VINCAS KUDIRKA'S PROGRAMME FOR
MODERNIZING SOCIETY
AND THE PROBLEMS OF FORMING A NATIONAL
INTELLIGENTSIA*

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ABSTRACT. *The article deals with several closely related problems. Firstly, it presents a concise analysis of the particulars of the formation of the Lithuanian intelligentsia – a modern social élite in the country. It is maintained that in Lithuania (as well as in the other states of Central and Eastern Europe) the intelligentsia's special role in society was conditioned by its modernization process and the level of its development and manifestation in public life. It was no accident that the pattern of the national ideal, shaped by the intelligentsia, as well as the proposed programme for the modernization of society were of ethnocentric nature.*

The second half of the study relates to the project for modernizing society, offered by Vincas Kudirka, a prominent figure in the Lithuanian national movement, a publicist and publisher. It was his belief, supported by many other Lithuanian intellectuals, that the processes of modernization – its social and economic development had to entail and presuppose the development of national self-consciousness. The proposed programme was intended for the lowest and most numerous social layer – the peasantry, and it actually expressed that group's interests. At the same time the modernization programme contained contradictions, acquired ethnocentric features and in future was liable to encourage social and ethnic tensions.

The formation and further development and, lastly, the 'historical role' of the modern social and political élite, which in the Central and East

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European societies is also referred to by a more specific term 'intelligentsia', has long ago become a mundane subject of the study of historians, sociologists and political scientists. Such an interest is easy to account for, since at the present time it is almost commonly agreed that this social group has played an exceptional role in the process of the formation of modern national societies in Central and Eastern Europe. The causes of this phenomenon, however, have been explained variously.¹

Issues relating to the intelligentsia have also received attention in Lithuanian historical scholarship – how and where it was formed, what its social and political programme and structure were, etc. Actually, the formation of the intelligentsia was investigated in close relationship with the development of the national movement, the intelligentsia being rightly considered the ideologist of that movement, in other words, the principal designer of the 'national ideal'.² It is noteworthy that formulating the trends of the research, Lithuanian historians experienced the influence of Polish historians who among the scholars of East-Central Europe possibly paid the greatest attention to the study of the intelligentsia.³

Another popular research trend in this field that has been and remains current at the present time as well is the attempts to determine the extent to which the political system and the political regime influence the consolidation of the intelligentsia. Thus, the Polish historian Malgorzata Stolzman analyzes the formation of the Vilnius cultural

¹ Zygmunt Bauman, 'Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change', *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1987 spring), pp. 162-186.

² Among the recent works the following might be mentioned as more typical ones: Antanas Tyla, 'Iš Lietuvos kilę Tartu universiteto studentai 1802-1918', *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1980* (Vilnius, 1981), pp. 62-85; A. Tyla, 'Lietuvos jaunimas Maskvos universitete: XIX a. – XX a. pradžia', nr. 1 *Kultūros barai* (1981), pp. 62-64, 70; *Lietuvių nacionalinio išsivadavimo judėjimas*, ed. Vytautas Merkys (Vilnius, 1987); Rimantas Vėbra, *Lietuvių visuomenė XIX a. antrojoje pusėje* (Vilnius, 1990), pp. 160-189; Egidijus Aleksandravičius, *XIX amžiaus profiliai* (Vilnius, 1993); E. Aleksandravičius, *Kultūrinis sąjūdis Lietuvoje 1831-1863 metais. Organizaciniai kultūros ugdymo aspektai* (Vilnius, 1989); Vytautas Merkys, *Knygnešių laikai 1864-1904* (Vilnius, 1994), pp. 129-132, 281-292; Česlovas Laurinavičius, 'Jonas Basanavičius kaip moderniosios lietuviybės simbolis', *Politika ir diplomacija* (Kaunas, 1997), pp. 264-268.

