

The Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd, 1921–1923

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The Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd in the years 1921–1923 has been studied in Lithuanian historiography by focusing on the establishment of Lithuanian consulates in Soviet Russia in 1921 and the appointment and activities of Stasys Zaskevičius as Consul ad Interim from the second half of 1922 through 1923. The period when the consulate was led by Jonas Matukas, his appointment and activities, the origins of the consulate and its operation in 1922 have not been investigated at all. Therefore, based on the sources and historiography, the aim of the research is to reconstruct the process of the establishment and functioning of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd from 1921 to 1923 with a special focus on the specificities of the living conditions and activities.

The research is based on unpublished sources from the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office, the Collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept at the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Manuscripts Department of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and published sources, namely documents, periodicals and studies by Lithuanian (Tomas Balkelis, Milena Tamošiūnienė) and foreign (Aleksander Wasilewski, Winfried Baumgart) authors. Methods of qualitative analysis and synthesis (the new material of the sources was supplemented with the information circulating in historiography), the comparative method (the information published in the Lithuanian press was compared with the information found in the Lithuanian Central State Archives), and the descriptive method were applied in this research. To process the primary sources in Lithuanian, German, and Russian languages, the logical-analytical method was applied (the notional content and information analysis was conducted).

The research led to the conclusion that due to the correspondence bureaus established in Petrograd during World War I, the city became the centre of communication between Lithuanians on both sides of the front. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed and Germany recognised Lithuania's independence, Petrograd became the centre of repatriation of Lithuanian deportees and refugees. The Lithuanian consular institution established in Petrograd in 1921 employed over thirty members of staff who helped the deportees and refugees of Lithuanian nationality and citizenship to return to the restored state of Lithuania and provided assistance in the form of food and clothes through the Lithuanian Red Cross until 30 September 1923.

Keywords: Lithuania, consulate, Vilnius, Soviet Russia, Petrograd, Andrius Dubinskis, Jonas Matukas, Stasys Zaskevičius, Vaclavas Čepanis, authorised representative

INTRODUCTION

The year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd. It is an excellent occasion to take a look at the path pursued by the Lithuanian consular service and to evaluate its accomplishments in defending the interests of the Lithuanian state and its citizens in Soviet Russia. The consular institution opened in Petrograd 100 years ago employed over thirty members of staff who helped the deportees and refugees of Lithuanian nationality and citizenship to return to the restored state of Lithuania and provided assistance in the form of food and clothes through the Lithuanian Red Cross. In 1921, they continued the work done by the authorised representatives of the Council of Lithuania in the summer and autumn of 1918 under the German Consulate General in Petrograd. Andrius Dubinskis, adviser to the authorised representative of the State Council of Lithuania and teacher, was appointed the head of the consulate and the Consul of Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd in the years 1921–1923 has until now been studied in Lithuanian historiography in other contexts, i.e., by focusing on the establishment of Lithuanian consulates in Soviet Russia in 1921. Previous research addressed the position followed by the Lithuanian Parliament with respect to the establishment of the consular network in Soviet Russia, the consulate's staff (1921), the start of the consulate's operation in the middle of 1921 and the beginning of 1922, but it did not cover the motives for appointing Andrius Dubinskis as Consul, his activities in the capacity of the authorised representative of the Lithuanian Red Cross in Petrograd, as well as the activities of the consulate in 1922–1923 [83]. Yet another study addressing the operation of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd in the second half of 1922 and 1923 elaborated on the appointment of Major Stasys Zaskevičius as Deputy Consul and Consul ad Interim and his activities in the said positions [84]. The period of the consulate under the leadership of Jonas Matukas, his appointment and activities have not been investigated at all. Although the beginning and end of operation have indeed been studied, the research has not covered the consulate's origins and functioning in 1922.

The research into the operation of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd between 1921 and 1923 is a complex process for several reasons. First, due to a number of weaknesses in the consulate's activities (profiteering, unfair behaviour, etc.), the research is avoided by the present-day consular corps of the Republic of Lithuania, which is unwilling to bring its predecessors into disrepute. Second, it is often difficult to reconstruct the consistent sequence of events due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving data. The consulate's accounting files of 1921–1922 include information written on separate scraps of paper; the precise data concerning the drawing up of the documents are lacking. The person in charge of the consulate's documentation did not have a command of the Lithuanian language and did not follow the rules pertaining to paperwork. As a consequence, the researcher has much work to do in checking elementary information. Third, the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow) had certain specificities relating to staff management similar to the Lithuanian Legation in Germany, i.e., it handled the affairs of staff hiring and dismissal independently, often without even coordinating them with the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hence, there was a considerable difference between the staff in paper and the staff in real life. What is more, orders on the hiring of employees used to be issued after they had already been dismissed. As a result, the date of appointment of Andrius Dubinskis as Consul is still not absolutely clear. The order on Dubinskis's appointment was

neither found in the files of orders kept in the Collection of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1920–1922) nor in the files of the Collection of the Lithuanian Cabinet of Ministers (1920–1922; it used to receive the transcripts of the orders issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The order on the appointment of Vaclavas Čepanis as Lithuania's authorised representative for repatriation of deportees was not found in the files of the orders of the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior of 1920–1922 either (the Ministry of the Interior used to appoint authorised representatives abroad for the handling repatriation of deportees and prisoners) (1).

