


## Actions by Ernestas Galvanauskas Towards the Hymans Plan – Internal Political Circumstances

### Działania Ernestasa Galvanauskasa wobec założeń planu Hymansa – wewnętrzne uwarunkowania polityczne

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**Abstract:** Ernestas Galvanauskas – politician, scientist and public figure – is a person little known to public opinion not only in Lithuania but also in Poland. However, Lithuanian historians and political scientists see him as one of the more influential politicians who contributed to the construction of the Lithuanian state, more than Prime Minister Augustinas Voldemaras or President Antanas Smetona. The revival of the Lithuanian state is inextricably linked with the person of E. Galvanauskas. He was involved in the process of modernization of Klaipėda, led to the development of Lithuanian economics, which he applied in practice to manage the country's economy. The research objective of this article is an in-depth analysis of the diplomatic activities of E. Galvanauskas in relation to the Hymans plan while he was Prime Minister of the government and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Polish literature on the subject lacks sources concerning the history of Lithuania and Lithuanian-Polish relations in the interwar period, especially in the context of E. Galvanauskas' political activity.

**Keywords:** Ernestas Galvanauskas, Polish-Lithuanian relations, League of Nations, Hymans plan

**Streszczenie:** Ernestas Galvanauskas – polityk, naukowiec i osoba publiczna – jest postacią mało znaną opinii społecznej nie tylko na Litwie, ale i w Polsce. Litewscy historycy i politolodzy postrzegają go jednak jako jednego z bardziej wpływowych polityków, który przyczynił się do budowania państwowego bytu litewskiego, bardziej niż premier Augustinas Voldemaras czy prezydent Antanas Smetona. Odrodzenie państwa litewskiego nierozzerwalnie wiąże się z osobą E. Galvanauskasa. Był on zaangażowany w proces modernizacji Kłajpedy, doprowadził do rozwoju ekonomii litewskiej, którą zastosował w praktyce do zarządzania gospodarką kraju. Cel badawczy niniejszego artykułu stanowi pogłębiona analiza działalności dyplomatycznej E. Galvanauskasa wobec planu Hymansa, w czasie gdy pełnił on funkcję premiera rządu oraz ministra spraw zagranicznych. W polskiej literaturze przedmiotu brakuje źródeł dotyczących problematyki dziejów Litwy i relacji litewsko-polskich w okresie międzywojennym, zwłaszcza w kontekście aktywności politycznej E. Galvanauskasa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Ernestas Galvanauskas, stosunki polsko-litewskie, Liga Narodów, plan Hymansa

In 1918, Poland and Lithuania regained their independence. The Polish government put forward a proposal to create a common state, which the Lithuanian government rejected. Between the two revived States there was an armed conflict, and the subject of the dispute was the nationality of the border areas. After the end of the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, the lands of southeastern Lithuania together with Vilnius were recognized as part of Lithuania under the Suwałki agreement, but Poland did not comply with the provisions and in October 1920 there was the so-called Żeligowski rebellion, as a result of which the Vilnius region was occupied. After the failure of the inter-state peace negotiations, the League of Nations began to normalize the situation. Paul Hymans, President of the League of Nations, presented on May 20, 1921, his own peace proposal. It involved the creation of two national cantons out of Lithuania, with the capital in Vilnius, and the linking of the state thus created with Poland, which was largely a replication of the Polish federation idea propounded by Polish Marshal Józef Piłsudski. In the face of the continuing lack of agreement, on September 3, P. Hymans proposed the autonomy of Vilnius region within Lithuania, which was rejected by Poland. Finally, on September 21, 1921, the League of Nations ended all attempts to settle the dispute, on February 3, 1923 it decided to divide the so-called neutral belt zone between the two sides, and on March 15, 1923 the Conference of Ambassadors, implementing the provisions of Article 87 of the Treaty of Versailles, decided to recognise the Polish borders.

The research objective of this article is to analyse the diplomatic activities of politician Ernestas Galvanauskas towards the Hymans plan. The article also discusses the foreign policy pursued by E. Galvanauskas in the crucial years of 1920–1921 in Lithuania. It was a period of trying to rebuild Polish-Lithuanian relations, mainly in the context of Vilnius. By examining selected cases from the perspective of political actors, this article can help explain why some of their decisions deviated from traditional consensus-based international foreign policy. The scope of the article delineates the Kaunas–Warsaw conflict. The subject matter, on the other hand, refers to the silhouette of the politician E. Galvanauskas. The territorial scope includes Lithuanian lands and areas under the Lithuanian administration (among others the territory of Klaipėda) and the lands of the Second Republic and the area under the Polish administration (among others Vilnius region). The chronological framework of the research field defines the years 1920–1921.

