Przemysław Dąbrowski, *Narodowa Demokracja byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Studium z zakresu myśli politycznej i działalności obozu narodowego na ziemiach litewsko-białoruskich w latach 1897–1918*, Kraków: Księgarnia akademicka, 2010, 388 p. ISBN 978-83-7638-008-7

The liberalisation of political life after 1905 in the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania created favourable conditions for the appearance of clearer ethno-cultural and political contours, and allowed the emerging modern Lithuanian, Polish and Jewish nations represented by political groups and parties to declare their goals publicly. The direction of the Polish National Democrats also began to emerge and operate as a strong political force. The birth of National Democratic ideological and political currents, the organisational structure of the party, and social and cultural activities have rather long research traditions in Polish historiography. However, the research in 2010 by Dr. Przemysław Dąbrowski of the University of Gdansk's, Faculty of Law and Administration, on the political thought and activities of the National Democrats in the lands of the former grand duchy is a new and important contribution to the field. Particularly noteworthy is Dąbrowski's working hypothesis, and later the main conclusion of his research, that National Democracy in the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania had its own autonomous organisational structure, and their political-social ideas were not completely identical to those developed and formed in the Kingdom of Poland (pp. 19, 323–324). This rather long and single-minded scholarly study (in addition, to his 2012 monograph *Rozpolitykowane miasto: ustrój polityczny państwa w koncepcjach polskich ugrupowań działających w Wilnie w latach 1918–1939*) allowed Dąbrowski to introduce into the historiography of both Poland and Lithuania the concept of Lithuania's National Democrats (*endekai*), and in such a way prove and reveal the complexity of the political-social thought of National Democracy, and the regional variations and differences, 'preventing' both Polish and Lithuanian historians from assessing the National Democratic ideological platform 'in corpore'.

The chosen definition of 'political thought' crowns all of Dąbrowski's research, and generates an employment structure. Complying with the provisions that the earlier attempts by Polish historians to delineate the definition of political thought were rather unsuccessful (in fact, this provision of the author could be further argued), Dąbrowski has presented a broader interpretation of this definition, which includes various forms of

political reflection, and allows us to bring together ideology, doctrine and programme provisions, i.e. the intellectual basics of political, social and cultural activities (p. 15). Therefore, the structure of the monograph is broad, and is dedicated not just to aspects of the political thought and activities of Lithuania's National Democrats. The prepared study consists of five chapters, and a wide list of archival and published sources, which allows researchers from other countries also to 'retrace' in Polish historiography the dominant problems, trends and methodological approaches in research into National Democracy. We believe that a conceptual historiographical overview of national democracy, while evaluating also the place of Lithuania's National Democrats in the overall field of research, would provide additional benefits to the work. It must be noted that Dąbrowski has mastered the very extensive database of archival sources stored in academic institutions not only in Poland, but also in Lithuania. He has also evaluated research by Lithuanian and Belarusian historians in the Polish and English languages. Also noteworthy is the provision of Dąbrowski not to 'trust' only the programme documents of Lithuania's National Democrats, but to evaluate thoroughly the political publications, and even works of prose and poetry, the analysis of which has enabled the researcher to trace the evolution of their ideological provisions.

In the first chapter of the monograph 'The Institutional Forms of the Activities of National Democracy', Dąbrowski, relies on two criteria to present the formation of the autonomous organisational structure of national democracy in the lands of the former GDL. First, he identifies and describes National Democratic political parties and organisations (*koło Ligi Narodowej*), National Democratic Party in Lithuania (*Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne na Litwie*), which implemented the programme provisions of national democracy directly. He presents those political, educational, cultural and social organisations which followed the programme provisions of national democracy. According to the researcher, these were the Youth sports' society *Sokol*, the People's Club (*Klub Narodowy*), the Citizens Committee (*Komitet Obywatelski*), the Polish Committee (*Komitet Polski*), the Vilnius Supreme National Committee (*Wileński Naczelny Komitet Narodowy*), the People's Education Society (*Towarzystwo Oświaty Ludowej*), and even the Women's Equal Rights Society (*Koło równouprawnienia kobiet*). In this way, Dąbrowski presents a very wide network not only of the political structures of Lithuania's national democracy, but also of other sub-organisations, stating that, compared to the network in the lands of the Kingdom of Poland, this network was less developed (p. 63). Unlike in the later chapters of the monograph, in which the ideological and organisational relationship of national democracy with other Polish political groups in the lands of the former GDL is essentially bypassed, in the first chapter of the monograph Dąbrowski also evaluates the direction of the activities of different political parties and groups during the years of

the First World War, and the possibilities for the formation of a common political representation (pp. 47–55). He also analyses the unsuccessful attempts at the time by Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Jewish political forces to cooperate, for example, in organising the activities of the Citizens Committee (pp. 53–55), supplementing the research by the historian of Lithuania Andrzej Puksztó¹.