The hope that we will finally get a chance to take a glimpse at the origins of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd arose in 2017, when the data from the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office became available in Lithuania. These data provided an opportunity to see the results of the work accomplished by the authorised representatives of the Council of Lithuania in Petrograd in 1918 and the continuity and transferability of their activities after the establishment of the consulate in Petrograd in 1921. The above circumstance was a stimulus to resume the research, the object of which was the investigation into the origins of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd (1918), its establishment (1920) and operation between 1921 and 1923, the working and living conditions of the staff, and the motives behind the appointment and dismissal of the heads of the consulate. The chronological boundaries of the research cover the period from 26 January 1921 to 1 October 1923, i.e., from the hiring of the first employees for the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd (clerk Jadvyga Piotrauskaitė and accountant Antanas Matusevičius) to the consulate's close-down. The chronological boundaries are marginally crossed when trying to trace the origins of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd and the role of Petrograd in the life of Lithuanians during the years of World War I.

Building on the sources and historiography, the research aims to reconstruct the process of establishment and functioning of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd from 1921 to 1923, with a special focus on the specificities pertaining to living conditions and activities. In pursuit of the above aim, the study: (1) attempts to trace the origins of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd (1918), (2) tries to find out where the headquarters of the consulate, the apartments of the consul and the consulate's staff were located and how the structure of the consulate's activities was organized, (3) reveals the circumstances behind the appointment of the heads of the consulate and their dismissal from office, and (4) presents the fields of the consulate's activities.

The research is based on unpublished sources from the Political Archive of the German Federal Foreign Office (hereinafter PAAA_RZ201), the Collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (F. 383, inv. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8) at the Lithuanian Central State Archives (hereinafter LCSA), the Manuscripts Department of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (F. 255-1096, F. 255-1041, F. 255-1052) and published sources: *Lietuvos Taryba ir nepriklausomos valstybės atkūrimas 1914–1920 metų dokumentai* (The Council of Lithuania and the Restoration of the Independent State in the Documents of 1914–1920), *Lietuvos*

(1) After reviewing the files from the Collection of the Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, it turned out that in contrast to other locations, the authorised representatives for the repatriation of deportees and prisoners were appointed by consuls in Petrograd and the cities of Ukraine. In this particular case, the above fact does not help us to identify the date of the appointment of the authorised representative or the consul, because the authorised representative commenced his service in November–December 1920, whereas the consul was appointed at the end of January or in February 1921; see [28].

Tarybos prezidiumo 1918 m. posėdžių protokolai (Minutes of the Presidium of the Council of Lithuania, 1918). The study also resorted to the press: *Lietuvių balsas* (The Voice of Lithuanians; Petrograd, Voronezh), *Vienybė* (Unity; Vilnius), *Laisvė* (Freedom; Kaunas). Lithuanian and foreign historiography gave a deeper insight into the international context and individual episodes of the establishment and operation of the consulate. The study by Aleksander Wasilewski [87] provided valuable information about the operation of the Polish Consulate in Petrograd; the research by Winfried Baumgart [80] shed light on the appointment of the German Consul General to Petrograd; the research by Tomas Balkelis [79, 63] led to a better understanding of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow) in taking the refugees back to Lithuania; Milena Tamošiūnienė's study [86] elaborated on the repatriation of Lithuanian prisoners of war; the publication *Lietuvos kariuomenės kari-ninkai 1918–1953* (Lithuanian Military Officers, 1918–1953) [85] provided information on the life and activities of Stasys Zinkevičius; the research by the author of the present article covered the appointment of authorised representatives to Petrograd (1918) and the establishment and operation of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd from 1921 to early 1922 and from the end of 1922 through 1923 [82; 83; 84; 88].

Methods of qualitative analysis and synthesis (the new material of the sources was supplemented with the information circulating in historiography), the comparative method (the information published in the Lithuanian press was compared with the information found in the Lithuanian Central State Archives), and the descriptive method were applied for the research. To process the primary sources in Lithuanian, German, and Russian languages, the logical-analytical method was applied (the notional content and information analysis was conducted).