The realisation of the research objectives was made possible by the implementation of the historical method, which is used to establish a historical fact. This analysis provides a starting point for further research. The research hypothesis formulated in the article is based on the assumption that the diplomatic activity of E. Galvanauskas was based on interests contrary to the far-right nationalist opposition, headed by Antanas Smetona.

### **1. Political biography of Ernestas Galvanauskas (1882–1967)**

After obtaining his matriculation in Mintawa in 1902, E. Galvanauskas began his studies at the Forestry Institute in St. Petersburg. In the same year, he became a member of the Lithuanian Democratic Party. In 1905, he was a representative of the Farmers' Union, and thanks to his active work and involvement in representing their affairs, he became a representative of the Great Seimas of Vilnius (*"Lietuvos ukininkas"* 1906: 528). In his memoirs about the Vilnius Seimas, he wrote:

During the speech, each party tried to attract as many supporters as possible, each struggled with other groups, each offered something, but none paid much attention to what should be required and what will serve the Lithuanian people. The Vilnius Seimas was the place where the first encounters between all Lithuanian parties took place, they [political parties – M.M.] were not prepared and were not willing to cooperate, each had its own ambitions. In such conditions, even long-term issues were insoluble, they became the object of inevitable sharp clashes (Audėnas 1990: 7).<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of the above, a few comments can be made. First of all, one can see the first important feature of E. Galvanauskas' personality: throughout his career on the Lithuanian political scene, he avoided intrigues and political games. For this reason, he is relatively unrecognised in Lithuanian history and political thought. Secondly, he did not write political manifestos or create political programs. In fact, he was more of a political performer than an ideologue. Therefore, in Lithuanian literature, there are no collections of his quotations or memoirs, unlike A. Smetona or Augustinas

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<sup>1</sup> All translations from the Lithuanian language come from the author of the article.

Voldemaras. However, his influence on governments is felt in all the most important events of Lithuanian history, beginning in 1919 until at least 1926. (Varnas 2018).

For his active political activity, including participation in the Vilnius Seimas, he was repressed by the Tsarist administration. In 1906, he was arrested and imprisoned in Poniewież for several months. In 1908, realizing that he could no longer come to Lithuania and the Russian Empire, he emigrated to Belgium, where he continued his engineering studies at the Technical University of Liège. In 1912, he graduated as a mining engineer, and as an electrical engineer in 1913 (Banevičius 1991: 58). Unable to find employment, fascinated by the mountains and the Balkan climate, he left for Serbia, where in 1914 he was employed by a French-Serbian railway company. During the coming Great War, like most political activists, he emigrated to Western Europe. In 1916, he moved to Paris where he worked as an electrical engineer. In the capital of France began his second instalment of the political road. There he met a Lithuanian diplomat and delegate to Paris Osakaras Milašius, who offered him a job as a secretary in the Lithuanian delegation to the ongoing peace conference in Paris (E. Galvanauskas spoke French very well). Ernestas Galvanauskas was responsible not only for the preparation of state texts for the Paris conference but also for the attire and representative appearance of A. Voldemaras, which also influenced the creation of his external image in Paris (Klimas 1990: 159).

From a political point of view, E. Galvanauskas assisted the Lithuanian delegation. The sympathy of the Lithuanian delegates won by him was not only due to his dedication and diligence in favour of the delegation headed by A. Voldemaras but above all due to the fact that for a long time, he was a non-partisan person, which made him politically impartial – this inspired greater confidence. In 1912, E. Galvanauskas went to the European Congress of Socialists in Lucerne. After the conference, he was invited by Jonas Vileišis, head of the Lithuanian delegation, to Berlin for negotiations on a loan to the Lithuanian government for his activities. In June 1911, E. Galvanauskas, under the persuasion of J. Vileišis, returned to Lithuania to soon take up the post of Prime Minister. At this point, it is worth noting that E. Galvanauskas gained great sympathy and recognition from the head of the delegation J. Vileišis, who recommended him to perform the highest functions in the state, presented him as a loyal, hard-working person, and most importantly – not belonging to any political party (Martišius 2003: 118).

