra būtinas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 31 (February 2, 1936): 2; J. Sidabrinis, “Lietuva gali išmaitinti visus savo vaikus,” *Apžvalga*, no. 63 (October 25, 1936): 1.

<sup>226</sup> Again, the compliment for objectivity can only be reserved to the analysis of anti-Semitic tensions in 1930s, i.e. the claims that anti-Semitism (or any other anti-Jewish feeling, without needless engage in problems of terminology) is alien for Lithuanian society throughout the centuries can easily be denied when one is not trying to do a comparative analysis with almost all of the rest of Europe, where situation was comparatively worse. For an account on Lithuanian-Jewish relations in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania see: Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, *Žydai Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės visuomenėje. Sambūvio aspektai* (Vilnius: Žara, 2009), 239-252; for situation at the end of 19th c. and the beginning of the 20th, for e.g. see: *Kai ksenofobija virsta prievarta. Lietuvių ir žydų santykių dinamika XIX a.-XX a. pirmojoje pusėje*, ed. Vladas Sirutavičius and Darius Staliūnas (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2005).

occupy niches of economic activities (mostly trades and crafts), created tensions with the Jews, who traditionally dominated these circles.<sup>227</sup> Almost half of the members of the Elite state this exact reason for growth of anti-Jewish tensions in the society.<sup>228</sup> They explain that eagerness of Lithuanians to move to the towns is a natural development and Jews should understand that. As Grinius said:

Lithuanians should know that it is not the fault of the Jews, that they are mostly concentrated in the sections of commerce and crafts. The series of historical circumstances and reasons are to be blamed. However, the Jewish society should likewise understand, that it is not the fault of Lithuanians that they have not engaged in business of the city.<sup>229</sup>

Former Prime Minister and at the time of interview rector of the Institute of Trades Ernestas Galvanauskas says that Lithuanian youth receive diplomas and at once aim to high positions in commerce. After failing due to the lack of experience, this ambitious young intelligentsia turns to “chauvinism, develop negative attitudes towards foreigners (lt. “kitataučius”) and especially the Jews, who are seen as guilty for the failure”<sup>230</sup>. Professor Romeris summarizes the real situation and at the same time identifies the general position of the Elite by saying that anti-Semitism is a consequence of economic factors, which do not legitimize anti-Jewish tension, however it “can be understood”.<sup>231</sup>

Finally, what is common to many of the opinions analyzed here is a delicate blame put on the Jews themselves for the worsening state of Jewish-Lithuanian relations. Indifference to the needs and goals of the state of Lithuania, passive participation in social life, lack of

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<sup>227</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. less than 15-17 percent of Lithuanian population lived in towns. See: Gediminas Vaskela, “Lietuvių ir žydų santykiai visuomenės modernėjimo ir socialinės sferos politinio reguliavimo aspektais (XX a. pirmoji pusė),” in *Žydai Lietuvos ekonominėje-socialinėje struktūroje: tarp tarpininko ir konkurento*, ed. Vladas Širutavičius and Darius Staliūnas (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2006), 135.

Mendelsohn provides data from 1923, which shows that over 50 percent of Jews were employed in commerce and industry; those engaged in commerce constituted 77.1 percent of all involved in it. See: Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe ...*, 226.

<sup>228</sup> E.g. see: “Kaip gali būti pagerinti lietuvių-žydų santykiai,” 1; L. Vilkyš, “Kauno miesto burmistras aktualiais klausimais,” *Apžvalga*, no. 4 (July 7, 1935); J. Sidabrinis, “Žydai neturi būti išstumti iš prekybos,” *Apžvalga*, no. 6 (July 21, 1935); 2; J. Sidabrinis, “Lietuvos žydų išeivija ir jos reikšmė Lietuvai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 22 (November 29, 1935); 1; “Supraskime vieni kitus logingai ir objektyviai,” 1.

<sup>229</sup> “Žydai neturi būti išstumti iš prekybos,” 1.

<sup>230</sup> “Lietuvių-žydų bedradarbiavimas yra būtinas,” 1.

<sup>231</sup> “Prof. Roemeris apie žydų lietuvių santykius,” 1.

initiative to reduce unfamiliarity between Jews and Lithuanians and etc. These are the key points that the Jews are blamed here.

Reprehensible is the indifference of certain strata of the Jewish society towards series of important matters of the state ... It seems that Jews create a psychological and political ghetto for themselves ... One can not silently pass by the fact that the Jews participate in the anti-state communist party quite actively.<sup>232</sup> It is true however, that it is not right to blame the whole Jewish society for this, because [every] nation has its own fiends and strays".<sup>233</sup>

The interviews with Lithuanian elite presented here are interesting first of all not because of the ideas mentioned, but because they are so similar among themselves and to the official politics of the state altogether. With only couple of exceptions, articles analyzed here do not include the questions that journalist asked the respondent in the actual conversation. In other words, a reader of the newspaper can only see what that respondent said without knowing what was he asked. Without detailed research it is very difficult to say whether the respondent was only asked his opinion on Jewish-Lithuanian relations and chose the criteria of evaluating this relationship himself, or was he asked particular questions (for e.g. opinion on growing antagonism or the reasons and origins of anti-Semitism). One can only speculate that there were particular questions asked, because the respondents dwell on the same criteria. However, it would be an interesting observation should one find out that respondents chose the criteria themselves, grounding their choice on reality of the days.

A couple of reasons for this uniformity of accounts can be easily grasped. First of all, one has to understand that being a member of political (or not necessarily) elite under the authoritarian rule among other things implies that s/he is going in-line with the President. Without an intention to undermine many other factors that influenced the ideas analyzed here, Smetona's tolerance and disapproval of any discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity or

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<sup>232</sup> Vareikis pinpoint the fact that if one would only analyze archival sources of State Security Department, it would be clear that Kaunas' communist organization in 1937-1939 was almost exceptionally "Jewish". However it is obvious, says the author, that there was no such thing as "Jewish communism", only communist Jews as same as communist Lithuanians or Russians. See: Vygantas Vareikis, "Žydų ir lietuvių susidūrimai bei konfliktai tarpukario Lietuvoje," in *Kai ksenofobija virsta prievarta...*, 164-165.

<sup>233</sup> J. Sidabrinis, "Kokie turi būti lietuvių-žydų santykiai," *Apžvalga*, no. 24 (December 13, 1935): 1.

religion had a clear imprint at least on the language used by the respondents of the Jewish periodical. Second is the censorship. From vast amount of other articles in the same “Apžvalga”, criticizing or at least questioning various decisions of the government, it is obvious that censorship was quite mild. However, it still has to be considered, because in all of the articles analyzed and the ones left out, the reader can feel some apologetic stance, carefully selected phrases or tacitly expressed thoughts.

What is not said in the interviews is as much as interesting as what is said. Despite the fact that throughout the interwar period not a single law was passed which would discriminate the Jews or any other minority, the position of the Jews in the society was quite grim. There was a constant decline of the number of Jews taking part in elected offices, the situation among military officers was even worse, less and less Jewish students were admitted to the universities, “from bad to worse”<sup>234</sup> went constantly declining economic situation of the Jews, etc.<sup>235</sup> All these problems, as well as various advancements of the Jewish life, are discussed extensively in the periodical. Even though there is a certain apologetic tone in which the critique of the government or lay Lithuanians appear in “Apžvalga”, the periodical can not be called *spineless*. So why is this newspaper not asking more precise questions to the Elite? Why does it allow the Elite to talk in such general observations, that actually at the end there is nothing said at all? Why there is no engagement in more detailed discussion?

If we look at the issues in which the interviews appear, we can see quite clearly that interest in the opinion of the Elite was higher at the beginning of publishing. Issues No. 1 to 7 had an interview on top of every first page, then in the issues No. 11, 15, 16, 22, 24, 28, 29, 31, 63, 79, 117 and later. This sequence of numbers is here to show that basically only during the first year of publishing (or rather first half a year), “Apžvalga” was concerned with the

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<sup>234</sup> Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe ...*, 238.