³ The names of at least some Polish historians, who took up the issues of the formation of the intelligentsia in the nineteenth-century Lithuania as their research subject, might be mentioned: Ryszard Czepulis-Rastenis, Daniel Beauvois, M. Stolzman, et al.

and intellectual centre in the mid-nineteenth-century Lithuania in a still topical article published over a decade ago. In her opinion, the process of the formation and consolidation of intelligentsia in Lithuania was obstructed by several factors: firstly, the unfavourable political situation – the assimilation policy of the Russian authorities, and secondly, the rather conservative social structure of Lithuanian society, in other words, its ‘backwardness’ and ‘underdevelopment’. The new intelligentsia was comparatively too weak, and not being able to change the social structure it usually adapted itself to it.⁴

The present paper focuses upon the modernization programme for Lithuanian society, formulated by Vincas Kudirka (1858–1899), a ‘founding father’ of the modern Lithuanian nation.⁵ An attempt is made to determine the genesis of this programme, its content and controversies. In the most general sense it can be stated that in Lithuania, as well as in other Central and Eastern European countries, the particular role of the intelligentsia and its place in society were conditioned by *the nature of the modernization*, then taking place, and *the backwardness and underdevelopment* of those societies.⁶ It is also not accidental that the formulated model of the national ideal and the proposed programme of the modernization of society were clearly ethnocentric.

Modernization of Society and Formation of the Intelligentsia: General Trends

In order to better understand the processes taking place in Lithuania, it is necessary to examine, at least superficially (a more comprehensive analysis would be a subject of a larger study), the ‘backwardness’ of the social content of the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the specificity of the modernization processes there.⁷ True, taking

⁴ M. Stolzman, ‘O wilenskiej inteligencji międzypowstaniowej (1830–1863) *Inteligencja Polska XIX i XX w.* (Warszawa, 1983), pp. 9–65.

⁵ This study does not specifically deal with the concept of intelligentsia, and it does not analyze in greater detail the Lithuanian characteristic features of its development. Formally intelligentsia is perceived as a separate and particular social group, engaged in intellectual activity and educated at a level higher than average of that particular society (Cf., e.g., Janusz Żarnowski, ‘Rola historyczna inteligencji w Europie Środkowej i Południowo-Wschodniej’ *Międzymorze. Polska i kraje Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej XIX–XX wiek* (Warszawa, 1995), p. 39). Informally it could be conceived as ‘producers of national identity’ or ‘national organizers’.

⁶ Broadly speaking, this kind of reasoning was typical of such Central and Eastern European investigators as Hugh Seton-Watson, Ivan T. Berend or George Schöpfunglin.

⁷ *Criteria and Indicators of Backwardness: Essays on Uneven Development in European History*, ed. by Miroslav Hroch and Luda Klusáková (Prague: Variant Editors, 1996).

into account the general tendencies, one cannot ignore the peculiarities of one's own country. In the nineteenth century Lithuania and its society were a half-bureaucratic part of the Russian empire which had preserved many traditional and even archaic elements. Of course, that does not mean that the political and social system of Russia was inertly static and did not undergo any changes. Therefore it would hardly be a mistake to state that the Russian political regime (with its assimilative policy) and the agricultural character of Lithuanian society (with serfdom being abolished rather late) were the two most fundamental factors determining the modernization content of Lithuanian society. As a constituent part of Russia, Lithuania was gradually turning into a 'double periphery' or 'periphery of the periphery'.

The investigators, analyzing the causes of the backwardness and underdevelopment of the Central and Eastern European region, are liable to emphasize the socio-economic and/or political motives. A slow rate of urbanization, in their turn conditioning the domination of the social structure of estates, is usually mentioned among the causes. A slow economic modernization together with the slow pace of urbanization and the belated abolition of serfdom contributed to the situation in which the overwhelming majority of society was peasantry, as a rule engaged in traditional ways of farming. The absence of 'profit mentality' in the consciousness of the traditional élite obstructed the introduction of technological innovations.