## 2. Consequences of the crisis in the Cabinet of Minister Mykolas Sleževičius

The initial stage of his political career professionally prepared E. Galvanauskas for work in the administrative, diplomatic and economic spheres. At the beginning of September 1919, a crisis broke out in the Cabinet of Mykolas Sleževičius, as the government did not cope with new challenges in the international arena. For this reason, the opposition demanded changes. On September 30, 1919, President A. Smeton ordered an extraordinary meeting in the Seimas, where all representatives of Lithuanian parties gathered. During the meeting, A. Smeton proposed the formation of a government for E. Galvanauskas, because – according to the political tactics of the president – a non-partisan candidate could unite the polarized Lithuanian political elite. On October 7, 1919, E. Galvanauskas formed the fifth Lithuanian government, and on April 19, 1920 A. Smetona transferred the post of head of state to Alexander Stulginsk (Grinius 1954: 211). Due to the economic crisis in the country in early 1921, E. Galvanauskas assumed the position of Minister of Finance with the approval of the new President. Lithuania lacked professional diplomats, which is why E. Galvanauskas decided to be the head of the Lithuanian delegation in Brussels and in Geneva during negotiations with the Polish delegation (“Akiraščiai” 1973: 53).

At this point it is worth asking why, in January 1921, E. Galvanauskas decided to take responsibility in diplomatic negotiations with Poland in favour of the Hymans plan. Both the ruling party and the opposition on January 21, 1921 jointly expressed their resentment to A. Smetona that his friend and closest collaborator Minister A. Voldemaras was passive in the League of Nations. Having learned of this, A. Voldemaras resigned the same day as the head of the Lithuanian delegation to the League of Nations. President A. Smetona offered the position to E. Galvanauskas, who officially headed the Lithuanian delegation to the League of Nations on February 1, 1921 (Bukaitė 2016: 178). The diplomat in Paris, Petras Klimas, wrote about this event in his memorial:

Doubts arose about the new helmsman of Lithuanian diplomacy because Voldemaras was our greatest intellectual force in the League of Nations. He was still *homo novus* for us as an overly abstract thinker, a dialectician. In addition, he retired from public activity, sensing that he and his political group were losing popularity in the Seimas. For this reason, it was necessary to look for a more responsible representative in the government (1990: 293).

It can be concluded that the main reason for the departure of A. Voldemaras was the decline in his popularity and authority among his closest associates, therefore he became passive both in the Seimas and in the government, which eventually led to the loss of his position in 1920.

### 3. Vilnius case at the League of Nations forum

Already at the beginning of the negotiations, when plans for a plebiscite on the territory of Vilnius were being drawn up in the Council of the League of Nations, E. Galvanauskas demanded from the members of the Council that the consequences of the plebiscite be recognized by the Polish side. According to the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Poland has repeatedly violated the rules related to the demarcation line. Also on the initiative of E. Galvanauskas, an argument arose in the league of Nations to postpone the plebiscite. Since at that time, Lithuania still did not have a *de jure* status in the international arena, from a political point of view it was Lithuania, unlike Poland, that occupied an unequal position in the League of Nations.

Ernestas Galvanauskas managed to convince all members of the Council of the League of Nations on the Vilnius issue that another option was needed to resolve the conflict than holding a plebiscite. In his opinion, this was to be an option that would be consistent with all previous Council resolutions adopted on the dispute between the parties on the Poland-Lithuania line (Klimas 1990: 296). To this end, both countries should send their government representatives to Brussels, where P. Hymans, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, headed the mediation between the parties to the conflict.

On May 11, 1921, the first Polish-Lithuanian negotiations concerning the Vilnius dispute took place, where P. Hymans proposed his plan (the Hymans plan) to both sides. The content of this plan contained the basic idea of the Swiss model: Lithuania would have to become a federal state, formed from two cantons: Vilnius and Kaunas. Foreign, military and economic policy in the future should be governed by a common political body elected by the Lithuanian and Polish parliaments (*Hymanso projektas vyriausiuose kr. d. p. organuose* 1928: 6–8). The second thesis of the plan indicated that Klaipėda and its port would be used by the Polish

side without any customs restrictions. In response, E. Galvanauskas stated that this was a good basis for further discussions at the League of Nations forum, but he was afraid that from an economic point of view, economically stronger Poland would absorb Lithuania with its power and would not pay Lithuanian customs duties to the Treasury, which would ultimately weaken the Lithuanian economy (Galva 1982: 17). Both sides rejected the project, but it is worth deepening the historiographic analysis, which shows that E. Galvanauskas did not reject the project of Hymans in its entirety (Valsonokas 1989: 8).