1. ORIGINS. THE ROLE OF PETROGRAD IN THE LIFE OF LITHUANIANS IN 1915–1918

In the midst of World War I, from 1915 to 1917, Petrograd played an important role in the communication between the Lithuanians in Russia and the Lithuanian War Relief Society (hereinafter the Lithuanian Society) in Vilnius, Lithuanians abroad (in Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, the USA), and the Council of Lithuania (in Vilnius) in 1917–1918. Between 1915 and 1917, correspondence bureaus or divisions were opened in Petrograd: two were organized by the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Society (Refugee Registration and Information Bureau [73]; Bureau for Correspondence with Occupied Lithuania [41; 20; 69; 66]); the other three were established by the institutions of the Russian Empire (Bureau for Correspondence with the Places Occupied by Germany under the Grand Duchess Tatiana Committee [78]; Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Second Department [68]; Central Information Bureau on Prisoners of War of the Russian Red Cross Society). Through them and with Spanish embassies abroad playing the role of an intermediary, information (letters, inquiries) and money used to reach Lithuanians on both sides of the front [81].

After Soviet Russia and Germany signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918 and Germany recognised independent Lithuania on 23 March 1918, Petrograd became an important centre of repatriation of Lithuanian deportees and refugees. As soon as Germany entered into diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia and opened its consulate general in Petrograd [80, 210], Consul General Friedrich Louis Max Biermann established contacts with deportee and refugee societies and committees situated in the territory under his jurisdiction [11] (People's Union, Lithuanian Chamber of Economy [44]). Exactly the same

was done by the Council of Lithuania (in Vilnius). On 24 May 1918, the Commission for Deportees and Prisoners of the Council of Lithuania authorised Jonas Vailokaitis, a member of the Council of Lithuania, to establish contacts with the People's Union in Petrograd and to set up food supply points for Lithuanian returnees as well as provide financial support on both sides of the demarcation line [50]. The members of the People's Union, namely Juozas Vailokaitis (chair), Blažiejus Česnys, Juozas Januškevičius, Kazimieras Rėklaitis, Andrius Dubinskis, also the members of the Lithuanian Chamber of Economy, namely Andrius Dubinskis (chair), Aleksandras Požela, Jurgis Alekna, Šadeikis (the name is not known to the author) were in close contact with the German Consul General in Petrograd [44].

After the delegations of the Supreme Lithuanian Council in Russia (from Petrograd and Voronezh [72]) recognised the Council of Lithuania (in Vilnius) to be “the supreme and sole body of the nation” on 8 May 1918, the Presidium of the Council of Lithuania sent its representatives to Petrograd with various missions concerning the repatriation of Lithuanians. On 8 June 1918, Baron Vilhelmas Egertas was authorised to handle the return of Lithuanian civil staff from Russia [63, 117]; on 4 July 1918, Antanas Jucevičius was assigned to organise the return of railway workers to Lithuania (*Vollmacht* No 619 was issued in three languages – Lithuanian, German and Russian [35]).

As soon as Egertas informed the Presidium of the Council of Lithuania about the activities of the member of the Lithuanian Chamber of Economy (in Petrograd), Aleksandras Požela, on 15 July 1918, the members of the Presidium entrusted him with handling the repatriation of Lithuanian deportees from the area of Petrograd, the return of cultural valuables taken from Lithuania and “representing the State Council of Lithuania in the said affairs with the Russian and German government” [64, 126]. In the letter of 22 July 1918 to Aleksandras Požela in Petrograd, Antanas Smetona, writing on behalf of the State Council of Lithuania, thanked him for his agreement “to accept the mission of the State Council of Lithuania” [27]. On 23 August 1918, the Presidium of the State Council of Lithuania informed the German military administration in Lithuania about “the appointment of Aleksandras Požela as the country's representative in Petrograd and the north-western provinces of Russia” [29]. As a consequence, “the Representation of the State Council of Lithuania in Petrograd” fell under the authority of the German Consul General in Petrograd, with Aleksandras Požela, Petras Maikauskas, Stanislovas Digrys, and Andrius Dubinskis enrolled in its activities with the consent of the Presidium of the Council of Lithuania (Jurgis Šaulys) [23]. The above-mentioned individuals worked under the authority of the German Consul General in Petrograd, but the Presidium of the State Council of Lithuania did not agree to their treatment as the authorised representatives of the German government [62].

