

'LITHUANIAN NATIONALISTS' AGAINST 'IMPERIAL RUSSIANS'? GENERATIONAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN SENIOR LITHUANIAN ARMY OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

With the creation of the Lithuanian armed forces in the early 20th century, the question of having officers loyal to the idea of the nation-state inevitably arose. It became especially relevant during the Wars of Independence that followed the First World War. Due to the need to create the armed forces urgently, individuals from different backgrounds and with different experiences joined the corps of officers in the emerging Lithuanian army. Therefore, a variety of tensions of a political and social nature arose between them, which in some cases grew into open conflict. The article examines the question of whether these conflicts were based on differences in officers' education, social background, national engagement or experience. Can we explain the conflicts between the officers by the generation gap? And what role was played in these conflicts by the experience of military service acquired by some officers in the Imperial Russian army, including experience in the First World War?

KEY WORDS: Lithuanian army, Russian army, officer corps, relations between officers and politicians, generational conflicts, prosopography.

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ANOTACIJA

XX šimtmečio pradžioje kuriant Lietuvos Respublikos kariuomenę, neišvengiamai kilo karininkų, lojalių tautinės valstybės idėjai, egzistavimo klausimas. Jis tapo ypač aktualus po Pirmojo pasaulinio karo prasidėjus Nepriklausomybės karams. Dėl neatidėliotinos būtinybės kurti karines pajėgas į besikuriančios kariuomenės karininkų korpusą susibūrė skirtingų pažiūrų ir patirčių asmenys. Tarp jų reikėsi įvairios politinio ir socialinio pobūdžio įtampos, tam tikrais atvejais išaugdavusios į atvirus konfliktus. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami klausimai, ar šių konfliktų pagrindas buvo karininkų išsilavinimo, socialiniai, tautiniai ir patirties skirtumai? Ar karininkų tarpusavio prieštaravimus galima paaiškinti kartų skirtumais? Ir kokį vaidmenį šių prieštaravimų atžvilgiu vaidino dalies karininkų Rusijos imperijoje įgyta karinės tarnybos patirtis, įskaitant patirtį Pirmajame pasauliniame kare?

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Lietuvos kariuomenė, Rusijos kariuomenė, karininkų korpusas, karininkų ir politikų santykiai, kartų konfliktai, prozopografija.

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Lithuanian military historiography and biographies of senior officers contain many details indicating that the officer corps of the Lithuanian army evolving after the First World War was not a homogenous group in social and ethnic terms. It consisted of members of different generations of officers. Based on the research publications¹ by Vytautas Lesčius, at the turn of the second and third decades of the 20th century, members of the officer corps of the Lithuanian army can be divided into three generations:

1. The older generation: officers who served in the military formations of the Bolsheviks and the White Army, led by Admiral Alexander Kolchak and generals Anton Denikin and Pyotr Wrangel, and who after the Russian civil war returned to Lithuania and served in the Lithuanian army from 1921 to 1923.

2. The middle generation: students and teachers, who trained in military institutions in the Russian Empire during the First World War, usually with the rank of *praporshchik*, who joined the Lithuanian army in 1918–1920. According to Lesčius, these officers formed the core of the new Lithuanian army, their numbers amounting to 500 in 1918–1920.

3. The younger generation: graduates of the Lithuanian Military School, who began serving in the Lithuanian army in 1919–1920. These officers accounted for 38.6% of the total number of officers in the army in 1920.²

There are also several facts and fragmentary observations in historiography of the conflicting and complex relationships between senior officers of different generations. Vidmantas Jankauskas, a biographer of many commanders in the Lithuanian armed forces, noted disagreements between General Kazys Ladiga, General Jonas Galvydis Bikauskas³ and Colonel Teodoras Daukantas.⁴ Gintautas Surgailis pointed out the opposition lingering among officers of the younger generation, and, according to the historiography, the 'old' generals Silvestras Žukauskas and Juozas Kraucevičius.⁵ He also noted the tension in relations between Colonel Konstantinas Žukas and Major Antanas Merkys.⁶ In the opinion of Jonas Aničas, the conflict be-

¹ LESČIUS, Vytautas. *Lietuvos kariuomenė 1918–1920 m.* Vilnius, 1998, p. 162–163; LESČIUS, Vytautas. Karininkų rengimo pradžia (1919–1920). *Lietuvos archyvai*, 1999, [t.] 12, p. 7–12.