Ernestas Galvanauskas understood well the vision offered by the mediator P. Hymans, who saw Lithuania as a state-province under the care of the pro-Western orientation of Poland. For this reason, E. Galvanauskas went on to say that negotiations could proceed according to this project, but without Federation elements. At the same time, he reported that negotiations with Poland could be conducted as follows: first, to sign an agreement on the protection of minorities in Lithuania and Poland on the basis of the basic, relevant agreement concluded in Versailles, and secondly, to conclude a military defence convention between the parties (Jegelavičius 1997: 315).

During the session of the League of Nations on June 21, 1921, directly asked by P. Hymans what he thought about remaining under Polish auspices, E. Galvanauskas replied

that in his opinion the priority was to resolve the conflict by guaranteeing the rights of minorities in Kaunas and Lithuania because these places become a nexus of conflicts. Secondly, the conclusion of a war convention is intended to limit Poland's defence matters in a potential conflict with Lithuania, i.e. the conclusion of a so-called non-aggression agreement against Lithuania. On the issue of Klaipėda, he completely refused to conduct any negotiations on this issue (Jegelavičius 1997: 316).

Other elements of the project, according to E. Galvanauskas, were worth discussing, which in effect constituted a *modus vivendi*. Therefore, in the then situation, the satisfied Council of the League of Nations passed a resolution on June 28, 1921, according to which talks on the Hymans plan were to be continued at the next session of the Council in Brussels.



#### 4. Effects of diplomatic activity of Ernestas Galvanauskas

The Hymans plan caused a loud resonance in Lithuania. At the beginning of September 1919, unrest reigned in the capital, opposition pressure on E. Galvanauskas ordered him not to allow or continue discussions, as well as to enter into further negotiations on the possibility of concluding federal or union relations with Poland. The Lithuanian anti-Hymans movement, organized by the radical wing, i.e. the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party and the Party of National Progress, prompted E. Galvanauskas to issue his note on July 22, 1921. in which he presented his position on the Hymans plan. In the note, he pointed to the actual reasons (raised in Lithuania) for not allowing the implementation of the resolution of June 28 (Abromaitis 2004: 219). Ernestas Galvanauskas' initiative was also to present another letter to the Council of the League of Nations. The note was approved by the Lithuanian Seimas, and its main thesis was that in order to continue negotiations with Poland on the forum of the League, it is necessary to implement the Suwałki Agreement,<sup>2</sup> because this agreement guaranteed the confidence of the Lithuanian government towards Poland and secured the basis for continuing negotiations without tension ("Voruta" 2012: 13). The Polish delegation, headed by the Minister at the League of Nations Szymon Askenazy, having read the document of E. Galvanauskas, rejected the demands of the Lithuanian Prime Minister, which resulted in further fruitless negotiations between the parties.

At the beginning of September 1921, at the autumn session of the League of Nations, P. Hymans presented the second version of the plan, the theses of which were more favourable for the Lithuanian side. The assumptions of the plan were consulted with the representative of Lithuania in England Tomas Narusevicius. However, the essence of the plan was not the basis for discussion, it was an agreement that had to be accepted by both sides of the conflict. In the second version of the plan, the idea of a canton was abandoned, autonomy was offered to the Vilnius region, it was suggested to establish separate general staffs on the territory of Vilnius, their activities would be coordinated by both sides and during a potential war Poland would have the right to use the Vilnius territory. As a result of pressure from the Council of the League

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<sup>2</sup> The Suwałki agreement established a demarcation line, which granted a significant part of the Vilnius Oblast to Lithuania, but not Vilnius, as well as an agreement on the end of the war, thus providing for the procedure for the exchange of prisoners of war between the parties.



of Nations, E. Galvanauskas agreed to continue negotiations towards the second Hymans plan (Žepkaitė 1980: 148).