The 'political context' was also mentioned as an important condition of modernization. According to researchers, the most favourable political combination for the economic 'growth' was the rise of autonomous towns plus the absence of strong imperial and ecclesiastical powers. It is commonly agreed that in the eastern part of Europe there were no favourable circumstances for growth and development.⁸ Moreover, in the middle of the nineteenth century the differences of development, and divergence in the backwardness rates between Eastern and Western Europe increased rapidly. It must be stated that the region itself developed very unevenly.

In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where society's autonomy was very weak or variously restrained by the governmental authorities, the state was the main modernization agent, in the case under consideration, this was bureaucratic empire. Sometimes, particularly in the discussions about the possibilities of economic modernization, the state was treated as the only factor, capable of

⁸ *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Daniel Chirot (University of California Press, 1989), pp. 4-5.

⁹ Janusz Górski, *Polska myśl ekonomiczna a rozwój gospodarczy 1807-1830* (Warsaw, 1963), p. 37.

invigorating social development.⁹ In relation to Russia some authors noted that autocracy did not aim to stimulate full economic modernization because, first, it did not possess enough resources for the implementation of such a programme, and, second, from the viewpoint of the political autocratic regime such a strategy seemed unnecessary.¹⁰ Therefore, the reaction to the Western challenge of modernity (economic and political changes) was slow, cautious and inert in these countries. Modernization proceeded in the form of the reforms defined in the instructions sent out by the central authorities without any active participation of society. True, in almost all the central- and eastern-European societies there were representatives of the traditional élite who sought to introduce various economic and social reforms (Prince István Széchenyi in Hungary, Franciszek K. Drucki-Lubecki and Andrzej Zamoyski in Poland or Irenij Oginski in Lithuania).

Therefore in this region modernization lacked the finality, it was merely partial, because it had to satisfy the interests of the ruling bureaucracy with the sovereign and the traditional élite at the head, whose principal aim was to devise more efficient management methods in order to preserve the existing political regime and social order.¹¹

Another important feature, peculiar to Central and Eastern Europe, was the weakness and, particularly the ethnic alienness of the middle class, and that made it 'remain in the shadow of other traditional social structures' in contrast to Western Europe, where the middle class was the principal force behind the modernization of society. It must be added that there are scholars, who believe that in Central and Eastern Europe the function of the Western middle class was performed by a part of the traditional élite, developing along the democratic lines.¹²

The old social structure was not replaced by a new one – both of them existed side by side. The result of that situation was the appearance of such a social system which the Hungarian historian István Bibó referred to as 'dualistic'. Its significant characteristic was the actual preservation of the traditional peasant community. Peasantry remained the most numerous and lowest social class, legally emancipated,

¹⁰ On some new aspects of the economic modernization in the Russian empire, cf. Linda Weis and John M. Hobson, *States and Economic Development. A Comparative Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

¹¹ G. Schöpflin, 'The Political Traditions of Eastern Europe', *Eastern Europe ... Central Europe ... Europe*, ed. by Stephen R. Graubard (San Francisco - Oxford, 1991), pp. 65-71.

¹² Piotr Wandycz, *Laisvės kaina: Vidurio Rytų Europos istorija nuo viduramžių iki dabarties* (Vilnius, 1997), pp. 139-146.

but de facto outlawed in society. Agriculture was dominated by small or landless peasants, actually not integrated with the markets, and their produce was usually exported as raw materials.

These societies also underwent certain changes. The abolition of serfdom and the subsequent reforms significantly influenced the social and cultural changes. Again, their manifestations differed in various countries. On the western fringes of Russia (in the former Kingdom of Poland and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) they coincided with the defeat of the Uprising of 1863, and that in its turn strengthened the tendencies of social conservatism. Repression was directed mainly against the traditional élite, and the overwhelming part of the gentry, being democratically- and reform-minded, was eliminated from social activity. At the same time, the uprising called forth the rise of the ideology of 'organic work', and greater attention was being paid to the gradual progress of reforms, their peaceful nature, constantly accentuating the role of the economic modernization.