<sup>235</sup> This decline is analyzed or mentioned by many historians. For a concise account of the worsening situation in 1930s see: Liudas Truska, “Antisemitism in the Interwar Republic of Lithuania: Focus on the 1930s,” *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe*, no. 54-55 (2005): 64-71.

opinion of the Elite. One can guess that this has a lot to do with finding “a place under the sun” for the newspaper itself. The periodical with a goal to bring two communities together through the medium of language and common interests first had to state the case that on one hand there are problems, on the other – everything is fine in general, just recent trends are not too good, but can be eliminated if both sides work together. Responses of the Elite suited this goal very well. Moreover, not involving in deeper discussions freed the Elite to warmly congratulate “Apžvalga” for being first Lithuanian-language Jewish periodical.

### **3.3.2. Lithuanian language**

There is no doubt, that the Union was well aware of the language importance among the Lithuanian population. As it was shown, language was and still is the key trait of the Lithuanian national identity. And since a common language is the core medium in the dialogue between any cultures, without knowing Lithuanian the Jewish community could not have hoped any cultural closeness.<sup>236</sup> The linkage between the Jews speaking Lithuanian, becoming closer in cultural terms and thus diminishing the hostility towards the Jews was unquestionable. In this light, the majority of the issues of “Apžvalga” included at least one mentioning of the importance of the Jews speaking the local vernacular.

Besides constant general mentioning that knowing and using Lithuanian is crucial in bridging the two communities,<sup>237</sup> “Apžvalga” involved in two more specific debates, namely: responding to the accusations that the Jews are using Russian language and discussing the new schools’ curricula presented after discussed education reforms of 1936.

A part of Lithuanian Jewry, which was one of the least acculturated Jewries in the region, was determined to become a “part of the Russian Jewry, or in the extreme form, simply Russians”.<sup>238</sup> Conditions to “become Russians” were formed by the policies of the tsar

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<sup>236</sup> Lithuanians learning Yiddish or Hebrew is of course out of question.

<sup>237</sup> The clear example of such accounts is in the conversations with the Elite, discussed above.

<sup>238</sup> Pažėraitė, “Žydų kultūrinių ir politinių orientyrų pokyčiai...”, 54.

Aleksander II (reigned 1855-1881). These policies were twofold; first, the privileges were given to the Russian-oriented educated Jews for occupying various positions, and second, there were measures used to impose Russian-Christian culture upon the Jews through the education system, thus turning them into a culture of “European level”.<sup>239</sup> Pažėraitė claims that the second policy was doomed to be unsuccessful due to the strong rabbinical teaching culture and the weakness of the new system.<sup>240</sup> The first one, however, was accessible only to the wealthier Jews, since the majority of the population could not afford receiving the high-quality “Russian-oriented” education.<sup>241</sup> There is no need to go into details of the Russification process. It is important though to understand that a part of Lithuanian Jewry turned to Russian culture and this tendency remained until the First World War. This group of Jews was the instigator of the accusations made by Lithuanians.

Time and again Lithuanian press claimed that the Jews are using Russian language publicly and thus offend Lithuanians and their independent state. It is probably reasonable to say, that “Apžvalga“ managed to register most of such instances and give its response.

The most common accusation [against us Jews] is of using Russian ... but it is a fact, that Jewish youth and even parts of older generation learned Lithuanian well; it has to be understood that it is difficult for the older generation, which was brought up in Russian language and literature, to overcome [this], to start using another language. One can notice though, the gaffes of certain Jewish intellectuals, who use Russian without a reason ... which should be avoided. ... Nonetheless, today Russian language is not a threat to the Lithuanian culture, and it is not a tragedy [if some Jews still use this language].<sup>242</sup>

This overview of the situation by a Jewish industrialist Jakovas Frenkelis is very encapsulating both in the understanding of accusations and the way the newspaper dealt with them. Various publications in “Apžvalga“ answered unsophisticated accusations with quite objective evaluation of reality; during the years of independence a vast majority of the Jewish youth went through education in Hebrew and Yiddish with mandatory Lithuanian language

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 62-63.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>242</sup> “Bendras likimas ir bendrų priešų pavojus pašalins visus nesusipratimus. pasikalbėjimas su žinomu pramoninku ir visuomenės veikėju J.Frenkeliu,” *Apžvalga*, no. 14 (September 15, 1935): 2.

classes, or received whole-Lithuanian education, hence knows Lithuanian. It is always admitted in “Apžvalga” that there are Jews who speak Russian and in every instance it is frowned upon. Another response to the accusation reads:

To withstand from such whippersnappers’ ... mislead of society, it has to be stressed that Lithuanian Jewry itself always fought against usage of Russian within the Jewish community.<sup>243</sup>

The author then carries on with an outline of the Jewry’s contacts with Lithuanian language: schooling system, university, activity of Kaunas’ Jewish Gymnasium with whole-Lithuanian curricula, publication of “Apžvalga”, work of Jewish linguists like Kisinis, Šulmanas, Lemchenas, etc.<sup>244</sup> Later on several more articles addressed this issue with the same stance.<sup>245</sup>

In general it can be said, that the Union addressed these accusation with a somewhat similar attitude as to the accusations of blood libel, i.e. they had to be contradicted in the only Lithuanian-language Jewish newspaper with the hope that at least a part of Lithuanian readers, who are exposed to these fallacies, will know the other side of the story. However, these accusations should not be taken too seriously, because it is obvious that they are false.

Second issue largely discussed in the periodical is the new school curriculum introduced for the years 1936-1937. The first publication as an editorial appeared in April, 1936,<sup>246</sup> at the heights of debate in the Parliament about the reform. Here the stress was made that the Jews should create a unified agency to speak in the name of the Jewish community on the reform’s issue. This clearly showed the relevance of the reform to the Jewish community. However, the question of the new curricula is not mentioned here.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Garliaviškis, “Vėl dėl rusų albos vartojimo žydų tarpe,” *Apžvalga*, no. 30 (January 24, 1936): 7.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup> “Žydų visuomenė prieš svetimų kalbų viešą vartojimą,” *Apžvalga*, no. 113 (November 10, 1937): 2; Translations of articles from Yiddish press: “Mūsų klausimas?” *Apžvalga*, no. 156 (October 7, 1938): 7; “Folksblatas” apie kovą prieš svetimų kalbų vartojimą,” *Apžvalga*, no. 114 (November 21, 1937): 3; S. Goldšmitas, “Rusų kalbos liga...,” *Apžvalga*, no. 114 (November 21, 1937): 3.

The latter article is mocking the Jewish women who speak Russian in order to be “saucy”.

<sup>246</sup> “Mokyklų reforma ir žydų atstovavimo klausimas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 41 (April 19, 1936): 1.

<sup>247</sup> Quite likely because the new curricula was not yet being discussed at the Parliament.

Right after passing the new law establishing the reform, another editorial appeared with the new curricula as a main concern.<sup>248</sup>

Firs of all, many disciplines that at first were taught in Jewish language, will now be taught in Lithuanian. In this case, the most important is the teaching of history. ... Throughout history [the Jews] played a certain role in it. Can a certain view on history, which is different to the Jewish understanding of the development of history and culture, be imposed on the Jews? Jewish view on history is different from the others.<sup>249</sup>

The author of this passage clearly understood that the change of instruction language will also change the content of the discipline. Analyzed legislation (see chapter 2.1.1.) does not imply these changes, however, the detailed curricula might reveal that the concern is grounded. Either way, here we can see the conditionality in the advocacy of using Lithuanian. The cherished school system in which the Jews learned Lithuanian was being questioned by the periodical and the whole Jewish society once the threat of losing parts of the Jewish identity appeared.

Conference of Jewish teachers held in January, 1937 became sort of a summary of ongoing debates and made resolutions later given in to the Ministry of Education. „Apžvalga“ overviewed the conference in an extensive article.<sup>250</sup> During the conference Jewish teachers were complaining that new Lithuanian language programme is inadequate for Jewish schools. Jewish teachers argued that learning geography and history in Lithuanian is equal to major sacrifice of knowledge in these subjects for the sake of a scarce development of the language itself.<sup>251</sup> Also, the new programme of Lithuanian language is not at all adapted to Jews, when having in mind the *otherness* of Yiddish and Hebrew. In general, Jewish teachers made claims to reinstate the instruction language to Jewish languages in all courses and to develop a new programme for teaching Lithuanian. After providing extracts of speeches presented during the

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<sup>248</sup> „Naujieji mokyklų įstatymai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 57 (August 23, 1936): 1.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> „Visuotinis žydų mokytojų suvažiavimas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 91 (May 21, 1937): 1,2,5.