In this regard, a new wave of protests against the second Hymans plan arose in Lithuania (*Dar dėl Ženevos rezoliucijos. Didelis mitingas – demonstracija* Kaune 12.07.1921: 1–3). In political and social meetings, E. Galvanauskas was strongly urged not to enter into any Confederal relations with Poland, because of which the independence of Lithuania would suffer, and to try to keep the issue of Lithuania's independence with its capital Vilnius on the Forum of the League of Nations (*Piliečių balsai. Vilkaviškio gyventojų rezoliucija* 1921: 3). Therefore, on November 1, 1921, E. Galvanauskas organized a conference for delegates to the League of Nations in Kaunas, and on the eve he had a meeting in the Seimas with public activists, leaders of parties and factions. At the conference, he stated that everyone is determined to reject the Hymans plan, both its first and second versions. Their arguments were based on internal politics and on strong social reactions against any closer union with Poland. The adoption of P. Hymans' proposal would cause serious confusion which could lead to a national disaster (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas, *Lietuvos pasiuntinių konferencijos posėdžio protokolas* 31.10.1921, f. 383, b. 118). During the conference of delegates, E. Galvanauskas also mentioned that in the event of riots, the Lithuanian Army is likely to be actively involved in these matters. At the same time, he stressed the need for further negotiations on the second Hymans plan, since rejecting it would mean the end of mediation, and, consequently, the renunciation of Vilnius and the entire country. Further, as the head of the delegation stated, this could lead to a war with Poland and the occupation of Lithuania as a whole, and then, as he said, We must not forget that if Poland loses its independence, Lithuania will not survive as a state entity either (*I sesijos 124 posėdis* 20.09.1921). At the end of November 1921, an appeal was sent to the members of the Lithuanian Seimas by the Lithuanian Committee for the Salvation of the Nation. The appeal included a demand that the members of the Seimas categorically reject the adoption by the Lithuanian government of the second version of the Hymans plan (*Kauno mitingo nutarimas dėl Hymanso projekto* 1921: 6). A few days later, members of the Lithuanian government, including E. Galvanauskas, received anonymous threats about what would happen if they accepted the proposals of the League of Nations (Žepkaitė 1978: 206).

November 24, 1921, Lithuanian social activist Zigmundas Žemaitis arrived at the conference of the factions of the Lithuanian Social Democratic

Party and the Peasants' Union Party, stating that the new Prime Minister of the government Kazys Grinius informed him that his cabinet of Ministers will consider the issue of the Hymans plan on November 25, and its resolution will not require ratification by the Seimas. At the same time, Z. Žemaitis feared that the Seimas would only be entitled to ratify treaties prepared after the adoption of the draft. Members of the faction were not sure whether the cabinet of Ministers would not adopt the draft without the knowledge of the Seimas, so some members of the faction insisted on guarantees that this would not happen, while others expressed no confidence in the Cabinet of Ministers of K. Grinius (*Steigiamojo Seimo LSLDP ir LVS frakcijų bloko protokolai* 24.11.1921: 343). The Cabinet of Ministers was tasked on November 25 to consider the Hymans plan without the knowledge of the Seimas and independently of that body to accept it or reject it at a meeting of the Masonic lobby. On November 22, Z. Žemaitis was appointed Minister without portfolio for Belarusian affairs in the government of Dominik Semaška. In a broad sense, Minister D. Semaška wanted to consult not only Z. Žemaitis but also other members of Freemasonry about the Hymans plan. It is worth noting that Z. Žemaitis and the Kaunas Lodge, founded on February 1, 1920, by Freemasons and former Prime Minister Mikolaj Šleževičius, opted for the adoption of the Hymans plan. Most of the members of the Kaunas Masonic Lodge were supporters of the Hymans plan. However, Minister D. Semaška, being at the same time a member of the Kaunas Masonic Lodge and an opponent of the Hymans plan, together with the Minister of the Interior, Rapolas Skipitis, resigned.

It is noteworthy that in the Cabinet of Ministers, there was a vast majority of supporters of the Hymans plan and they planned to accept it with minor reservations. Michał Römer, an ardent supporter of the agreement with Poland, expressed this in his memorial as follows:

I am aware that there is a need to adopt the Hymans plan, but not in the way that the proponents of this cause in the cabinet are promoting it, it is unacceptable. This contempt for Lithuanian democracy, the Seimas, the Constitution and the establishment on the Lithuanian political scene should not be called political actions around the League plan. I understand and would justify the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, which is not afraid to take the initiative of a dictator, but the current speculators of the Lithuanian establishment are cowardly, they want to achieve the goal by deceiving, cheating and lying, treating the principles of Lithuanian democracy as a naive child. I am not surprised that

the League of Nations: England and France, convinces the Lithuanian establishment to undertake such methods of action, because they are interested in resolving the issue of Vilnius as soon as possible. For this reason, they are looking for any way to achieve the goal (Römeris, Miknys, Grigaitienė 2013: 30).

Based on his critical assessment of the political situation in Lithuania, M. Römer accused the League of Nations of treating Lithuanian society as a nation that must be deceived and cannot be convinced of anything, and with this in mind, the Lithuanian government acted in the same way, while the League of Nations imposed its proposals on the Lithuanian government.