On the other hand, even after the reforms of the mid-nineteenth century the modernization rates (especially in national economy) were comparatively slow in Lithuania. Only at the very end of the nineteenth century the concentration of industry and economic growth became more visible, and it was followed by the economic crisis of 1900-1903.¹³ Economic stagnation and slow development are evident in the comparison of the economic progress between the Lithuanian (Kaunas and Vilnius) Provinces and that of the neighbouring regions of the Russian Empire (e.g., Livonia and Courland).¹⁴

As is commonly known, the development of the communication network is a major factor in the modernization of society and its national consolidation.¹⁵ In Lithuania, however, the communication network started to develop rather late, it was designed disproportionately, as it had to meet the military strategic requirements rather than perform economic functions. Quite a number of fertile regions in western Lithuania had no railways. Economically the most important were two

¹³ On the economic development in Lithuania after the abolition of serfdom, see Витаутас Меркис, *Развитие промышленности и формирование пролетариата Литвы в XIX в.* (Вильнюс, 1969); Michalina Meškauskienė, *Ekonominė Lietuvos padėtis pirmojo pasaulinio karo išvakarėse (1900-1913)* (Vilnius, 1963); Kazimieras Meškauskas, *Lietuvos ūkis 1900-1940* (Vilnius, 1992).

¹⁴ M. Meškauskienė, *Ekonominė Lietuvos padėtis*, p. 10.

¹⁵ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Farmers. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford, 1976), p. 486. See also V. Sirutavičius, "'Liaudis virsta tauta' – E. Weber paradigma", *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, vol. 4, *Liaudis virsta tauta* (Vilnius, 1993), pp. 419-436.

lines, constructed between 1861 and 1873; they connected the central regions of Russia with its western fringes. Neither were the Russian authorities interested in road building, and no general road and railway communication system was developed.

Inconsequential and belated modernization left its imprint on the formation of the intelligentsia. It has been noticed that one of the most important preconditions for the formation of the intelligentsia was the changes in the education systems of the bureaucratic empires, more precisely their unification and liberalization. The modernization, initiated by the bureaucratic empires, induced those changes, while the main aim of the transformations was to train qualified staff for the governmental apparatus of the empire in order to improve administration. Thus, the reforms of tertiary education enabled the representatives of the lower social layers to obtain higher education. Therefore, in the hope of influencing the formation of a Lithuanian loyal intelligentsia, in the mid-nineteenth century the Russian authorities even devised a special system of grants for the studies in the universities of the Russian empire (this policy was practised in respect not only to Lithuanians but also to other non-dominating ethnic communities). In the course of about two decades 89 alumni of the Suvalkai and Marijampolė grammar school used these grants for their studies.¹⁶ At the same time the majority of them were forced to live outside Lithuania, because their chances to get a better job in a government organization were limited, and they could work here only in private practice.

In the opinion of some scholars, the modern secularized élite – intelligentsia – of Central Eastern Europe, in contrast to that of Western Europe, did not evolve ‘organically’, i.e., in the course of a long historical period, but appeared as a result of the modernization of society, conducted by a bureaucratic empire.¹⁷ Taking into consideration the fact that in those societies the middle classes had not been consolidated to be able to affect the social development to any significant extent, it becomes evident why the intelligentsia grew into an important social and political force, which with the help of the new ideology, i.e., nationalism, managed to mobilize the peasantry – that part of society which previously had not taken any active part in those processes.

¹⁶ R. Vėbra, *Lietuvių visuomenė*. Among recent works, see Darius Staliūnas *Visuomenė be universiteto? (Aukštosios mokyklos atkūrimo problema Lietuvoje: XIX a. vidury – XX a. pradžia), Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, vol. 16 (Vilnius, 2000), pp. 100–109.

