

Vaidotas Mažeika. *Danijos santykiai su Lietuva 1918–1940 m.* [Danish-Lithuanian Relations from 1918 to 1940], Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2002. Pp. 343.
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When investigating Denmark's attitude to Lithuania, the author perceives this as having been more or less dependent on Denmark's policy towards Russia, at least in the period between 1918 and 1925. He distinguishes three different stages in Danish-Lithuanian relations: 1918–1925, 1926–1933 and 1933–1940, the character of which changed as Lithuania increasingly developed as an equal partner for Denmark. That process was not fully accomplished, and that was attested by the words of the last inter-war Danish diplomatic representative in Lithuania, cited by Mažeika, that the policy of the Baltic states, and 'in particular that of Lithuania was erroneous from the very beginning, and it would be wrong to compare these countries with other small countries of older and higher cultures'.

The economic ties between Denmark and Russia had been close prior to the First World War, but they were severed when the Bolsheviks came to power. After their secession from tsarist Russia, the Baltic states made up only a part of the former Russian market. At best they could be treated as 'a bridge to Russia' from the Danish point of view. That attitude conditioned Denmark's policies towards Lithuania and other Baltic countries, which was orientated to economic contacts rather than to a political cooperation in pursuit of some common aims. This idea is pivotal for all Mažeika's deliberations in his detailed and comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of the Danish-Lithuanian relations during the entire period from 1918 to 1940. It should be noticed that this conception was taken over by Mažeika from Danish historians, and, in the opinion of this reviewer, it was a sort of trap for the author.

The political issues analyzed by Mažeika actually are related to Lithuania's recognition *de jure* and *de facto*. It is quite natural that adhering to his pivotal idea he was quite logical and consistent in arguing that Lithuania's recognition was conditioned by its attitude to Russia, since Denmark was interested in renewing its trade relations with Soviet Russia through Lithuania.

Among other things, Mažeika states that the time of Lithuania's recognition *de jure* was not accidental – it was done when it turned out that Lithuania would not accept Paul Hymans' second plan for Vilnius,

and Denmark became utterly convinced of the inevitability of Lithuania's pro-Russian orientation. The reviewer has already disputed on this issue with the author.¹ Nevertheless, in his book, Mažeika does not retract from those statements; he corroborates them with additional arguments, and the reviewer would like to continue the polemics. Actually the reviewer's version is supported not only by taking into consideration the role of other (not purely economic) factors but also by the analogy of the materials of Swedish (true, not Danish) archives relating to Lithuania's recognition. The Swedish diplomatic correspondence is very similar to that used by Mažeika. Investigation of Swedish material, however, reveals one important aspect – Sweden identified the 'principal solution' of the Polish-Lithuanian conflict with Lithuania's acceptance to the League of Nations treating them as simultaneous actions.² In the reviewer's opinion, Denmark's behaviour practically was similar. Citing the Danish diplomatic texts, nearly word for word coinciding with the corresponding Swedish ones, Mažeika, however, makes other conclusions (p. 74). The presented quotations are really insufficient to support the statement 'about the differing Copenhagen dispositions in the chronologically concurrent documents' (ibid.). In this context it is necessary to ascertain the implications of 'the solution of the Polish-Lithuanian conflict'.

The Swedish material clearly shows that Sweden perceived that issue only as a presentation of Hymans' second project and its approval by the League of Nations rather than its realization. And that was referred to as 'the solution in principle'. Sweden considered that that would be the most appropriate occasion for Lithuania's recognition and acceptance to the League of Nations. That could be interpreted as an inducement for Lithuania 'to make a constructive decision' in regard to its relations with Poland – that deduction was made by Česlovas Laurinavičius, though he lacked concrete evidence.³ Mažeika seems to have considered that the solution of the Polish-Lithuanian conflict was an implementation of certain actions which could have taken quite some time. But that is a deliberation from the perspective of the twenty-first century. Denmark's attitude could not differ from that of Sweden, where it was also well known that Hymans' second plan was unacceptable for Lithuania and that Lithuanian orientation towards Russia was strong enough due to Lithuania's territorial problems. Denmark simply advocated not waiting for a formal Hymans solution,

¹ S. Pivoras, 'Švedija ir Lietuvos pripažinimas *de jure*', *Lituanistica*, 4 (1999), p. 44.

² H. Branting's enciphered telegram, Geneva, 17 Sept. 1921. Stockholm, *Riksarkivet*, HP 24B, t. 1218, unnumbered pages; H. Wrangel to H. Branting, Stockholm, 17 Sept. 1921, *ibid.*; K. Kanger, 'Die schwedische Baltikumpolitik 1918–1925', *Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia*, 3 (1988), pp. 191–149.

³ Č. Laurinavičius, *Politika ir diplomatija* (Vilnius, 1997), p. 149.

which would be proposed in any case; Lithuania's recognition was possible simply by voting first for its acceptance to the League of Nations. In other words, Denmark's position could be accounted for by short-time considerations rather than by those directed to the remote future, and its correspondence with Sweden and Norway was related to the discussion more on details rather than on fundamentals.

Neither do additional arguments prove Mažeika's thesis. Danish deliberations, say, about the impracticability of Hymans' plans and even about Lithuania's orientation to Russia do not yet signify that they were pretexts for the *de jure* recognition on the part of Denmark. It is unbelievable that Denmark could fear Polish domination and consequently the possibility that it might go to war with Russia was asserted not by the Danes or even by some anonymous Swedish official but by the Lithuanian diplomat Ignas Šeinis. At least the Swedish ministry of Foreign Affairs and military experts considered (and that viewpoint did not change through the entire period between 1918 and 1940) that all *randstater*, including Poland, could not in any way contribute to maintenance of the balance of power in Eastern Europe. That was conditioned in essence only by the relations between Russia and Germany, and certainly by the relations of these two states with France and England.⁴ Danish politicians must have foreseen that. Besides, Denmark was more interested in supporting Poland as an adversary of Germany rather than Lithuania. It is a fact that Denmark, recognizing Lithuania *de jure*, indirectly supported the rejection of Hymans' plan. However, it remains unproven that the motives of such Danish actions were a silent backing of Lithuania's gravitation towards Soviet Russia.

All in all, Mažeika's book is an innovative significant contribution to the research of the contacts between Lithuania and Scandinavia, grounded in Lithuanian and Danish archival materials and historiographical studies. The work has extensive English and Danish summaries.

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⁴ W. Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum. Från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår* (Stockholm, 1993), pp. 16–20 ff.; H. Wieslander, *I nedrustningens tecken. Intressen och aktiviteter kring försvarfrågan 1918–1925* (Lund, 1966), p. 125.