<sup>251</sup> As a father of an eight year old pupil put it: “[The Jews] do not want to turn from being good Jews to being bad Lithuanians.” See: Tėvas, “Žydų mokyklos vargai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 65 (November 1, 1936): 5.

conference, author/editor of the article very shortly states his own position, thus the position of the periodical.

Jewish teachers' conference made a huge impression on the whole Jewish society. ... Lithuanian nation, which itself for many centuries fought with foreign language in the school, should understand, that even with the highest respect for Lithuanian, as a language of the state and of the majority, it should not be the instruction language in the primary Jewish school. [We] can assure that even without this unnecessary duress, the Jewish youth would learn and love Lithuanian.<sup>252</sup>

It is interesting here that the author somewhat levels the strong and rather unambiguous statements made by the teachers and takes apologetic stance, again claiming the need to learn Lithuanian, to respect the surrounding culture, etc.<sup>253</sup>

The question of Lithuanian language was clearly very important for the Union as well as for its periodical. The state language, as a key measure in bringing the two cultures closer and thus reducing the tension between communities, was promoted throughout the Union's activity. However, not unconditionally. The threat to lose part of the "Jewish education" was seen as one of the greatest issues both by the Jewish society and by "Apžvalga", which expressed its concern in several editorials.

### **3.3.3. *Fighting the anti-Semitism***

Anti-Semitism in interwar Lithuania, at least at the beginning, was comparatively mild and is usually paralleled with other Baltic States and Czechoslovakia.<sup>254</sup> Weak Lithuanian nationalism did not include anti-Jewish sentiment. The stereotypes and hostility towards the Jews did not provoke pogroms during the Independence wars of such magnitude (and nothing near that) as in Poland, although some violence occurred. Jewish autonomy was founded and long-lived friendship between Jews and Lithuanians was at least officially celebrated and

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>253</sup> For more accounts on the language issues, see: "Žydų mokyklos balsas," *Apžvalga*, no. 93 (June 4, 1937): 1; "Lietuvių kalba mažumų mokyklose," *Apžvalga*, no. 146 (July 17, 1938): 1; G. Zimanas, "Kas turi dėstyti lietuvių kalbą nelietuvių mokyklose," *Apžvalga*, no. 148 (August 1, 1938): 2; etc.

<sup>254</sup> Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe...*, 1.

fostered by the government. Furthermore, even later the officials of the right-wing authoritarian rule, as oppose to the “extreme right in Hungary, Romania, and Poland, were not obsessed with the ‘Jewish question’ “. <sup>255</sup> However, the Jews remained the outsiders not only because of the prevalence of common stereotypes and myths, but also because of the struggle of Lithuanians to overcome Jews in their occupations, i.e. commerce and industry.

Thus, “Apžvalga” battled anti-Semitism in two fronts. First, turning down the racial theories and the myth of the Jewish-world-domination, which gained special importance because of the market crash of 1929. And second, more important for this research, denouncing and objectively analyzing the distorted views on Lithuania’s economy expressed mostly in the Lithuanian press.

The very first issue of the newspaper dedicated almost the whole page to present the Berne trial of 1934-1935. <sup>256</sup> This article presented the main speeches of those involved in the case and the court rule that the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” is not written by Jews, that it has to be considered as plagiarism and a piece of fake dirty literature with only goal to spread the hatred of the Jews. Later, a series of extracts from upcoming book “Judenas von heute” by R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi appeared. <sup>257</sup> In the reprinted parts of the book the author is more concerned not only with the denial of the validity and authenticity of the Protocols, but with the turndown of the myth of Jewish world domination in general. Although this myth did not find the peasant Lithuanian society the most receptive one, however, the series of articles in 1930’s on Protocols indicates that by then they were well known. Later on, “Apžvalga” mentions the Protocols few times as part of the general news, e.g. that they were republished in Italian <sup>258</sup> or that they function as a “pure proof of anti-Semitism” <sup>259</sup>, etc.

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>256</sup> “Siono seniūnų protokolų falsifikacija nustatyta,” *Apžvalga*, no. 1 (June 6, 1935): 6.

<sup>257</sup> “R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, “Ciono išminčių protokolai,” *Apžvalga*, no. 23 (December 6, 1935): 3; No. 24, 13 December 1935, 5, 6; No. 25, 25 December 1935, 3.

<sup>258</sup> “Italijos žydų bendruomenės,” *Apžvalga*, no. 146 (July 17, 1938): 4.

<sup>259</sup> Nikolaj Berdiajev, “Krikščionybė ir antisemitizmas,” *Apžvalga*, no. 148 (August 1, 1938): 7.

Another topic discussed quite extensively is racism. Articles condemning racial theories of inequality<sup>260</sup>, attacking Nazi Germany for its racial politics<sup>261</sup> or negating the myth of pure Aryan race<sup>262</sup> are rather frequent. These articles are mostly written not by regular writers for the paper, but by foreign scientists, famous activists, speakers, etc.<sup>263</sup> Whatever the reasons for this tactic (or maybe just a pure necessity) are, it is certain that articles by authors like that are more credible and appealing to the reader. They are both sophisticated and not too difficult to understand, that is, adapted to the Lithuanian reader. In other words, authors would explain the falsity of racial theories by simple historical or present day examples and do not involve in theoretical contemplation.

The creation of Lithuanian middle class was one of the most important goals of the new state,<sup>264</sup> hence the rise of tension between Jews (the main middle class) and Lithuanians was inevitable. This goal, first proclaimed during the national revival movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., became an object of everyday life discussions during the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, consolidation of Lithuanian businessmen and their strive to *Lithuanianize* small business implanted modern anti-Semitism into majority's thought, which was unknown before.<sup>266</sup> Although no direct anti-Jewish law was passed, the government tacitly allowed the Lithuanian businessmen to *Lithuanianize* economy, which could be observed as another nationalizing policy.

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<sup>260</sup> E.g., E. Hooton, "Tiesa apie rasę," *Apžvalga*, no. 52 (July 12, 1936): 4.

<sup>261</sup> E.g., M. Vainraich, "Čekų mokslo akademija sugriauna Hitlerio antisemitinę rasių teoriją," *Apžvalga*, no. 3 (June 30, 1935): 4.

<sup>262</sup> E.g., G. Günther, "Arijiečių rasė - istorinis melas," *Apžvalga*, no. 127-128 (February 27, 1938): 6.; Lord Raglan, "Grynoji rasė - mitas," *Apžvalga*, no. 83 (March 21, 1937): 3.

<sup>263</sup> E. Hooton (op.cit.) is a professor at Harvard University; Lord Raglan (op.cit.) famous antropologist, etc.

<sup>264</sup> Vaskela, "Lietuvių ir žydų santykiai...", 133.

<sup>265</sup> Hektoras Vitkus, "Smulkiojo verslo lituanizacija tarpukario Lietuvoje: ideologija ir praktika", in *Žydai Lietuvos ekonominėje-socialinėje struktūroje ...*, 183.

<sup>266</sup> Vitkus, "Smulkiojo verslo lituanizacija tarpukario Lietuvoje...", 216.

The “Union of Lithuanian Traders<sup>267</sup>, Industrialists and Handicraftsmen” was established in 1930 to promote the idea of a strong Lithuanian middle class and two years later began to publish its weekly “Verslas” (en. “Business”), which later was one of the most intense and, presumably, successful spreader of negative socio-economic image of the Jews. In the very first page of the first issue of “Verslas” it is stated that

The present day division of business by nations (agriculture – Lithuanians, and trade, industry and crafts – other-nationals<sup>268</sup>) is in no way healthy and can not be acquitted.<sup>269</sup>

It has to be said, that the goal of Lithuanian businessmen itself can hardly be assessed as negative. Natural understanding of the time that the nation-state should “be in the hands” of the titular nation was not questioned and “owning the state” of course entailed having its economic leverage in the hands of majority. However, the methods used to achieve that aim were clearly anti-Jewish. The main tool in the information war was the rhetoric of the Lithuanians. The reflections of the Lithuanian Businessmen Congress (1936) presented in “Verslas” shows many of such examples.