¹⁷ Cf., Hugh Seton-Watson, ‘The National Idea in Eastern Europe’, *The Politics of Ethnic and Civic Community*, ed. by Gerasimos Augustinos (Lexington-Toronto, 1996), pp. 18–19.

The relics of the traditional social structure of the estates as the aftermath of incomplete modernization conditioned the social attitudes of the intelligentsia in two ways. A section of the new élite was integrated or, to be more precise, co-opted by the bureaucratic political regime into the political system and engaged in the formation of official ideologies, legitimizing that system. The other part became an opponent of the existing social order and political system and often expressed the 'ideals of the rural progress'. In other words, the inability to express oneself professionally made a part of the intelligentsia to join various social movements critically disposed towards the existing political systems.¹⁸ Having found itself between the bureaucratic imperial regime and the essentially traditional society, the intelligentsia formulated its 'ideology of resistance' (nationalism) and looked for support in the half-traditional milieu – the peasantry. Therefore it is not surprising that in this situation the most efficient means of ensuring the support was the ethnocultural or the so-called ethnographic values, in short, the 'native' tongue. The actualization and politization of the linguistic factor was also associated with the endeavours to distance oneself from the traditional élite, still dominating the public sphere.

Thus, the prevalence of ethnocentrism and ethnoculturalism, in the opinion of the intelligentsia, could be accounted for by the peculiarities of the socio-economic modernization, characteristic of the bureaucratic empires of Central and Eastern Europe. According to Ernest Gellner, this process inevitably led to cultural unification and homogenization. Only a culture of that type could create favourable conditions for the society's development and the social mobility of the individuals. However, in a bureaucratic empire these modernization tendencies were nothing more than the cultural assimilation of non-dominating ethnic groups. As a result of such changes, the new intellectuals, being unable to find their place in the bureaucratic administrative structures of the empire, turned to their own ethnic culture, becoming its apologists.¹⁹ Thus, the overwhelming majority of the new élite, without discarding the idea of the modernization of society, considered that that process cannot proceed at the expense of the loss of national identities.

¹⁸ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Manchester, 1995), p. 49.

¹⁹ Cf. E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1993). A similar viewpoint was also expressed by A. D. Smith. According to him the modern élite, instead of being engaged in assimilation, is interested in the search of its ethnic roots and in enhancing the prestige of its ethnic community and comes back to ethnicity only from the viewpoint of modernity (cf. A. D. Smith, *Nacionalizmas XX amžiuje* (Vilnius, 1994), pp. 203-4).

In summing up, some conclusions could be made. Firstly, the modernization, initiated by bureaucratic empires in order to establish more efficient governing structures, actually meant the strengthening of unifying centralist tendencies and in the multi-national empires it was also ultimately associated with cultural assimilation, and on the other hand it created conditions for the development of the new modern élite – the intelligentsia. Secondly, the modernization, carried out on the basis of official directives, preserved many traditional estate institutions in society, and that notably aggravated the integration of the intelligentsia into the social and political life. In protest at the belated democratization there appeared various ideological, social and movements, including ‘ethno-cultural nationalism’.

The Lithuanian Intellectual: a Social Critic and the Conception of Modernization

In the social and literary activity of Vincas Kudirka the idea of social modernization was closely related to the critique of the existing social order.²⁰ His social criticism is particularly evident in his journalistic work. Suffice it to say that the column ‘Tėvynės varpai’, published in his *Varpas* newspaper between 1889 and 1899, was a sort of a ‘chronicle of the Lithuanian social life’.

The object of Kudirka's criticism was not only the Russian state and its political regime, conducting the assimilative policy in respect to the Lithuanians, but also the Lithuanian community itself, full of vices, failing to comprehend various novelties and continuing its traditional way of life. The government was criticized for not creating conditions for the development of society, for even obstructing its progress, i.e., not fulfilling its civilization mission, while Lithuanian society, and first of all, its intelligentsia was blamed for the inability to overcome its backwardness. It was no coincidence that one of the most frequently criticized features of the Lithuanian intellectual community was its ‘sleepiness’, in other words, its social and moral indifference. True, it must be noted that the renunciation of one's national identity was most severely criticized by Kudirka.