After Germany terminated its diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, the diplomatic protection of German and Lithuanian subjects was assigned to the section of the Swedish Legation in Petrograd [36]. Dubinskis and Požela did not return to Lithuania; they stayed in Petrograd. Stanislovas Digrys, head of the Re-emigration Department, submitted the report on the activities of the Representation of the State Council of Lithuania in Petrograd and the financial statement (26 August 1919) [45]. He wrote in the report that “after the collapse of German consulates, the circumstances became unbearable for the Lithuanian representation” and it was resolved to “close down the representation and to save its property”. The money, which was to be sent to Lithuania, was returned, the employees were laid off after they were paid a three-month advance salary, accounting books and the representation

were closed. The sum of 320,000 roubles (Kerensky and Tsar roubles) was taken to the cash register of the International Red Cross of the neutral states; meanwhile, Aleksandras Požela left 320,000 roubles for the needs of the members of the Petrograd Lithuanian community and advisers to the representative of the State Council of Lithuania, namely Andrius Dubinskis, Vaclavas Čepanis, and others [45].

2. THE HEADQUARTERS, DAILY LIFE, STRUCTURE, AND STAFF OF THE CONSULATE

In 1920–1921, Petrograd was home to approximately 20,000 Lithuanians. From November 1920, Vaclavas Čepanis, a resident of this city of several decades, assumed the responsibility of establishing the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd [9]. As mentioned before, he served as an adviser to the representative of the State Council of Lithuania in Petrograd in 1918. From November 1920 to 1921, correspondence was addressed to “the Lithuanian Mission in Petrograd” (Kirpičnyj pereulok 1/4) [48]; from 1921 to 1923, it was already addressed to the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd (Gogol Street 4 [3]). The name of the addressee could differ, because the Division for Refugees and Option headed by Čepanis, which was under direct authority of the Deportee Division (headed by Lionginas Indreika) of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow), started its operation earlier. The consulate’s General Division was set up later, i.e., between February and July, after the consul assumed his office.

The headquarters of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd were located in the apartment owned by German citizen Paul Bekel [2]. It was a spacious two-floor apartment with a dozen rooms on each floor [60]. The consul’s office was on the second floor; 3–4 rooms were used for storing food (flour, sugar, fitches of bacon, groats) intended for Lithuanian refugees in Petrograd.

The staff of the consulate resided in the apartment of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID). The consul lived at the address Teriaev Street 2a, apartment 10 [24]. He was planning to move to the headquarters of the consulate where Čepanis resided, but did not have time for it [17]. The consulate did not have its own transport and used private or NKID’s transport, which had to be hired some 2–3 days in advance [15]. The consulate had to cover considerable expenses for transport and various household goods (ropes, nails, glue) [8].

The employees of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd used to receive food from the Petrograd Commune; as foreigners, they paid for it in gold roubles rather than Soviet roubles [15] (one gold rouble equalled to 57.5 Lithuanian auksinas, 39 German marks, 1175 Polish marks [18]). Therefore, when returning from Lithuania, Dubinskis used to bring products for personal use and selling and as food support for his colleagues at the consulate (flour, sugar, canned meat, condensed milk, coffee, herbal tea, sweets, cocoa) [53].

From August 1921 through August 1922, the consulate had two divisions: the General Division and the Division for Refugees and Option [30]. The General Division was under direct authority of Consul Dubinskis, whereas the Division for Refugees and Option was subordinate to Vaclavas Čepanis, the Lithuanian authorised representative for refugee affairs. Čepanis also had deputy authorised representative, Alfredas Aleksandravičius, and colleague for special affairs, Jonas Petraitis. According to the inspection data of August 1921, both divisions had 15 members of staff. The General Division was in charge of the general office, cash-register and financial accounting. Its employees were responsible for correspondence with Lithuanian citizens, consular and diplomatic representations of foreign

countries, the NKID Petrograd Division. The employees from the Division for Refugees and Option maintained communication with refugees, optants, institutions of Petrograd area and distributed the support of the Lithuanian Red Cross.

The door-keeper and courier Jonas Ratkus used to meet visitors at the door. The consulate used the services of the following diplomatic couriers: Adomas Bekarskis [12], Juozas Starkevičius [13], Jonas Petraitis, Mikolas Daščioras, Liudvigas Jakovičius [4], Nikolajus Šmidtas [6] (route Petrograd-Moscow). The Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow) had to give repeated reminders to the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd that it was not eligible to send a diplomatic courier and/or diplomatic bag to another Lithuanian consulate abroad.

The staff was recruited between February and July 1921. It was carried out by Čėpanis, because Consul Dubinskis arrived in Petrograd in early May 1921 only (the consul's first report was released on 14 May 1921 [39]). He spent June in Moscow due to option-related affairs (he assisted in drafting the agreement) and returned to Petrograd early in July 1921 [40]. It is not without reason that in the telegram of Juozas Avižonis, the secretary of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia, to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Juozas Purickis, dated 12 August 1921, the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd is referred to as "Čėpanis's consulate" [47].