We hope that ... a certain minority will stop provoking the harmful friction to the state.<sup>270</sup>

The largest group of national minorities’ are Jews, which has the whole business in its hands. However this group is weak and can not develop anymore. This is shown by various facts of the day and the backwardness in culture.<sup>271</sup>

Lithuanian [workers] are the best of all and do their job honestly and well ... Different worker is a Jew. Abroad s/he is held as the worst worker, but in Lithuania [a Jew] still holds some reputation, however our industry itself will push [him/her] out with time.<sup>272</sup>

A common claim that Lithuania’s economy is stagnating, because of inability of the Jews to develop the occupations that they are involved in, was not based on any facts. Yet it

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<sup>267</sup> Noticeably, the name itself shows exclusiveness, i.e. ‘union of Lithuanian traders’ is rather different of hypothetically possible ‘union of traders of Lithuania’. Even more, because of certain features of linguistics, the title of the organization in Lithuanian language has stronger nationalistic connotation than in English.

<sup>268</sup> This, without a doubt, was reference primarily to Jews.

<sup>269</sup> “Ko mes norime?” *Verslas*, no. 1 (February 25, 1932): 1.

<sup>270</sup> “Karštai pasveikintas kongresas,” *Verslas*, no. 50 (December 11, 1936): 2.

<sup>271</sup> “Pramonininkai pasiryžę išplėsti veiklą,” *Verslas*, no. 50 (December 11, 1936): 4.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

was a very common accuse, and “Apžvalga”, as the main adversary of “Verslas”, tried to denounce it throughout the years of publishing. A great amount of articles that object to the ideas of “Verslas” can be found in the Jewish weekly.

The main character of these polemics is its dead-end, i.e. discussions are usually started by “Verslas” and is centered around interpretations of everyday events in country’s economics or of “the ways Jews are doing business”, while “Apžvalga” is keen to deny them and explain the reality more objectively. For example, a response to the claims cited above, “Apžvalga” states that:

Jewish economy in Lithuania weakened ... only because the state took a lot of economic positions from the Jews. Of course, we do not have such “strongman” (lt. “stipruolio”), who could withstand the pressure of the state.<sup>273</sup>

In general, the weekly was promoting an idea of equal rights in business competition. Many times the periodical stated that the Jews understand a need for the Lithuanian villagers to move to towns and work in industry, hence develop economics. If the Jews were to be displaced from their positions, it should be in a natural way, without giving advantages to their competitors.<sup>274</sup>

Worth mentioning is another set of publications. There are quite a few messages throughout the period of publication that give very short summaries of events when some Jew was accused of slaying a child that was missing for some time, then the child reappeared and everyone was laughing at the one who blamed the Jews.<sup>275</sup> This is the story for most of such events. Among other things this shows that medieval myth was still active, but was not considered important anymore and a sort of relic of the uneducated past.

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<sup>273</sup> “Ką kalbėjo verslininkai apie žydus jų kongrese,” *Apžvalga*, no. 71 (December 20, 1936): 5; another example: “Apžvalga” states that religion should not be a question in doing business, and “Verslas” interprets this as if Jews are claiming that doing business is a sin in Christianity and therefore Lithuanians should step aside and let Jews prevail in markets. See: Iksas, “Ko je iš tikrųjų nori,” *Apžvalga*, no. 59 (September 6, 1936): 5.

<sup>274</sup> E.g. see: “Bendras likimas ir bendrų priešų pavojus pašalins visus nesusipratimus...”, 2.

<sup>275</sup> E.g. see: “Dėl prasimanymų apie žydus,” *Apžvalga*, no. 39 (April 5, 1936): 4; “Rietavo žydai išvengė prasimanymo padarinių,” *Apžvalga*, no. 40 (April 12, 1936): 7.

### 3.3.4. The “Vilnius question”

...Lithuanian Jews along with Lithuanians shed the blood for Vilnius, and longs and mourns for it together with Lithuanians now that it is lost, believing that justice will win and Lithuania will regain its capital.<sup>276</sup>

The head of the Jewish Soldiers' Union Goldbergas expressed the general stance of Lithuanian Jewry towards “Vilnius question”. The occupation of the Vilnius region by Poland in October of 1920 became the most important concern of the Lithuanian state throughout the most of the discussed period. In the history and culture of Lithuanian Jewry, Vilnius also plays a major role. Not by accident it is usually called the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” or even the “Northern Jerusalem”. Thus the stance of “Apžvalga” is quite obvious. A separate paper could be written on the representation of the “Vilnius question” in the Jewish newspaper, as scores of articles are dedicated to this issue. Larger part of them was published after the region was reincorporated in the state in October, 1939. 201<sup>st</sup> issue of the periodical (22, October, 1939) is almost entirely dedicated to the regaining of Vilnius. Of course, articles are concerned with the “Jewish perspective” of this historical event, i.e. publications analyze the situation of Jews in the city and the region, discusses what should be done next and reminds how Lithuanian Jewry fought for Vilnius in 1920. For this research, however, it is more interesting to look at the period when Vilnius was still a part of Poland, thus a very clear common interest for both Lithuanians and the Jews.

Later in the above cited speech Goldbergas said:

...it is the duty of our generation to fasten the coming of that joyous hour [of regaining Vilnius]. Unfortunately, we do not know any shortcut that would enable us to reach our goal with one leap. But we know several ways ... Our [friendly] coexistence in the independent Lithuania is the most important road to the regaining of Vilnius.<sup>277</sup>

“Our [friendly] coexistence” without a doubt meant the coexistence between the Lithuanians and the Jews (maybe including other national minorities as well). This claim was

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<sup>276</sup> "Ž.K.S. Pirmininko adv. J. Goldbergo kalba," *Apžvalga*, no. 110 (October 17, 1937): 2.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

most likely based on the understanding that Lithuanian state needs support from the residents of Vilnius. Since approximately one third of Vilnius' population is Jewish, a friendly coexistence of the two communities in Lithuania is an obvious goal for the state to attract Vilnius Jewry to its side. Having in mind an increasingly bad condition of the Jewry living in Vilnius it is questionable if there had to be any additional effort from the Lithuanian side to attract that population. Nonetheless, the Union did not miss a chance to push its agenda in the context of this sensitive question.<sup>278</sup>

The suggestion to pursue friendly coexistence was not the only pondering of the periodical on what should be done. A need to show Vilnius' Jews that their brethren's life in independent Lithuania is far better than in Poland was expressed several times.

There are also some things in the national politics that we could brag about to Vilnius' residents. Let's tell them how many schools our minorities have, how many of them are funded by government and municipalities ... We do not have to compare that to situation in Vilnius region (lt. Vilnijoje), the reader will do it himself.<sup>279</sup>

The author then carries on explaining that a book should be published somewhere abroad, full of numbers, graphs, diagrams and illustrations, and without any propaganda, so the reader would understand how well-off Lithuania is.

The stance of "Apžvalga" on the "Vilnius question" basically represents the general attitude of the Jews.<sup>280</sup>

### **3.4. Jewishness of the Union and the question of acculturation**

It was established in the previous chapters that the Union of Jewish Soldiers was very pro-Lithuanian. The organization advocated knowing and using Lithuanian language among

<sup>278</sup> This is not to say that it was only a pragmatic move.

<sup>279</sup> X., "Priešlietuviškoji lenkų agitacija ir Vilniaus gyventojai," *Apžvalga*, no. 32 (February 9, 1936): 7.