As many other individuals of contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, Kudirka also considered that education was the main means in the solution of various issues of backwardness. If schooling was the principal way of overcoming the backwardness of society, respectively modernization, progress and development were conceived as the

²⁰ Michael Walzer defines the critic from several viewpoints: a person who deliberately selects a particular activity or role, who is in opposition to the existing regime, and therefore is insecure in society, often, but not always politically active.

consolidation of national identity. For Kudirka social progress straightforwardly was nationalism. National, more precisely, ethnolinguistic values were construed as the national ideal. In one of his articles Kudirka stated that ‘... language and nationality are not at all an invention of civilization, they are truly serious notions of nature and it is dangerous to trifle with them’.²¹

From Kudirka’s standpoint the development of society and its democratization are linked inseparably with the implementation of the national ideal. The authenticity of a national community, its preservation and development – these are the main tasks facing the intelligentsia. In his appeal ‘Lithuanian Brothers’ (1897), Kudirka required that the Russian authorities allow Lithuanian publications. The press in the native tongue, forbidden by the government, was to protect the people from denationalization and assimilation.²² The main purpose of the national press and educational system had to be the formation of the national identity.

Kudirka accepted the so-called Polish (Warsaw) positivism as a model for the modernization of Lithuanian society, which seemed for him a good example of the modernization programme. Warsaw positivism endeavoured to combine nationalism and its development with the economic growth. In other words, the socio-economic development of society had to entail the development of national self-consciousness.

The programme of the Lithuanian Union, initiated by Kudirka in Warsaw in 1888–89, is a good example of such modernization. The programme consists of four parts: 1) the ‘dissemination’ of education, 2) the concerns for national culture, 3) the stimulation of the economic development of society or the ‘improvement of the economic situation’, and 4) the ‘extension of the boundaries of Lithuanianness’. The publication of a Lithuanian newspaper had to contribute to the education. In his letter to Jonas Basanavičius in April 1888, Kudirka wrote that it should be a newspaper accessible to the ‘averagely educated Lithuanian’. Vytautas Kavolis’s remark about the importance of the Lithuanian newspaper in Kudirka’s reasoning remains pertinent: ‘The possibility of a Lithuanian newspaper was conceived by Kudirka as a promise that in Lithuania the creation of a progressive culture worthy of the civilized human being was also possible’.²³

The fostering of the national culture implied the development of the intelligentsia, its support and the establishment of schools. The

²¹ Kudirka, *Raštai*, t. 2 (Vilnius, 1990) p. 412.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 797.

²³ Vytautas Kavolis, *Žmogus istorijoje* (Vilnius, 1994), p. 34.

first step should be 'the enlivenment of the national spirit', which in its turn meant the 'elucidation' of the distinctiveness of the Lithuanian nationality. In Kudirka's opinion this aim could be achieved in two ways: by separating nationalism from faith and by spreading the knowledge of history. The new Lithuanian intelligentsia had to engage itself in these two fields. Therefore the formation of the intelligentsia was the task of primary importance. That was why the prospectus of *Varpas* stated: 'The aim of *Varpas* is to unite Lithuanians through the intelligentsia'.