In the summer of 1921, two temporary employees were hired (Garmus (clerk) [19], Krištopaitis). Employees Jadvyga Piotrauskaitė (clerk and manager), Sofija Juozapaitytė (typist, office worker), Jonas Ratkus (door-keeper, courier), Steponas Olšauskas (consulate's secretary), Marija Griškienė (clerk), Balys Navikas (registering clerk), Marcelinas Gužas (office worker) had served at the consulate the longest [84]. Different positions were taken by Valentina Dobkevičienė, Marijona Viliumanytė (typist), Klaudija Bernadskytė (translator), Stefanija Nedbailytė (servant), Antanas Matusevičius (accountant), Mečislovas Jasinskas (clerk's assistant), Jonas Juškevičius (letter carrier), Stanislovas A. Juškevičius, Kirylovienė, Katrina Glebovskaitė (secretary) [6], Kazys Šimkevičius (office worker) [34].

In the summer of 1922, some of the consulate's employees returned to Lithuania together with the echelons of deportees and optants. In 1923, Sofija Juozapaitytė, Steponas Olšauskas, Matas Mačiukevičius, and Jonas Ratkus stayed to work together with Zaskevičius, Consul ad Interim. Aleksandras Požėla, the former authorised representative of the State Council of Lithuania in Petrograd, worked at the consulate on a voluntary basis [57].

3. HEADS OF THE LITHUANIAN CONSULATE IN PETROGRAD IN 1921–1923

From its establishment to closure, the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd had three heads: Aleksandras Dubinskis, Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd (1 February 1921–1 August 1922), Jonas Matukas, Deputy Consul (22 May 1922–1 June 1922), and Stasys Zaskevičius, Deputy Consul and Consul ad Interim (1 June 1922–1 August 1922; 1 August 1922–1 October 1923).

As mentioned before, Dubinskis was an active member of Lithuanian organisations – the People's Union and the Lithuanian Chamber of Economy – during World War I. In 1918, he served as an adviser to the representative of the State Council of Lithuania in Petrograd. As he had earned the confidence of the Lithuanian community in Petrograd, he was chosen to the position of the Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd. His appointment was coordinated with Baltrušaitis between 10 and 17 December 1920 during the latter's visit in Kaunas [65; 67].

On 1 February 1921, the newspaper *Laisvė* (2) reported that “Dubinskis will return to Petrograd to assume the Consul’s post” [71]. On 16 February 1921, the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia issued a note (No. 1261) to the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs asking to recognise Dubinskis, the appointed Lithuanian consul in Petrograd [26]. In the telegram of 18 February 1921 to Petras Klimas, vice-minister of foreign affairs, Jurgis Baltrušaitis reported that “the commissariat agrees to the establishment of our consulates without waiting for a special convention, so Mr. Dubinskis can leave for Petrograd the day after tomorrow” [46]. Hoping to receive an exequatur in a short run, Dubinskis left for Moscow together with the Lithuanian Commission for the Execution of Peace with Russia. The response of the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs about the agreement to recognise Dubinskis as the Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd and the appended exequatur were received on 18 April 1921 [26]. The payment of the consul’s salary (one million Soviet roubles) commenced from 1 May 1921 [83].

As revealed by the correspondence with the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia, Dubinskis arrived in Petrograd in early May 1921 [39]. Until then, Čepanis, the Lithuanian authorised representative for refugee affairs, was in charge of the consulate’s operation. He exercised the broad powers vested in him by the Petrograd Re-evacuation Committee and the NKID Petrograd Division and used to issue “deportee visas” to non-Lithuanian citizens [25]. Čepanis used to deputise for the consul on his departure to Kaunas. In the case of absence due to illness, Dubinskis was replaced by Steponas Olšauskas, the consulate’s first secretary [16] (he served at the consulate from 24 June 1921 to 12 January 1923).

From the summer of 1921 until the spring of 1922, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia used to receive complaints concerning the work of the consulate. Čepanis was forced to resign for exceeding his powers (the issuance of deportee visas for non-Lithuanian citizens). Meanwhile, for repeated complaints about the disappearance of valuable items and the improper use of food products and clothes donated by the Lithuanian Red Cross, on 1 August 1922, Dubinskis was replaced by Consul ad Interim Zaskevičius.