<sup>280</sup> For example, there were Jewish sections established in the "Union of Vilnius Emancipation" (lt. Vilniui vaduoti sąjunga), which was established by Lithuanians. See: "Vilniaus Vadavimo Sąjungos žydų sekcija Žiežmariuose," *Apžvalga*, no. 66 (November 8, 1936): 3.

the Jewish population, expressed its support for the Lithuanian state, together with the rest Lithuanian Jewry actively supported reincorporation of Vilnius region into independent Lithuanian state, analyzed the problems of Jews caused by nationalizing policies of the state with objective understanding of the needs of Lithuanian population, etc. Nonetheless, it has to be noticed and stressed, that disregarding all the contexts in which the Union promoted *Lithuanianness*, the ultimate aim was not to be “more Lithuanian”,<sup>281</sup> but to increase living conditions of the Jewish population through the raise of mutual recognition. For this reason, “Apžvalga” also extensively published material representing Jewish culture. Almost in every issue of the weekly Lithuanians could have find short stories and pieces of poetry written by Jews about Jewish life, articles presenting the main Jewish holidays (Yom Kippur, Passover, Hanukkah, etc.), excerpts from *Jewish* novels, etc. Massive amount of these publications was directed mostly to the Lithuanian reader with, presumably, the goal to “educate” them, to make them acquainted with Jewish culture.

Throughout the five years of publication, the general news, i.e. not related to the Jewish minority in Lithuania or abroad, were very scarce in “Apžvalga”. Foreign news, for example, were mostly about Nazi Germany, Poland, the US or Palestine, discussed in the obvious light for the Jewish weekly of the time. Besides publishing speeches of high governmental officials or of the President,<sup>282</sup> “Apžvalga” basically ignored all that was happening in Lithuania if it was not related to the Jews or if there was no way to relate those events to the minority. On one hand, such selection of information seems appropriate in the pursuit of the goals of the weekly and the Union. On the other, this is the first indication of the still strong *Jewishness* of the Union.

It seems that adopting the majority’s language and being pro-Lithuanian-state was the greatest extent of aspirations of the Union. And even these to aims should be assessed quite

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<sup>281</sup> Except in the case of language which will be discussed thereafter as a sign of acculturation.

<sup>282</sup> Which might have been mandatory in the authoritarian rule. It is not know in this research.

carefully. Being “pro-Lithuanian” most likely meant choosing the better of two evils, the worse one being almost any other state in the East Central Europe. A great level of Zionism among Lithuanian Jewry should be taken into account as well. Although the Union and its weekly never involved in the Hebrew-Yiddish, Zionism-Bundism conflict, it can be assumed, however carefully, that considerable number of the Jewish soldiers was Zionist.

The adoption of Lithuanian language was also only a goal, not an achievement even within the Union. This can be clearly observed when analyzing the Fund 593 at the Central State Archive of Lithuania, that is the collection of the inner documents of the Union. Among them, one can find letters received from the governmental institutions, documents written by the members of the Union in order to be given in to some authority, protocols that the Union filled at the meetings of the Board, lists of members, etc. All these documents are in Lithuanian and a lot of them were used in this research. However, it has to be noticed that all these documents had to be filled in Lithuanian, according to the legal requirements, i.e. the state-officials had to be able to read them. It can not be stressed enough, that apart from such kind of documents, basically nothing else is Lithuanian; everything else is in Hebrew script, and most likely everything is in Yiddish. From the short Lithuanian inscriptions on some pages that are mostly covered with Yiddish, it can be presumed that these documents are the letters sent or received by the head office in Kaunas from other branches of the Union. Not only that. There are application forms to join the Union that are in Yiddish, and some of them are filled in Yiddish.<sup>283</sup> Clearly, there can be no discussion about internalization of the Lithuanian and maybe a question of knowing it could be raised.

After the analysis of the activity of the Union, its stance expressed through the periodical and discussing the *Jewishness* of the organization, it can be turned back to the complexities of the term “acculturation”. General and simplistic definition of “acculturation”

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<sup>283</sup> E.g. “Istojamasis pareiškimas”, LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 12. See: Appendix 5.

proposed by Mendelsohn and cited in the introduction is worth reminding here – acculturation is the “adoption of the external characteristics of the majority culture, above all its language.”<sup>284</sup> In the context of this research, the lack of explanation what does the “adoption” mean is an obvious problem. Is it enough to know the language or to use it in public life? Should it be used in private life? Does it have to become the “mother-tongue”, a term very troubling itself? Clarifying “adoption” would help in assessing the level of acculturation of the Lithuanian Jewry and the Union. However, this could be done with a smaller or greater uncertainty, since the level of knowledge and usage of the language is not well-known.

There is another perspective in these complexities as well. Maybe it is more important and fruitful to measure the scale of acculturation, not the level. In other words, knowing what “adoption” means, and having more historical investigation, it would be possible to answer in what numbers the Lithuanian Jewry was acculturated. If it is enough to learn the language of the majority to be acculturated, then probably the Lithuanian Jewry, at least by the end of 1930s, was acculturated to a great extent. If, however, Lithuanian had to be internalized, i.e. used amongst the Jews, then it would be possible to claim that the acculturation never happened. The latter understanding of “acculturation” is very relevant, having in mind the experience of some East Central European Jewry, not even considering Western Europe. Internalization of majority’s language there was just a sign of acculturation, as oppose to assimilation, a term irrelevant for the Lithuanian Jewry altogether. Therefore, if one would apply the understanding of “acculturation”, which at least in part is coined *vis-à-vis* “assimilation”, then it would be possible to argue, that even “acculturation” is very difficult to talk about in the case of Lithuanian Jewry.

It can only be noted, that the literature on the terminology of acculturation and assimilation is not that helpful in making assessments here, both because of its diversity and

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<sup>284</sup> Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe* ..., 2.

the lack of historical data. In 1974, Raymond H. C. Teske, Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson published a study titled “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification”.<sup>285</sup> Today this article is maybe outdated, however, it discusses the classical understanding of these two processes through the analysis of vast literature on this subject. “A single unifying thread to be found in almost all discussions of acculturation is that it is a process as opposed to a unitary event”.<sup>286</sup> The very first sentence of the study already shows the complexity of the term. Later the term is analyzed through various criteria (e.g. individual or group process, dominance, change of values, etc.). However valuable the study is, it is hardly applicable to this research, since based on it, which means based on many well-received definitions of acculturation, can only be said that there is no indications of assimilation of Lithuanian Jewry, and again acculturation can be observed to some extent.

Going back to the history of the Union, another careful assumption can be made. Not diminishing the possible “pro-Lithuanianness feeling” that at least the elite of the Union had, the great effort in expressing it can be seen as a pragmatic move. However patriotic was the Union, maybe by establishing a position of a great supporter of the state and the government, and acting as an advocator of the Lithuanian language, the organization secured its position only in order to expose the concerns of the Jewry? Such measure seems to be very logical and there is nothing particularly interesting about it. However, if this was true, then the talk about acculturation becomes even clumsier. In other words, if the Union was trying to establish the mentioned position, then a lot of what was said in “Apžvalga” or even in the documents of the Union might be just a mask. Although there are hints to ponder about such possibility, it remains just a careful assumption.

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<sup>285</sup> Raymond H. C. Teske Jr. and Bardin H. Nelson, “Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification,” *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (May 1974), accessed February 09, 2010, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/643554>.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

## Conclusions

Somewhat Benjaminian understanding of Jewish history as an ever-increasing pile of wreckage and ending in catastrophe is being challenged more and more. Mutual recognition and understanding becomes increasingly noticed perspective in the analysis of Lithuanian-Jewish relations. This thesis is also a humble contribution to this discourse.

After creating independent Lithuanian state, for the first time in history the language of the majority received a status of a state-language. The minorities were now subjected to learn in. The analysis of the education system of national minorities shows that considerable majority of the Jewish youth went through a state-funded education system and thus had the possibility to learn Lithuanian. It is stays unknown how well they have learned it, but it is reasonable to state that at the end of the 1930s vast majority of at least younger generations of Lithuanian Jews were able to speak in majorities vernacular. Did they?

The Union of Jewish Soldiers is considered the most prominent promoter of Lithuanian language among the Jews and it is assumed that at least the elite of the organization would try to fulfil their publicly advocated aims within the Union as well. However, archival data shows that the members of the Union were either unwilling or unable to do that. Predominance of Yiddish within an organization, which successfully published basically the only Lithuanian-language Jewish weekly for over five years, indicates that there can hardly be any ponderings about the internalization of Lithuanian among the Jewish population before the Holocaust.