The necessity to achieve a rapid development of rural economy was indicated in the economic programme; and Lithuanian peasants were urged to take a more active part in the crafts and trade. Kudirka and other Lithuanian intellectuals were aware that the social activeness and consciousness of the peasantry were impossible without the improvement of their economic state. It must be noted that after some time the newspaper *Ūkininkas* (Farmer) was established specially for the rural population; its first number appeared in 1890. The 'extension' of the boundaries of Lithuanianness was identified with the 'prevention' of emigration and keeping the land in the hands of Lithuanian peasants.²⁴

Controversies over the Modernization Programme: Kudirka's Antisemitism

It seems that both Kudirka and other ideologues of the national movements of Central and Eastern Europe, who had their own visions of social modernization based on ethnocultural nationalism, faced a great difficulty in combining two principles of the organization of modern society: the consolidation of the cultural identity and the integration of civil society. If the preservation and spread of the authenticity of the ethnocultural community was proclaimed as one of the most important aims of social modernization, it was quite believable that all other ethnic communities were 'alien'; that they were either rivals or enemies, which had to be conquered. Taking into account the multi-ethnicity, peculiar to the nineteenth-century Lithuanian society, the national model, constructed on the basis of such ethnocultural values, inevitably generated ethnopolitical tensions and conflicts.

As has already been mentioned, favouring a more rapid socio-economic development, in his articles Kudirka urged the social mobility and economic initiative of the Lithuanian peasantry, encouraging them

²⁴ Vincas Kapsukas. "'Varpo" užgimimas' *Varpas*, nr. 12, 1903, p. 283; Rimantas Miknys, 'Lietuvių demokratų partija', *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos*, t. 10 (Vilnius, 1995), p. 21-23.

to move to the towns and engage in crafts and trade. However, by that time in Lithuanian society, in its towns and trade, a socio-economic structure, dominated by an ethnically different community – the Jews – had already been formed and they also sought to preserve their social positions and develop their cultural identity. For Kudirka the Jews were the factor that obstructed the development of the Lithuanians. This is how the negative attitude of the writer towards the Jews could be accounted for.

In Lithuanian scholarship Kudirka's anti-Semitism is either ignored or simply attributed to his negative experience and influence of the 'Warsaw milieu'.²⁵ In our opinion, anti-Semitism was immanent to Kudirka's thinking, because it was an important element of his modernization programme of Lithuanian society. In Kudirka's texts a negative presentation of the Jews had acquired several different aspects.

Kudirka was indignant at the unwillingness of the Jews to assimilate with the Lithuanians, because they allegedly 'do not see any use in it' (the presentation of Jews as willing only to profit for themselves is peculiar to the common people's viewpoint in general). A statement of this kind contained a negative characteristic of the Lithuanians rather than the Jews, because the level of the Lithuanian civilization did not enable them to assimilate the Jews. This was also an indirect confirmation of the backwardness and even inferiority of the Lithuanians, which Kudirka urges his fellow Lithuanians to overcome.

At the same time the harm inflicted by the Jews was emphasized. It was simply stated that 'the Semites harm us, the Aryans', and that the Lithuanians had already experienced 'the pressure of the Semitic hydra'.²⁶ That, in the first place, concerned the situation in trade and small-scale business. According to Kudirka, Jews act indecently in the economy by not observing the principles of fair competition.²⁷ They try to cheat the Christians and 'do evil'. By swindling they 'spoil our people'. In Kudirka's words, nobody can and wants to resist Jewish activities. That is again a reproach to Lithuanian intellectuals, because namely it is their duty to defend 'common people' from the Jews. Therefore, the Jews must be avoided and left alone. 'If you do not want to foul yourselves, do not let the Jew approach you, and if you do not want to foul your company, do not let the Jew into it'.²⁸

²⁵ Albinas Rimka, 'Vincas Kudirka. Jo gyvenimas, darbai ir visuomeninės pažiūros', *Jaunosios Lietuvos leidinys*, nr. 3 (Chicago, 1915), p. 24; Julius Būtėnas, *Vincas Kudirka* (Vilnius, 1988).

²⁶ Kudirka, *Raštai*, t. 2 (Vilnius, 1990), p. 438.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 449–50.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 457.