² LESČIUS, V. *Lietuvos kariuomenė...*, p. 162–163.

³ JANKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. *Kario kelias: generolas Kazimieras Ladiga nepriklausomybės kovose.* Vilnius, 2004, p. 38–39; LAURINAVIČIUS, Česlovas. Lietuvos valstybės padėtis 1919 m. pradžioje. In BLAŽYTĖ-BAUŽIENĖ, Danutė; GIMŽAUSKAS, Edmundas; LAURINAVIČIUS, Česlovas et al. *Nepriklausomybė 1918–1940* (Lietuvos istorija, t. X, d. I). Ats. red. Česlovas LAURINAVIČIUS. Vilnius, 2013, p. 141.

⁴ JANKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. *Nepriklausomos Lietuvos generolai.* Vilnius, 1998, p. 53–61; JUREVIČIŪTĖ, Aušra. Generolas leitenantas Teodoras Daukantas. In *Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministrai ir kariuomenės vadai.* T. 2. Sud. Gintautas SURGAILIS. Vilnius, 2008, p. 100.

⁵ SURGAILIS, Gintautas. *Lietuvos kariuomenės vadai.* Vilnius, 1992, p. 8.

⁶ SURGAILIS, Gintautas. Pulkininkas Konstantinas Žukas. In *Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministrai...*, p. 70.

tween General Žukauskas and the radical young officers affected the morale of the whole army.⁷

Historians explain the disagreements and reasons for conflicts between army officers by emphasising the ethnic and political orientations of the older generation, who opposed the emerging state of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian nation. According to Lesčius, many of the older-generation officers did not speak Lithuanian, and did not understand the aspirations of the Lithuanian nation.⁸ In Jankauskas' opinion, foreign army officers not only failed to understand the affairs of Lithuania, but, worse, they were involved in political activities such as the '*peovek*' (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, POW) conspiracy.⁹ Historians attribute the opposite political attitude to the younger-generation officers, strictly national, as opposed to the older generation. According to Gediminas Rudys, the young officers who organised the coup d'état of 17 December 1926, and belonged to the Secret Officers Union,¹⁰ were offended at seeing 'so many Russian and Polish army officers' in senior military positions.¹¹ The hostility of the younger officers towards the older officers, and their aspiration to clear the army of the influence of strangers, was also noted by Jonas Vaičėnonis.¹²

This fragmentary information from historiography about the existence of different generations of officers in the Lithuanian armed forces, and the conflicts between them, leads to two questions. Firstly, were the conflicts in the officers' corps caused by short-term circumstances relating to specific events, or were they determined by deeper social and political contradictions that were characteristic of the different generations of officers? Secondly, did the conflicts between different generations of officers affect the emergence of the Secret Officers Union among younger-generation officers, as the historiography tells us? To answer these questions, I will conduct the study in two steps: firstly, I will look into the causes of conflicts between the most senior officers in the army, identify the participants, and, based on the allegations stated in the conflicts, I will group the officers into different groups. Secondly, I will use the prosopographic method of analysis to look at the lives of senior military

⁷ ANIČAS, Jonas. *Generolas Silvestras Žukauskas (1861–1937): biografinė apybraiža*. Vilnius, 2006, p. 93–94.

⁸ LESČIUS, V. *Lietuvos kariuomenė...*, p. 163.

⁹ JANKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. Generolas leitenantas Mykolas Velykis. In *Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministrai...*, p. 29.

¹⁰ The Secret Officers Union [Slaptoji karininkų sąjunga] was a conspiratorial underground organisation within the army with a nationalist ideology, which, according to historiography, played a leading role in the preparation and execution of the coup d'état of 17 December 1926. The main members of the organisation were Colonel Vladas Skorupskis, Major Ignas Slapšys, Captain Antanas Mačiūka, Captain Juozas Matulevičius and Captain Antanas Steponaitis. The organisation became active in 1921, but reached the peak of its activities in 1926–1928.

¹¹ RUDIS, Gediminas. 1926 m. gruodžio 17-osios perversmas. In BLAŽYTĖ-BAUŽIENĖ, D.; GIMŽAUSKAS, E.; LAURINAVIČIUS, Č. et al. Op. cit., p. 550–551.