This research agrees with Zalkin, who was very careful in assessing the level of acculturation. Using expressions like “most likely”, “to a certain extent”, “highly/hardly possible” is far more appropriate than the rhetoric of Vershik, at least until more research is done. Considering language as the main trait in the process of acculturation, answering what was the level of knowledge and usage of Lithuanian among the Jewish population would contribute to the whole discourse of these studies. More questions can be raised. If there was

an acculturation, if there was a considerable amount of Jews communicating with Lithuanians, what did that change in their relations? Have contact reduced prejudice? Did nationalizing policies in education, which among other things aimed at teaching to love Lithuania, bear any fruits in the light of strong Zionism? More specific to this study, it is clear that knowing what is there in the Yiddish documents of the Union would contribute a lot.

Indeed, this field of studies is just opening up and there are plenty of questions that lack answers. If there were more studies done in the field of shifting Jewish identity, it would not be that difficult to use term “acculturation” or even disregard it, making a conclusion that Lithuanian Jewry was never acculturated.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1.

Elementary schools in Lithuania in 1918-1919-January 1, 1939 (the Klaipėda Region not included)<sup>287</sup>

School Year	Total	Lithuanian	Jewish	Polish	German	Latvian	Russian	Belarusian	Multinational
End of 1918-1919	1036	903	49	33	37	11	3	-	-
Jan 15, 1920	1173	1059	55	21	25	10	2	1	-
Jan 1, 1921	1321	1180	74	22	23	6	3	1	12
Jan 1, 1922	1656	1478	96	27	23	10	5	1	16
Jan 1, 1923	1849	1643	107	30	20	10	9	2	28
Jan 1, 1924	2003	1808	111	26	16	9	11	1	21
Jan 1, 1925	2064	1859	118	26	16	9	11	1	24
Jan 1, 1926	2108	1915	112	24	14	11	11	-	21
Jan 1, 1927	2301	1997	135	91	22	10	16	1	29
Jan 1, 1928	2401	2117	144	47	21	9	15	-	48
Jan 1, 1929	2431	2185	135	30	18	8	15	-	40
Jan 1, 1930	2386	2158	122	25	16	8	12	-	45
Jan 1, 1931	2288	2113	105	15	13	6	6	-	30
Jan 1, 1932	2290	2123	105	15	14	6	7	-	20
Jan 1, 1933	2297	2129	105	15	14	11	4	-	19
Jan 1, 1934	2298	2129	105	15	14	11	4	-	20
Jan 1, 1935	2301	2135	105	15	12	11	4	-	19
Jan 1, 1936	2308	2144	108	15	11	13	3	-	14
Jan 1, 1937	2308	2147	109	11	10	13	3	-	15
Jan 1, 1938	2319	2160	107	10	10	13	4	-	15
Jan 1, 1939	2334	2173	109	10	?	13	?	-	15

Šetkus ventures to explain the decline of number schools starting in 1928-1929. He claims that at the end of the 1920s the government started implementing “universal elementary teaching”, i.e. every child aged 7-14 had to attend a school. While establishing schools, the Articles 5 and 6 of Elementary Education Law were very important and this meant there could only be one school per population of 500, and also no less than 32 school-aged children. Thus schools were closed because of a failure to fulfill these criteria.<sup>288</sup> Even if the author points to actual reasons for the decline, his arguments are hardly convincing for two reasons. First, he does not explain why the 1922 law was not effective before and schools were not closed earlier. Second is the misreading of Article 6. It states that one teacher can teach 32 to 60 pupils, however with the permission of the Ministry of Education s/he can teach smaller classes. Other literature does not try to explain this decline at all and it stays unclear.

One more interesting and very sudden change in the numbers happened in 1926-1928, particularly with Polish and to a lesser extent Jewish schools. This can be explained as an outcome of two events. First, the short-lived coalition government of the Farmers Populist Union and the Social Democrats in 1926 freed the hands of minorities to establish schools. The Poles used this opportunity mostly through “Pochodnia” (Polish Society of Education and

<sup>287</sup> Taken from: Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 143.

<sup>288</sup> Šetkus, “Tautinių mažumų mokykla...“, 42.

Culture), an organization funded by Polish government, and established 67 new schools. The second event drastically reducing the number was the *coup d'état* in December of the same year. The new authoritarian government closed most of the recently opened Polish schools and dismissed 68 teachers, because they did not have certificates and used unapproved textbooks brought from Poland. This government action, as Kaubrys warns, should not be understood as an anti-Polish move, because in total 275 other teachers were dismissed throughout Lithuania as well.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 141, 143-144.

## Appendix 2.

The numbers of students in elementary schools of national minorities through 1922-1938<sup>290</sup>

School Year	Lithuanian	Jewish	Russian	Polish	German	Latvian	Belarusian	Multinational	Total
Jan, 1922	101719	10845	452	3336	2239	565	115	757	120028
Jan 1,1923	99952	10176	636	2852	1698	581	58	1313	117466
Jan 1, 1924	102198	9932	725	2728	1520	513	36	944	118596
Jan 1. 1925	107554	9686	738	2535	1524	499	34	1215	123 785
Jan 1, 1926	104396	9001	800	1862	1235	438	-	871	118603
Jan 1,1927	102884	9981	822	5276	1476	370	33	1354	122 196
Jan 1,1928	108244	10105	638	1788	1334	313	-	2156	134578
1929/1930	159008	10893	714	1470	1307	313	-	3831	177536
1930/1931	184684	11422	536	649	1328	311	-	2030	200960
1931/1932	205774	11843	573	603	1338	313	-	2140	2225 84
1932/1933	217883	12687	504	592	1343	469	-	1555	235033
1933/1934	223372	13116	501	551	1102	456	-	2312	241410
1934/1935	231862	13277	561	550	886	432	-	2097	249665
1935/1936	241497	13607	453	540	698	476	-	1726	258997
1936/1937	252299	13764	514	329	670	476	-	1898	269 950
1937/1938	266116	13856	475	296	637	431	-	1962	283773
1938/1939	274509	14009	507	266	547	421	-	2286	292545

<sup>290</sup> Taken from: Kaubrys, *National Minorities...*, 145.

Appendix 3.

A.I., AB žydu Mokyklai (Marijampolė: "Dirvos" B-vės Spaustuvė, 1928), 46-49.

46

Atmykė jautis ir sugėrė tą vandenį, kuris buvo užliejęs tą ugnį, kuri buvo sudeginusi tą lazda, kuri buvo sumušusi tą šunį, kuris buvo įkandęs tą katina, kuris buvo surijęs tą ožkele, kurią tėvas buvo pirkęs už du pinigėlius — ožkele, ožkele.

Atėjo skerdejas ir papiovė tą jautį, kuris buvo sugėręs tą vandenį, kuris buvo užliejęs tą ugnį, kuri buvo sudeginusi tą lazda, kuri buvo sumušusi tą šunį, kuris buvo įkandęs tą katina, kuris buvo surijęs tą ožkele, kurią tėvas buvo pirkęs už du pinigėlius — ožkele, ožkele.

Atlėkė mirties angelas ir numarino tą skerdeją, kuris buvo papioves tą jautį, kuris buvo sugėręs tą vandenį, kuris buvo užliejęs tą ugnį, kuri buvo sudeginusi tą lazda, kuri buvo sumušusi tą šunį, kuris buvo įkandęs tą katina, kuris buvo surijęs tą ožkele, kurią tėvas buvo pirkęs už du pinigėlius — ožkele, ožkele.

Atėjo Dievas ir nubaudė tą mirties angelą, kuris buvo numarinęs tą skerdeją, kuris buvo papioves tą jautį, kuris buvo sugėręs tą vandenį, kuris buvo užliejęs tą ugnį, kuri buvo sudeginusi tą lazda, kuri buvo sumušusi tą šunį, kuris buvo įkandęs tą katina, kuris buvo surijęs tą ožkele, kurią tėvas buvo pirkęs už du pinigėlius — ožkele, ožkele.

Pirko=	קנה	Atsliūko=	באה	Sugėrė=	שתה
Katinas=	חתול	Ugnis=	אש	Skerdejas=	שחט
Surijo=	אכל	Sudėgino=	שרף	Papiovė=	שחט
Kurią=	אשר	Atūzė=	קאו בשארן	Mirties angelas=	מלאך המות
Buvo pirkęs=	קנה	Vanduo=	מים	Numarino=	המית
Atšoko=	קפץ	Užliejo=	קברה	Dievas=	הקדוש
Šuo=	כלב	Atmykė=	בא בקריאת	ברוך הוא אלהים	
Įkando=	נשך	Jautis=	שור	Nubaudė=	ענש
Kuris=	אשר				



48

— Kas yra šešios?  
— Aš žinau:  
Šešios yra Mišnos knygos, penkios yra Įstatymų knygos, keturios yra motinų motinos, trys yra tėvų tėvai, dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.