In the criticism of the Jewish community moral motives were used alongside the economic and social ones. Many moral evils are inherent in the Jews, and neither education nor scholarship can eradicate them. 'Even the most intricate science cannot remove the dirt from the Jew ...' Thus, their decay is deep-rooted and total, and differs from that of the Lithuanian peasants, which still can be changed with the help of education. The Jews cannot be useful members of society, because they are always interested only in their personal gain, and are not concerned with the commonweal.

A conclusion can be made that such attitudes of Kudirka were conditioned by the traditional distrust of towards the Jews, which was typical of the Lithuanian peasantry, and it was instilled by religion. It is also noteworthy that Kudirka considered the Jews a dangerous and insidious rival, obstructing the process of the modernization of Lithuanian society. Similar considerations can be found in the thinking of other Lithuanian intellectuals. Thus, in his booklet *Mūsų žydai ir kaip nuo jų saugotis* (Our Jews and how to protect ourselves from them) (1886) the engineer, businessman and publisher Petras Vileišis (1851-1926) not only emphasized the negative influence of the Jews on Lithuanian peasants, but also urged them 'to resist' in an organized manner, to resort to new 'economic' measures by organizing their own credit unions, opening shops and so on.

The question why the ethno-cultural nationalism became the predominating ideology among the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Lithuanians, has remained unanswered as yet. It is not the aim of the present paper to solve the problem formulated in that way. Nevertheless, the most perspective way of looking for an answer to that question seems the specificity of the contemporary societies of that area, which is usually described by the terms 'backwardness' or 'belated, underdeveloped' modernization, conditioning the process of the formation of the modern national intelligentsia. Doubtless, in this paper the social backwardness and the specificity of the modernization processes are dealt with rather superficially. Their analysis should be the subject of a separate major study, the more so that new publications lead to the re-examination of the old viewpoints.

Kudirka, like many other Lithuanian intellectuals, argued that it is extremely important to combine the economic rise with the national development in the process of the modernization of society. In other words, the socio-economic development had to be accompanied by the fostering of the national self-consciousness. In the first place the proclaimed modernization programme had to meet the needs of the lowest and most numerous social layer of the contemporary society –

the peasantry. Taking all that into account it is easy to explain why the modernization 'programme' acquired some ethnocentric features and incited various social and ethnic tensions.

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VINCO KUDIRKOS VISUOMENĖS MODERNIZAVIMO PROGRAMA IR TAUTINĖS INTELIGENTIJOS FORMAVIMOSI PROBLEMA

Santrauka

VLADAS SIRUTAVIČIUS

Straipsnyje aptariamos kelios tarpusavyje glaudžiai susijusios problemos. Pirma, trumpai apibūdinama modernaus visuomenės elito – inteligentijos formavimosi specifika Lietuvoje. Teigiama, jog Lietuvoje kaip, beje, ir kituose Vidurio ir Rytų Europos kraštuose ypatingas inteligentijos vaidmuo bei vieta visuomenėje buvo sąlygoti čia vykusios modernizacijos ir tų visuomenių išsivystymo lygio bei jo raiškos. Neatsitiktinai ir inteligentijos suformuotas tautinio idealo modelis bei pasiūlyta visuomenės modernizavimo programa turėjo aiškiai išreikštą etnocentristinį pobūdį.

Antroje straipsnio dalyje analizuojama žymaus lietuvių tautinio sąjūdžio veikėjas, publicisto, leidėjo Vinco Kudirkos visuomenės modernizacijos projektas. Jo kaip ir daugelio kitų lietuvių inteligentų įsitikinimu, visuomenės modernizacijos procesai, socialinis-ekonominis vystymasis turėjo suponuoti ir tautinės savimonės ugdymą. Skelbiama modernizacijos programa buvo skirta žemiausiam ir gausiausiam to meto visuomenės socialiniam sluoksniui – valstietijai, ir iš esmės išreiškė jos interesus. Kartu tokia modernizacijos programa neišvengė prieštaravimų, įgijo etnocentrizmo bruožų ir ateityje galėjo skatinti socialines, tame tarpe ir etnines, įtampas.

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