November 24, 1921, in order to prevent the adoption of the Hymans plan, an attempt was made on the life of the head of the Lithuanian delegation, E. Galvanauskas. The explosive was planted on the windowsill of his bedroom. During the explosion, E. Galvanauskas was seriously injured. According to sources, he was saved by the fact that he was awake during the explosion, and turned his back to the window, playing cards. There was no doubt that for political reasons E. Galvanauskas was a very inconvenient figure in the political arena. The press organ of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union paramilitary organization "Trimitas" publicly condemned the act of terror, although it called it the result of the tense political situation in Lithuania and the consequence of the League of Nations interventionism in the internal political affairs of Lithuania (*Patamsių riteriai* 1921: 3). A member of the Lithuanian delegation, P. Klimas, wrote in his memorial that only after 40 years he learned that the attack was organized by several people and indicated their names: Balis Sruoga, Jonas Strazda and Miksa Kalmantavičius-Kalmantas. At the time of the assassination, the writer B. Sruoga was studying in Munich, so it is doubtful that he could have contributed to this act. Another version was also mentioned, that the initiator of the attempt was Wincenty Krevė-Mickievčius, and its executor was officer Józef Mikuckis (Čepėnas 1992: 650).

In 1923, it was revealed that the main perpetrator of the attack was Feliksas Šemeta, an active activist for the independence movement. Together with his brothers Alexander and Hipolitas, in the fight against the Western Volunteer Army (lit. *Bermontininkai*), they created the famous "Kužiai" group, which militarily supported the Telšiai command and the Janikščiai battalion. By the end of October 1923, F. Šemeta fought against the Poles and then became the leader of the partisan detachment. As a member of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, he cooperated with the Kaunas war counterintelligence. His involvement in the assassination of E. Galvanauskas

was confirmed by a former member of the Lithuanian Seimas and lawyer Zigmund Toliušis. In his memoirs, he wrote that Vladislavas Putvinskis, the commander of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, took a particularly hostile position against the Hymans plan. In his opinion, the adoption of the Hymans plan would cause Lithuania to enter the orbit of Polish political, economic and cultural influence, and in the future Lithuania, as a weaker partner for Poland, would lose its independence and be incorporated into its territory. In the opinion of Z. Toliušis, in order for the Hymans plan not to be adopted, it was decided to remove the most influential supporter of the League of Nations solutions – E. Galvanauskas. In addition to V. Putvinskis, the leadership of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Association included such leaders as: Mikas Mikelewičius, Pranas Klimaitis, Aleksandras Marcinkevičius, Liudas Vailionis, Antanas Žmuidžinavičius, however, the closest friends of V. Putvinskis were informed about the plan to assassinate E. Galvanauskas. As he wrote from Z. Toliušis, W. Putvinskis was a confidant of F. Šemeta, a native of the District of Šiauliai, and it was he who was commissioned to carry out the assassination (Toliušis 1968: 178).

In 1923, after the investigation and clarification of the case and the disclosure of the names of the Bombers by the Kaunas counterintelligence, V. Putvinskis advised F. Šemet to leave Lithuania and go to Latvia as soon as possible. Then he suggested that from Riga, F. Šemeta get to Moscow in order to obtain new identification documents and find work near the Lithuanian border. Leaving the country on November 12, 1923, he was arrested on the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Until September 1924 he was imprisoned in Lubyanka in Moscow. For illegally crossing the Soviet border, he was sentenced to 3 years in a concentration camp in Solovki. After serving his sentence, by the second decision of the Supreme Court of the USSR, he was deported to Tulun in Siberia for 10 years. In the forced labour camp in Irkutsk, where he worked as a carpenter in the city library, he was accused in 1938 of promoting Trotskyism and sentenced to another 3 years in a forced labour camp. He was soon accused of spying for Trotsky's supporters, which served as evidence for his conviction and execution (Žadeikytė 2013).

Antanas Gravgrokas, a member of the central board of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, participated in the organization of the assassination attempt on the head of the Lithuanian diplomacy. His son Vytautas Gravgrokas mentioned that his father and captain Antanas Petruškevičius and another unidentified person, a member of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union,

detonated an explosive (Anton von Gravrock asmeninis archyvas, *Atsiminimai* 2015). In 1905, A. Gravrokas was a member of the praesidium of the Great Seimas of Vilnius, he was actively involved in revolutionary events. At the beginning of 1921, he joined the ranks of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, and at the time of organizing the attempt on the life of E. Galvanauskas, he served as editor of the press organ of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, "Trimitas." On its pages, he officially fought for the public status of the organization. In 1932–1933 he was the mayor of Kaunas. In his autobiography, A. Gravrokas wrote that E. Galvanauskas was well known from the activities of the Great Seimas of Vilnius, and feeling antipathy towards him, decided to take part in the assassination (Anton von Gravrock asmeninis archyvas, A. Gravrokas, *Autobiografija* 1941).