— Kas yra septynios?  
— Aš žinau:  
Septynios yra savaitės dienos, šešios yra Mišnos knygos, penkios yra Įstatymų knygos, keturios yra motinų motinos, trys yra tėvų tėvai, dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.

(15. אלהי בתי.)

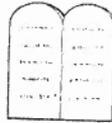
Vienas=	אחד	Tėvų tėvai=	אבות	Penkios=	חמשה
Žinau=	אני יודע	Kėturios=	ארבע	Šešios=	ששה
Dvi=	שנים	Motinų motinos=	אמהות	Septynios=	שבעה
Įstatymų lentos=	לוחות הברית			Savaitė=	שבוע



47

**Kas yra vienas?**

— Kas yra vienas?  
— Aš žinau:  
Vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.  
— Kas yra dvi?  
— Aš žinau:



Dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.



— Kas yra trys?  
— Aš žinau:

Trys yra tėvų tėvai,

dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.

— Kas yra keturios?  
— Aš žinau:

Keturios yra motinų motinos, trys yra tėvų tėvai, dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.



— Kas yra penkios?  
— Aš žinau:

Penkios yra Įstatymų knygos, keturios yra motinų motinos, trys yra tėvų tėvai, dvi yra Įstatymų lentos, vienas yra Dievas danguje ir žemėje.

49

**Abécėlė.**

Aa Aą Bb Cc Čč  
Dd Ee Eę Èè Ff Gg  
Hh Ch ch Ii Ij Yy  
Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo  
Pp Rr Ss Šš Tt Uu  
Uų Ūū Vv Zz Žž

**Appendix 4.**

“[Istojamasis pareiškimas]” [Application], *Žydų karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos dokumentai*, [Documents of the Union of the Jewish Soldiers who Participated in the (Re)Liberation of Lithuanian Independence] LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 10.



Nario bilieto № 23 מיטגלידס-קארטע 80

\_\_\_\_\_ žydų karių, dalyvavusių Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės atvadavime, sąjungos valdybai.

דער פֿאַרוואַלטונג פֿון פֿאַרבאַנד פֿון די יידן אַנטיילנעמער אין דער באַפֿרײַאונג פֿון ליטע.

**Istojamasis pareiškimas — איינטריטס-קארטע**

Prāšau priimti mane sąjungos <sup>aktyviu</sup> nariu. Duodu apie save šias žinias: <sup>pasyviu</sup>

אין בעט מיר אָנצוגעבען פֿאַר אַן אַקטיוון מיטגליד פֿון פֿאַרבאַנד. וועגן זיך זען אין מיט פֿאָלגנדע יודיעות:

- Pavardė Alpermas פֿאַמיליענאָמען
- Vardas ir tėvo vardas Abraham, Calles נאָמען און פֿאַטערס נאָמען
- Gimęs 1895 m. Varso mėn. 2 d. יאָר \_\_\_\_\_ חודש \_\_\_\_\_ סאַן \_\_\_\_\_ געבאָרן:
- Tarnavo Lietuvos Kariuomenėje nuo 1921 m. ligi 1923 m. <sup>15</sup> d. פֿון \_\_\_\_\_ ביו \_\_\_\_\_ עדינס אין דער ליטווישער אַרמיי

Ar įstojo savanoriai, arba kaip pašauktas? daly mobilizacijos

6. Kariuomenės dalis 6-ai Rejt. Pulkas, 4. p. pulkas iz 10 rejt. pulkas

7. Tarnybos laipsnis švaro Gydytojas דינסט-ראַנג

8. Kokiose kovose dalyvavo (dalyvavau prie Klaipėdos atvadavimų) אין וועלכע טעלעכע אַנטיילגענומען

9. Sužeistas \_\_\_\_\_ פֿאַרוואַנדעט

10. Pasizymėjimai \_\_\_\_\_ אַרטיסט-קאָנגען

11. Užsiėmimas Gydytojas באַשעפֿטיקונג

12. Gyvenimo vieta Konstancija, Valanoviaus g. nr 3 וואוינאָרט

13. Ar gavo žemės kaipo savanoris ar ne? ne באַזעמען אַדער אַלס פֿרייה פֿיקער אָרע-ני

14. Šeimininė padėtis šiuo, duoda, motina פֿאַם ליע צושטאַנד

15. Kuriai organizacijai priklausoti? \_\_\_\_\_ צו וועלכער אָרגאַניזאַציע געהערט אַר?

Pasižymu, kad sąjungos įstatai man yra žinomi ir pasižadau juos pildyti. Einant įstatų § § 7-10 šiuo tvirtinu, kad mano duotosios viršminėtos žinios yra tikros ir kad neprieštarau siūlytoms sąjungos įstatams bei reikalams, taip sąjungos viduje, taip ir sąjungos išorėje, ir, be to sąjungos narių atžvilgiu būsiu mandagus ir draugiškas Nario mokeskį mokėsiu punktualiai

אין באַשעפֿטיק, אָז די סטאַטוטן פֿון פֿאַרבאַנד ווידעו זיינען מיר באַקאַנט און איך בין זיך מתחייב זיי אַפּצוהיטן לויט די § § 7-10 פֿון די סטאַטוטן באַשעפֿטיק איך, אָז די אויבנדערמאָנטע יודיעות האָב איך געגעבן ריכטיק און אַז איך וועל ניט אַויסטרעטן קעגן די סטאַטוטן און אינערעסן פֿון פֿאַרבאַנד, סיי אין פֿאַרבאַנד גופא און סיי אויסער אים, און אַז אַן באַצוג צו די פֿאַרבאַנדס-מיט-גלירער וועל איך זיין קאַרעקט און חבייש. מיטגלידס-אַפּצאָלע וועל איך צאָלן פּונקטליך.

Parašas A. Alpermas אונטערשריפט

Sąjungos narių rekomendavusių jį, parašai \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mykolas G. Galla Nario bilieto Nr. \_\_\_\_\_  
 אונטערשריפטן פֿון די פֿאַרבאַנדס-מיטגלידער געראַטן 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Įmokėjo įstojimo mok. Lit. 3 cent \_\_\_\_\_

Valdybos NUTARIMAS Priimtas 193 m. \_\_\_\_\_ mėn. \_\_\_\_\_ d. Šiuo įstatu 2-jo įstatu 4996 m.  
 Protokolo \_\_\_\_\_ Nr. nuo 193 m. \_\_\_\_\_ mėn. \_\_\_\_\_ d. 1923-11-14 d. H. H. H.

Valdyba \_\_\_\_\_

1934-II-26d.

CEU eTD Collection

**Appendix 5.**

“[Istojamasis pareiškimas]” [Application], *Žydu karių dalyvavusių Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atvadavime sąjungos dokumentai*, [Documents of the Union of the Jewish Soldiers who Participated in the (Re)Liberation of Lithuanian Independence] LCVA, F. 593, Ap. 1, B. 16: 12

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№. 508

**פראגע-בויגן**

**פארבאנד**

פון אידישע מיליטער - לייט טיילנעמער  
אין דער באפרייאונג פון ליטע  
סטאטיסטישע ביראָ.