Jonas Matukas was the secretary of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow). He was sent to Petrograd late in May 1922 with a special mission [43] to investigate the facts provided in the complaint of Vincentas Žalkauskis of 6 May 1922 about “the unfair distribution of products from the Red Cross at the Petrograd Consulate” and to restore its lost authority in the eyes of the consular representatives of other countries [59]. After the consulate’s staff (Olšauskas, Griškienė, Piotrauskaitė, Juozapaitytė, Gužas, Ratkus) were interviewed and their written testimonies were collected in May-July 1922, it was ascertained that the products and clothes of the Lithuanian Red Cross brought to Petrograd from Kaunas were “at the disposal” of Dubinskis’s relative, the diplomatic courier Juozas Starkevičius. One kind of products used to be distributed to deportees and a different kind of products used to be entered in accounting books; more expensive products were replaced with cheaper ones (e.g., rice was replaced with barley groats); food parcels used to be given

(2) The newspaper *Laisvė*, published by the Lithuanian Christian Democrats, used to receive information, including confidential, from the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and used to make it public without delay. It is very likely that Consul Dubinskis was either appointed in late January 1921 or perhaps even on 1 February 1921. However, as mentioned before, the precise date of his appointment has not been identified so far. Therefore, the date of publication in the newspaper (1 February 1921) will be considered the conditional date of Dubinskis’ appointment.

for ten rather than 20 days. The consulate's staff were involved in a scheme of taking food products and clothes of the Lithuanian Red Cross "for the consulate's needs" (they used to issue false requests in the name of refugees) [52].

Owing to his responsibility, organisational skills, principled position, ability to take decisions in problematic situations [85, 300], on 1 June 1922, Major Stasys Zaskevičius was appointed Deputy Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd [32]. His far-sightedness proved to be useful on numerous occasions in solving complicated problems concerning Russian and Polish prisoners [86]. Due to the above reasons, he was assigned as Consul ad Interim from 1 August 1922. Just as Matukas, he had a mission to restore the deportees' and optants' confidence in the staff of the Lithuanian consulate, to improve the poor living conditions of the consulate's personnel, to harmonise relations with the staff of the NKID Petrograd Division. Zaskevičius arrived in Petrograd on 8 July 1922 and worked there until 1 October 1923 [33].

4. FIELDS OF THE CONSULATE'S ACTIVITY

As soon as the consulate commenced its activities, its major focus was the repatriation of refugees and prisoners to Lithuania and the acceptance of applications from optants (the applications were accepted at the consulate until October 1921 [22]). With the prior consent of the Petrograd Re-evacuation Committee and the NKID, Vaclavas Čepanis, the Lithuanian authorised representative for refugee affairs, was in charge of these activities at the consulate [38]. He was assisted by his deputy Alfredas Aleksandravičius and the clerk Jadvyga Piotrauskaitė. Čepanis commenced his activities in November 1920, even before the official appointment of the Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd [38]. Under his leadership, 2–9 echelons departed to Lithuania through or from Petrograd. The echelons to Lithuania used to be escorted by Aleksandravičius, Januškevičius, and Čepanis (as far as Zhogov station on the Russian-Latvian border); another Lithuanian authorised representative used to take them over near the Latvian border [42; 37]. In total, 15 echelons departed to Lithuania during the period of operation of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd [61]. Consul ad Interim, Zaskevičius, also travelled to Lithuania on the 15th echelon for receiving new instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On return from Kaunas early in November 1922, Zaskevičius concluded that there were still about 2000 Lithuanian optants in Petrograd, 2810 people who failed to submit their applications to Soviet institutions in time, and 858 people whose option cases were still pending for review in Moscow [58].

The Division for Refugees and Option aided in preparing the baggage carried by the deportees and refugees (it was weighed and sealed) and obtaining the required documents from local institutions. The authorised representative and his assistant were in close contact with the Petrograd Re-evacuation Committee, as this institution compiled the lists of deportees willing to return to Lithuania and formed the echelons (one echelon was made of 40 wagons). Smaller echelons, each comprising 500–800 people, used to depart from Petrograd. Transit echelons formed in Siberia (Tomsk, Novonikolayevsk) were also sent through Petrograd. They accommodated 1000–1200 people. If the number of Lithuanian refugees was not sufficient to form a separate echelon, they would be sent on a Latvian echelon. The lists of returning deportees were approved by the Lithuanian authorised representative in Petrograd (Čepanis until August 1921). Starting from August 1921, which saw an increase in the flows of returning non-Lithuanian citizens, it was already requested that the lists of refugees travelling on echelons would be approved by an authorised

representative from the Deportee Division of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow) or the lists would be forwarded to Moscow for approval. Information on the plans concerning the repatriation of deportees (when, how many wagons, and from which city of Soviet Russia they would arrive) and the arriving echelons was published in the Lithuanian press [70; 77; 74; 76; 75].