Another person involved in the attempt on the life of E. Galvanauskas was the Lithuanian soldier Antanas Petruškevičius. He joined the Lithuanian armed forces on January 28, 1919 and took part in the battles against the Bolsheviks and Poles. His father Laurynas Petruškevičius was arrested by Polish soldiers, and then imprisoned in Sejny. Interrogated and tortured, he died in 1924 (Dainos Kemeraitienės asmeninis archyvas, Antanas Petruškevičius, Stasys Petruškevičius, Vincas Petruškevičius, Andrius Petruškevičius, Juozas Petruškevičius, *I ir II pasaulinio karo metų pergyventi prisiminimai* 2005: 6). The death of his father and the personal experience of the atrocities inflicted on him by Polish soldiers imposed on the anti-Polish attitude of the activist, as a result of which, as he admits, he became involved in organizing the assassination of E. Galvanauskas – the most active supporter of the Hymans plan. After a deeper analysis of the facts, it can be concluded that there is no unambiguous evidence for this story. Until November 21, 1942 (he was shot in the prison in Sverdlovsk), Antanas Petruškevičius was obliged to keep the course of those events secret.

In 1935, editor Viktoras Biržiška wrote in the "Trimitas" newspaper that during one of the underground meetings in August 1921, The Polish Military Organization, in cooperation with Kaunas Poles, was to assassinate Minister E. Galvanauskas and Józef Purickis, who they were the only and most influential supporters of the Hymans plan. However, the assassination was organized by the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and the anti-Hymans movement led by A. Smetona and A. Voldemaras (Biržiška 2013: 187). However, the analyses show that while A. Smeton was in power in the state (1926–1939), the editor V. Biržiška was instructed to publicly compromise the Polish environment in the press.

After a quick recovery on December 3, 1921, E. Galvanauskas organised a meeting of the Council of Ministers, at which he urged Ministers not to take into account the assassination and pressure from the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and activists of the anti-Hymans movement when making decisions on the Hymans plan. He argued that Hymans plan should be accepted "to-day" ("Karys" 1921: 2). However, on the same day, the Council of Ministers did not dare to adopt the League of Nations plan and officially rejected it. On December 22, 1921, the Legislative Seimas of Lithuania unanimously approved the decision of the Council of Ministers not to accept the Hymans plan, which was to resolve the dispute between Lithuania and Poland (*I sesijos 156 posėdis* 22.12.1922). People's Party MP Jan Staugaitis said that Poland is politically and economically stronger, which is why the League of Nations plan was used by Poland as a tool to bring Lithuania into a federal union. The leader of the Christian Democrats, Mykolas Krupavičius, stressed that the Hymans plan is unacceptable because it carries slavery and destroys the sovereignty of the Lithuanian state. On the other hand, Steponas Kairys, a Social Democratic politician, criticized the government for allowing E. Galvanauskas and the delegation under his leadership to succumb to pressure from the Entente without paying attention to the opinion of the Lithuanian people. He argued that the proposal of president P. Hymans was only the first stage for Lithuania and that there is still a high risk of losing its independence. In conclusion, he appealed to the Seimas about the need to consolidate all the forces of Lithuanian society in order to maintain a strong political line towards Poland and the League of Nations.

On behalf of the Lithuanian government, E. Galvanauskas on December 24, 1921 in a memo to the League of Nations notified: "Having considered the proposal of the Council of the League of Nations from all sides, the Lithuanian Council of Ministers is obliged with the deepest regret not to accept its recommended reconciliation with Poland" ("Lietuva" 1921: 1). Ernestas Galvanauskas pointed out the following arguments against the Hymans Plan: 1) after the adoption of the plan, agricultural reform in Lithuania would be suspended; 2) Lithuania would be included in the Polish imperialist wars; 3) Lithuania, being a small state, would become a province of Poland. Analyses show that the implemented agrarian reform at the beginning of 1921 affected the Lithuanian rural population most with fear when they were threatened, in case of reconciliation with Poland, with the taking of Lithuanian lands by the Polish establishment (Laurinavičius 2004: 257). In order to consolidate the Lithuanian peasant nation against the league of



Nations and Poland's plan, the largest faction of the Lithuanian legislative Seimas – the Christian Democratic bloc, the People's and Social Democratic parties – took advantage of this fear and persuaded E. Galvanauskas to enter this argument as the main reason for rejecting the proposal of P. Hymans (*Steigiamojo Seimo atsišaukimas "Piliečiai" 1920*).