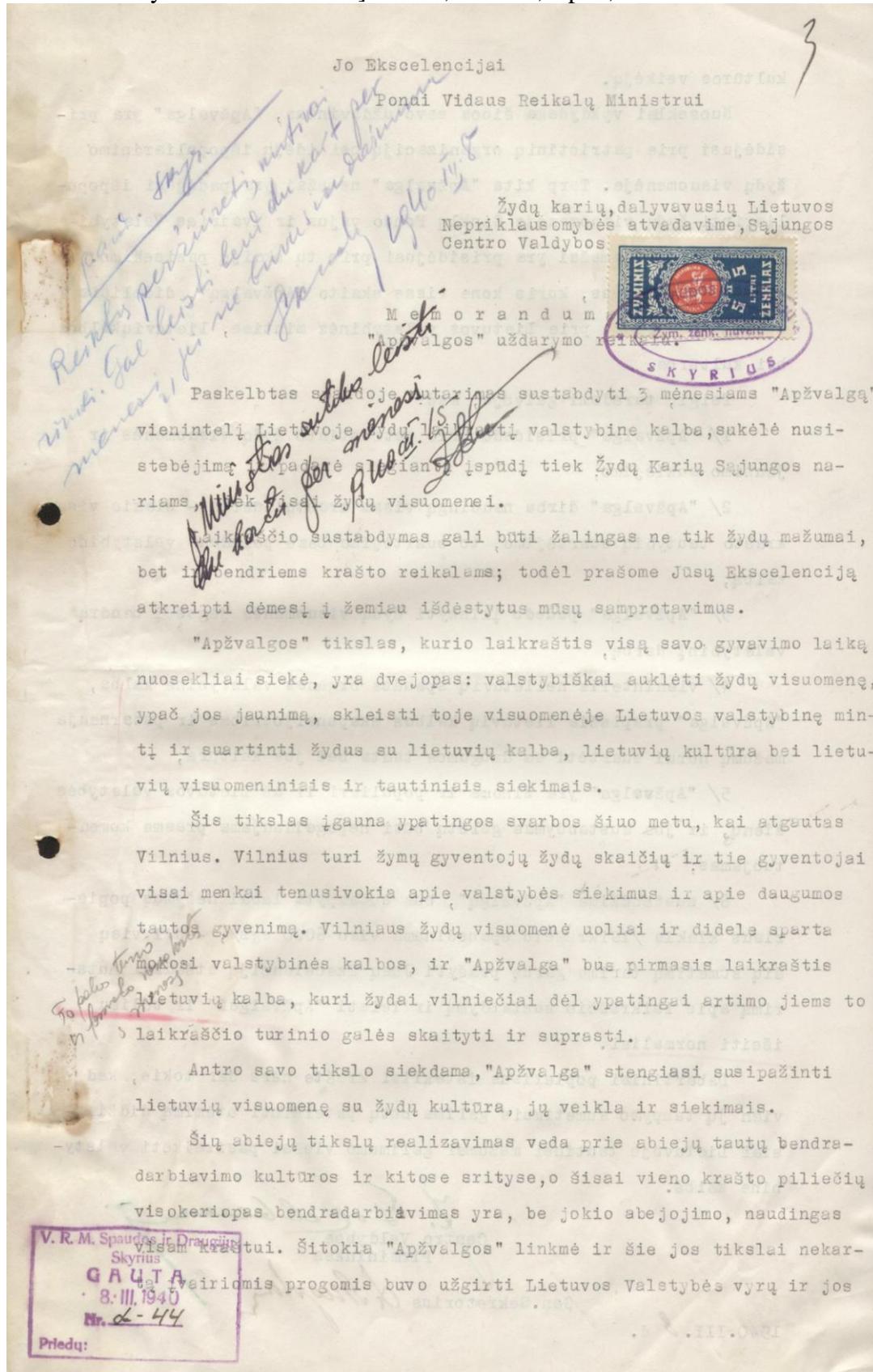
1. פאמיליע אשכול
2. נאָמען און פאָטערס-נאָמען אשכול - ווערמאן
3. געבוירן אין יאָר 1896
4. געדינט אין דער ליטווישער אַרמיי פון 1919/א ביז 1922/ו
5. אַרײַנגעטרעטן פרייוויליק אָדער מאָביליזירט? אומביליזירט
6. ביז צום יאָר 1920 אָדער שפעטער
7. אויב פרייוויליק וועלכן נומער פון מעדאל אָדער אַנדערע אויסצייכענונגען
8. מיליטער טייל אשכול, אשכול
9. סטראָיעזאָי אָדער נישט-סטראָיעזאָי אשכול
10. דינסט-ראַנג
11. וועלכן פאָסטן פאַרנומען אין דער אַרמיי אויקאָלעג
12. אין וועלכע שלאַכטן אַנטײַלגענומען
13. פאַרוואַנדעט
14. אויסצייכענונגען
15. אויב געווען אַ שאַליס?
16. אַקטיוו אָדער פאַסיוו
17. אין וועלכע שלאַכטן אַנטײַלגענומען אַלס שאַליס
18. בילדונגס-צענט
19. פראָפעסיע און פאַך אויקאָלעג
20. ווי לאַנג באַשעפטיקט אין דעם פאַך
21. אויב אַרבעטסלאָז ווייט ווען?
22. האָט איר צאָוועגלעכע גיטער אשכול
23. פאַמיליענשטאַנד און וויפיל קינדער אשכול, 2 קינדער
24. עלטער פון קינדער אשכול, 13 יאָר, אשכול, 9 יאָר
25. וואו לערנען זיי אין געזעלשאַפֿט
26. זיינען אייך באַקאַנט נעמען פון געפאלענע אידישע מיליטער לייט און וואוינאָרט פון זייערע קרובים
27. באַזיצט איר וועלכע בילדער פון מיליטער דינסט פון יאָרן 1918—1923
28. האָט ביי איר אין דער צייט פון דינסט אָדער שלאַכטן פאַסירט אויסערגעוויינדלעכע וויכטיקע פאַלן
29. צו זייט איר אַ מיטגליד פון קראַנקן קאַסע? אויב נישט צו נייטיקט איר זיך אין ביליקע מעדיצינישע הילף?
30. צו נייטיקט איר זיך אין וועלכע עס איז שפראַכן-קורסן

אונטערשריפט אשכול

דאַטום

**Appendix 6.**

"Memorandumas "Apžvalgos" uždarymo reikalu" ["Apžvalga" Closure Memorandum ], *Vidaus Reikalų Ministerijos Administracijos Departamentas*, [Administration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs] LCVA, F. 1367, Ap. 5, B. 39: 3-3v.



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kultūros veikėjų.

Nuosekėmsi vykdydama šiuos savo uždavinius, "Apžvalga" yra prisidėjusi prie patriotinių organizacijų bei idėjų išpopuliarinimo žydų visuomenėje. Tarp kita "Apžvalga" nemažai yra padėjusi išpopuliarinti žydų visuomenėje Ginklų Fondo vėjus ir įvairias Valstybinės paskolas, nemažai yra prisidėjusi prie tų akcijų pasisiekimo.

Žydų jaunimas, kuris kone visas skaito "Apžvalgą", dideliais žingsniais artėja prie Lietuvos valstybinės minties, lietuviųkalbos bei kultūros.

Taigi, turėdami galvoje, kad:

1/ "Apžvalga" prisideda prie patriotinio žydų visuomenės ir jaunimo auklėjimo;

2/ "Apžvalga" dirba naudingą visam kraštui darbą – siekia visą krašto tautybių suartėjimo, to suartėjimo baze paimdama valstybinę kalbą,

3/ "Apžvalga" padeda įkinkyti žydų visuomenės jėgas į bendrą valstybinį darbą,

4/ vienintelis nelietuvių spaudos organas valstybine kalba, "Apžvalga" praplečia lietuvių kalbos ekspansijos ribas ir patarnauja mažumų norui suartėti su daugumos tauta bei jos kultūra;

5/ "Apžvalga" yra žinoma ir populiari ir už Lietuvos valstybės sienų, ir jos sustabdymas galėtų būti nepageidaujama prasme komentuojamas;

6/ sustabdžius "Apžvalgą", bus sutaupyta labai nežymus popieriaus kiekis /laikraščio spausdinama viso 6000 egz/, – dėl visų šių sumetimų turime garbę prašyti Jūsų Ekscelenciją atšaukti nutarimą apie laikraščio sustabdymą ir leisti "Apžvalgai" ir toliau išeiti normaliai.

Dabartiniai popieriaus ištekliai krašte nėra dar tokie, kad vien jų taupymo sumetimais galima būtų pateisinti atėmimą didžiausiai Lietuvoje tautinei mažumai galimumo viešai pasireikšti valstybine kalba.

Centro Valdybos  
Pirmininkas

Gen. Sekretorius

1940.III. 8 d.



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