Close cooperation with Estonian and Latvian consuls and the Polish delegation in Petrograd (the Polish Consulate in Petrograd was established in 1925 [87]) was maintained in solving the emerging problems with respect to the repatriation of deportees and refugees and the delivery of diplomatic bags abroad [21]. Jonas Ratkus, the courier of the Lithuanian Consulate who often delivered documents to Latvian and Estonian consulates, was fluent in Latvian and Estonian [83].

After Želigowski staged a mutiny resulting in the annexation of Vilnius and Vilnius Region, Lithuanian consulates abroad followed the principle of banning entry to Lithuania for the deportees and refugees originating from that territory [10]. The issues of repatriation of those people had to be harmonised with the Polish delegation in Petrograd, which provided the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd with the lists of the districts of Vilnius and Grodna governorates from which the repatriates would be admitted. The districts of Grodna and Lida fell to Poland, whereas the control over the districts of Ashmyany, Švenčionys, and Trakai was disputable. The map of Central Lithuania was enclosed as well [14]. There were no communication problems, because Aleksandravičius, assistant to the Lithuanian authorised representative for refugee affairs, was originally a Pole from Kaišiadorys and the clerk Jadvyga Piotrauskaitė, who was responsible for the inspection of the documents of deportees and acceptance of applications from optants, was also of Polish descent [7].

Consul Dubinskis also maintained a close personal contact with the members of the Polish delegation in Petrograd. Dubinskis's wife Hedvige Dziubińska was "a member of the Polish delegation in the mixed repatriation commission" (headquarters in Warsaw, Poland) [54]. The Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd rendered services to Polish diplomats or individuals with special powers and had a permission to go to Poland [55], though that was contrary to the instructions of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Incidentally, it was one of the reasons of his dismissal from office.

The Lithuanian consul in Petrograd was also an authorised representative of the Lithuanian Red Cross. While in Lithuania, Dubinskis handled the acquisition of food products and clothes and their transportation to Petrograd. Jadvyga Piotrauskaitė and Marcelinas Gužas were responsible for the distribution of the aid of the Lithuanian Red Cross in the form of food and clothes at the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd. Food parcels intended to last twenty days used to be distributed to the deportees [51]. A deportee would receive 20 pounds (a pound is equal to 409 grams) of rye flour, eight pounds of rice, three pounds of sugar, two pounds of salt, two bars of soap, three pounds of oil, half a pound of bacon flich [49] and clothes. Late in November 1921, the consulate rendered support of two million Soviet roubles to the starving people in the Volga Region [8].

The consulate accepted money, securities, jewellery, and other valuables from the Lithuanian people for storage and protection. They were kept in non-combustible cabinets [1]. For a certain fee, Lithuanian citizens used to send valuable items through the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd. They were further sent to Lithuania through the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia (Moscow). Januškevičius and Matusevičius would accept them for delivery at the consulate [31].

At the request of the Lithuanian Representation in Soviet Russia of 20 August 1921, the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd was asked to compile lists of prisoners in the area of Petrograd for exchange purposes [5]. Zaskėvičius took care of the situation of prisoners immediately after arrival to his place of destination [56].

CONCLUSIONS

1. As correspondence bureaus were established in Petrograd during World War I, the city became the centre of communication between Lithuanians on both sides of the front. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed and Germany recognised Lithuania's independence, Petrograd became the centre of repatriation of Lithuanian deportees and refugees. While working at the Representation of the State Council of Lithuania under the authority of the German Consulate General in Petrograd, future personnel and heads of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd had a chance to accumulate valuable experience.

2. The headquarters of the Lithuanian Consulate were situated in the apartment of German citizen Paul Bekel at the address Gogol Street 4; its staff resided in the NKID apartment, and Consul Dubinskis lived in the apartment at Teriaev Street 2a, apartment 10. Food products were supplied from the Petrograd Commune by paying for them in gold roubles. Hence, food support was not only important for the deportees and refugees but also for the members of staff of the consulate themselves. From the middle of 1921 to the middle of 1922, the consulate's General Division was responsible for correspondence with Lithuanian citizens, consular and diplomatic representations of foreign countries, the NKID Petrograd Division, and the cash register and financial accounting of the consulate. Meanwhile, the Division for Refugees and Option was in charge of communication with refugees, optants, the institutions of the Petrograd area, and the distribution of support from the Lithuanian Red Cross.

3. Aleksandras Dubinskis was chosen to the position of the Lithuanian Consul in Petrograd due to his reputation in the Lithuanian community in Petrograd and his former experience in the position of adviser to the authorised representative of the State Council of Lithuania. He was dismissed from office for violations in the accounting of the support provided by the Lithuanian Red Cross. Jonas Matukas was selected to serve as Deputy Lithuanian Consul in order to find out how the accounting of the support of the Lithuanian Red Cross was handled and to collect information for bringing a case. Stasys Zaskėvičius became Deputy Consul and later Consul ad Interim owing to his excellent organisational skills and principled position, which was required in regaining the confidence of Lithuanian deportees, optants, consular and diplomatic institutions of foreign countries, and the NKID Petrograd Division.