In the second chapter of the monograph, Dąbrowski presents a very broad review of periodicals, in the pages of which the most important provisions of national-democratic doctrine were formed. The completed research shows that in Vilnius and Minsk (in the author's opinion, the activities of Lithuania's National Democrats were essentially concentrated in these cities), about 20 periodicals of various genres associated with *endecja* in terms of ideas were issued. The third chapter of the monograph, entitled 'Education-culture activities', in terms of informativeness and factographical accuracy, is comparable to the second chapter. In this section, Dąbrowski analyses fully not only the programme provisions of Lithuania's National Democrats in the fields of education and culture, but also presents the practical activities of the People's Education Society, Oświata, the Society of Friends of Science, the Educational Committee, the Society of Polish Folk School Catholics, and various school youth self-education groups known in historiography.

Dąbrowski also supplements the research by Polish and Lithuanian historians into the participation in the elections to the State Duma by political groups in the lands of the former GDL. He not only describes the order of the elections to these bodies, but also changes, and the rules for campaign agitation, and describes the peripety of the elections of Lithuania's National Democrats, their cooperation and confrontations with other national groups. The creation of a more complete picture, with the research by the Lithuanian historian Darius Staliūnas on the elections to the First State Duma, would be useful, as well as to some extent the research by Aldona Gaigalaitė². Most of the trends in the activities of Lithuania's *endekai* noted by Dąbrowski are similar to those we find in the earlier historiography by Polish historians. However, Dąbrowski, after analysing the participation by Lithuania's National Democrats in the elections to the State Duma, has proved with facts and generalisations the validity of the insights of Roman Jurkowski about the growing influence of the National Democrats in the Polish society of Vilnius. The comparative analysis conducted by Dąbrowski on the ideological provisions of the National Democrats of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland in 'Duma' activities,

¹ A. Puksztó, *Między stołecznością a partykularyzmem. Wielonarodowościowe społeczeństwo Wilna w latach 1915–1920* (Toruń, 2006), pp. 14–76.

² D. Staliūnas, 'Rinkimai į I Rusijos Dūmą Lietuvoje', *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 1992 (Vilnius, 1994), pp. 45–67; A. Gaigalaitė, *Lietuvos atstovai Rusijos valstybės dūmoje 1906–1917 metais* (Vilnius, 2006), pp. 13–58.

which allowed the researcher to formulate one of the essential conclusions of the research, is also significant. According to Dąbrowski, the position of Lithuania's National Democrats was different only on the political future of the Lithuanian state and relations with the government of the Russian Empire. In the State Duma Lithuania's *endekai* directed special attention to the strengthening of solidarity with Polish representatives from the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania and Ruthenia, the aspirations to get autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland, the problem of the *zemstva* in the Northwest Province, the agrarian question, and the separation of the Chelm province from the composition of the Kingdom of Poland (p. 327).

As was mentioned, the last chapters in the monograph 'National democracy and its relationship with the nations living in the lands of the Former GDL', in which the view of Lithuania's National Democrats of the Lithuanian national revival is discussed, the difference in the viewpoint of the National Democrats of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania about the political future of the Lithuanian state and the relations with the newly recovering Polish state, the relations with the Imperial Russian government, and the activities of Jewish and Belarusian political groups, is the cornerstone chapter of the monograph. Therefore, it is essential to present the conclusions of Dąbrowski's research more broadly. The researcher argues that whereas the National Democrats of the Kingdom of Poland called for autonomy for the Polish lands in the composition of the Russian Empire, the Lithuanian *endekai*, appraising the national policy carried out by the government in the Northwest Province, opposed the pro-Russian direction of the activities. Even after 1915, when the strategy of the 'protection' of the Poles from the Germans became ever more dominant, some of the members of Lithuania's National Democrats (e.g. Stanisław Maciejewicz, Marian Chełkowski) remained 'anti-Russian' (pp. 323–324). Dąbrowski offers to evaluate more precisely the programme provisions of Lithuania's National Democratic Party with regard to the Lithuanian and Belarusian national movements. The official party documents would appear to show that Lithuania was conceived territorially-historically, considered as a unit consisting of all the nations living in this territory, and there was a call for the full equality of these nations. However, the political publications of the Vilnius *endekai* (Wacław Studnicki, Józef Hłasko, Jan Obst), and the assessment of their proclaimed theories of national self-determination, allowed Dąbrowski to make the conclusion that the Lithuanian national movement was seen as a temporary phenomenon, and not as a long-term activity or a goal to win national autonomy in the future (pp. 280–281). In the political publications only an ethnic/tribal separation was attributed to the Belarusians, and no right to their own statehood was foreseen (p. 305). Dąbrowski has determined another *differentia specifica* in the viewpoint of the National Democrats of Lithuania and of the Kingdom of Poland about the political future of the Lithuanian state and relations with the

newly recovering Polish state. The National Democrats of the Kingdom of Poland, up to the events of 1905, spoke out against the planned federal state relations between Poland and Lithuania, since both from a political and a cultural viewpoint, the land inhabited by the Lithuanians was Polish. Thus, until 1918 Lithuania's National Democrats did not have a common viewpoint on the future of Lithuania and its relations with the newly reestablished Polish state. There were advocates of federation and incorporation. Meanwhile, evaluating the legal form for the future arrangements of these lands, there were offers of autonomy or broad provincial autonomy, with the central organ in Vilnius, in the competence of which would be all local affairs of a cultural and economic nature (p. 325).

Olga Mastianica