Later, in his memorial, the future president of Lithuania, K. Grinius, wrote that for him, E. Galvanauskas and J. Purickis, the Hymans plan with minor amendments seemed acceptable, but for many irresponsible patriots, especially the younger generation – soldiers, students, it was unacceptable parties. According to K. Grinius, the Hymans plan at that time was the only opportunity to regain Vilnius. He was convinced that having its own administration, schools and leadership, as well as a local Lithuanian Army was a good option for the possibility of combining Vilnius with Kaunas Lithuania (Ilgunas 2000: 259). Augustinas Janulaitis, a lawyer and member of the Seimas from the Social Democrats party, wrote in his article that the Hymans plan fundamentally changed the state of law and the Constitution of the Lithuanian state, the law belonged only to the Legislative Seimas, and not to the competence of the Council of Ministers. Further in the article, he condemned all party leaders who, fearing that the League of Nations plan would become the subject of debate in the Seimas, decided to hold E. Galvanauskas and the Council of Ministers fully responsible (Janulaitis 1921: 2).

The Voldemaras-Smeton duo closely and suspiciously followed the activities and attitude of E. Galvanauskas in relations with Poland. In the pages of the press organ of the Party of National Progress, A. Voldemaras claimed that E. Galvanauskas was a supporter of the Hymans plan and wanted to pass it as soon as possible. However, at the last moment, under pressure from the Party of National Progress and the socialists, he was forced to reject the League of Nations plan. Then he preached the thesis that the political thought of the Lithuanian Socialists was aimed at turning Lithuania away from the political influence of the West and turning it towards Soviet Russia. On the other hand, the political goal of the Party of National Progress was to implement more radical anti-Polish rhetoric. When the Party of National Progress lost the legislative elections in 1922, it did not win a single seat. Unable to accept the defeat, it launched an anti-Hymans campaign to oppose E. Galvanauskas, the government and the Lithuanian Seimas (Voldemaras 1922: 1-2). It is also worth noting that the top secret direct contacts with the Russian Embassy maintained by the Party of National Progress, and not the party of Social Democrats, confirm the cooperation



of this party with Soviet Russia. The Russian archives were examined by Professor Zenonas Butkus of Vilnius University. This analysis shows that E. Galvanauskas was not a supporter of either the authoritarian regime or the leaders of the Party of National Progress A. Smetona and A. Voldemaras – his vision of the Hymans plan stood out.

Already in exile, the diplomat Vaclovas Sidzikauskas, a colleague of E. Galvanauskas, admitted in his memoirs that although E. Galvanauskas failed to solve the problem of borders with Poland, his position on this issue was correct, since he was a supporter of improving relations with Poland. According to V. Sidzikauskas, the lack of efforts to change relations with Poland under the pressure of the opposition and paramilitary organizations, such as the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, facilitated the process of national consolidation, accelerated the development of national consciousness, and strengthened the determination to fight for patriotic values. According to the political forecast of V. Sidzikauskas, if E. Galvanauskas had persuaded the Council of Ministers to accept the proposal of P. Hymans in 1921, Vilnius would probably have found itself in the zones of Soviet Belarus, and after World War II in communist Poland (Sidzikauskas 1970: 65).

## Conclusions

In this article, an attempt is made to show that the diplomatic activity of E. Galvanauskas against the Hymans plan was characterized by pragmatism.<sup>3</sup> As the analysis showed, in many cases, E. Galvanauskas was guided by a more intuitive than strategic choice of foreign policy instruments. The desire to be different from his predecessor is also an attempt to show that E. Galvanauskas was not only a continuator of the foreign policy that the extreme Lithuanian opposition expected. He wanted to create his foreign policy in such a way that it would be distinguished not only by the pragmatism of the solutions used but also by a style that could be less confrontational towards Poland. The political crisis in Lithuania, which intensified from 1921, and regular pressure from the opposition led to a definitive break in

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<sup>3</sup> The pragmatic policy of E. Galvanauskas should be understood as the use of all opportunities to pursue the interests of Lithuania, including those related to federation solutions while maintaining proper relations with Warsaw.

diplomatic relations with Poland, which also resulted in the fact that talks on the adoption of the Hymans project ultimately failed. In this way, the chance to rebuild at least a substitute for the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, associated with Poland, was wasted.

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