4. In 1921–1923, the staff of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd paid most attention to the repatriation of deportees and refugees to Lithuania by handling baggage- and documentation- related issues, compilation of lists of Lithuanian prisoners for exchanges with Soviet Russia, provision of support from the Lithuanian Red Cross to deportees in the form of food and clothes, storage and protection of valuables and their transportation to Lithuania, cooperation with the consulates and representations of foreign countries in respect of the repatriation of deportees and refugees and other current affairs.

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- [3] Address of the Lithuanian Consulate in Petrograd between 1921 and 1923. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 166, l. 102.
- [4] Avižonis's report to Čepanis of September 1921 [the precise date is not given]. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 165, l. 41–42.
- [5] Avižonis's report to Dubinskis of 20 August 1921. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 165, l. 90.
- [6] Avižonis's report to Lithuanian representative in Soviet Russia (Moscow) of 22 August 1921. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 165, l. 56a–62a.
- [7] Avižonis's report to the Lithuanian representative in Moscow of 22 August 1921. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 165, l. 56a–62a.
- [8] Cash order of 21 November 1921. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 3, b. 167, l. 290.
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- [10] Čepas's report to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Jurgutis of 12 May 1922. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 4, b. 49, l. 48–55.
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- [17] Dubinskis's report to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 14 September 1922. *LCVA*, f. 383, ap. 7, b. 294, l. 30–33.
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SANDRA GRIGARAVIČIŪTĖ

Lietuvos konsulas Petrograde 1921–1923 metais

Santrauka

Lietuvos konsulas Petrograde 1921–1923 m. lietuvių istoriografijoje buvo tirtas ginantis į Lietuvos konsulatų Sovietų Rusijoje steigimą 1921 m. ir į a. i. konsulo Stasio Zaskevičiaus paskyrimą ir veiklą 1922 m. antroje pusėje – 1923 metais. Neištirtas liko Jono Matuko vadovavimo konsulatui laikotarpis, jo paskyrimas ir veikla, konsulato ištakos ir veikla 1922 metais. Tyrimo tikslas – remiantis šaltiniais ir istoriografija rekonstruoti Lietuvos konsulato Petrograde įsteigimo ir funkcionavimo procesą 1921–1923 m., ypatingą dėmesį skiriant gyvenimo sąlygų ir veiklos specifikai.

Tyrimas atliktas remiantis nepublikuotais – Vokietijos reicho URM Politikos archyve, Lietuvos centriname valstybės archyve URM fonde, Lietuvos Mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių bibliotekos rankraščių skyriuje esančiais ir publikuotais šaltiniais – dokumentais, spauda, lietuvių (Tomo Balkelio, Milenos Tamošiūnienės) bei užsienio (Aleksander Wasilewski, Winfried Baumgart) autorių darbais. Tyrimas atliktas naudojant kokybinės analizės, sintezės (nauja šaltinių medžiaga papildyta cirkuliuojančia istoriografijoje informacija), lyginamąjį istorinį (lietuvių spaudoje paskelbta informacija lyginama su Lietuvos centriname valstybės archyve esančia), aprašomąjį metodus. Apdorojant pirminius šaltinius, lietuvių, vokiečių, rusų kalbomis, taikytas loginis-analitinis metodas (atlikta turinio ir informacijos prasminė analizė).

Tyrimo metu konstatuota, kad Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metu Petrogradas, jame įsteigus susirašinėjimo biurus, tapo abiejose fronto pusėse esančių lietuvių komunikacijos centru, o pasirašius Brest Litovsko sutartį ir Vokietijai pripažinus Lietuvos nepriklausomybę, – lietuvių tremtinių ir pabėgėlių grąžinimo centru. 1921 m. Petrograde įsteigtoje Lietuvos konsulinėje įstaigoje dirbo per trisdešimt tarnautojų, padėjusių lietuviams ir Lietuvos piliečiams tremtiniams bei pabėgėliams grįžti į atkurtą Lietuvos valstybę, teikė pagalbą maistu ir drabužiais per Lietuvos Raudonąją Kryžių iki 1923 m. rugsėjo 30 d.

Raktažodžiai: Lietuva, konsulas, Vilnius, Sovietų Rusija, Petrogradas, Andrius Dubinskis, Jonas Matukas, Stasys Zaskevičius, Vaclavas Čepanis, įgaliotinis