¹² VAIČĖNONIS, Jonas. *Lietuvos kariuomenė valstybės politinio gyvenimo verpetuose (1927–1940 m.)*. Vilnius, 2004, p. 68.

officers, show their political and social characteristics, and compare them with the conflicting officer groups identified in the conflict analysis. In this way, I will attempt to identify officers belonging to different generations.

It should be noted that the survey sample includes only the group of officers in the highest positions in the army who were involved in conflict situations at the turn of the second and third decades of the 20th century. Conflict situations in this study are understood as situations revealing competition for dominant positions,¹³ characteristic only of the group of senior officers leading the army and its units.

It is no accident that the prosopographic method of research was chosen to address the problem, because the application of this particular method allows us to highlight and summarise specific political, social and economic traits characteristic of a particular group in society, a family, a genealogical branch, a clan, a ruling elite, or a professional group. This method also helps us to summarise and generalise individual lives of people comprising the analysed group, and based on this, to comment on the internal structure of the analysed group of society.¹⁴ For this reason, the prosopographic method is suitable for analysing the group of officers who formed the military command.

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'Lithuanian officers' versus 'Russians, Poles and the nobility'

The first conflict between senior officers took place on 23 December 1918, when a group of officers expressed their lack of confidence in the deputy minister of defence General Kiprijonas Kondratavičius. As a result, he was forced to step down from the post.¹⁵ The mistrust of the general among Lithuanian officers is explained in their memoirs by national and political reasons: they were unhappy that he spoke Russian,¹⁶ wore a Russian uniform,¹⁷ and mixed with officers of Russian origin, who, according to Captain Kazys Škirpa, were only interested in their salaries.¹⁸ Lithuanian officers were dissatisfied with the Belarusian 2nd Infantry Regiment in the army, which, in their opinion, was not a Lithuanian military unit, and was only set up to offer

¹³ Cf. KEATS-ROHAN, K. S. B. Introduction: Chameleon or Chimera? Understanding Prosopography. In *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook* (Prosopographica et Genealogica, vol. 13). Ed. by K. S. B. KEATS-ROHAN. Oxford, 2007, p. 21.

¹⁴ VERBOVEN, Koenraad; CARLIER, Myriam; DUMOLYN, Jan. A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography. In *Prosopography Approaches and Applications...*, pp. 35–70.

¹⁵ Order from the Ministry of Defence, 24 December 1918. *Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas* (Lithuanian Central State Archives, hereafter LCVA), f. 383, ap. 7, b. 52, l. 6–7.

¹⁶ PETRUITIS, Jonas. *Laisvę ginant: mūsų žygiai*. [T.] 1: *Atsiminimai iš kovų su bolševikais ir bermontininkais*. [Chicago, IL], 1952, p. 30–31.

¹⁷ LESČIUS, V. *Lietuvos kariuomenė...*, p. 76.

¹⁸ ŠKIRPA, Kazys. Tėvynės gelbėjimas. In *Mykolas Sleževičius*. Sud. Julius BŪTĖNAS. Chicago, IL, 1954, p. 204.

refuge to Russian officers who had come to Vilnius.¹⁹ Captain Vincas Grigaliūnas Glovackis was the only Lithuanian officer who knew General Kondratavičius, since he had served with him in the Turkestan military district of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, he also protested against the establishment of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, and accused General Kondratavičius of inviting Russian 'joint-staffers' into the army, and sending them to serve in the Belarusian regiment.²⁰ Under General Kondratavičius, Lithuanian officers in key positions in the General Staff were replaced by foreigners, including Major-General Boleslovas Kazimieras Kreičmanas,²¹ Colonel Chaleckis²² and Colonel Sviekovskis.²³ Seeing how the actions of General Kondratavičius opposed the national and political aspirations of Lithuanian officers, other officers began to protest against the formation of the Belarusian regiment,²⁴ and contemplated getting rid of the 'Russian yoke'.²⁵ Consequently, colonels Vladas Nagevičius, Jurgis Kubilius, Stasys Nastopka and Pranas Liatukas refused to join General Kondratavičius on a trip to Hrodna, removed him from the post of deputy minister of defence, and demanded he return the funds appropriated from the Ministry of National Defence.²⁶ The national and political nature of the conflict between these officers is also evidenced by the fact that after the removal of General Kondratavičius, the new minister of defence Colonel Mykolas Velykis, together with Lithuanian officers, initiated a reform of the General Staff, and dismissed some Russian officers.²⁷ It is not possible to determine accurately the number of dismissed officers, but from the memoirs of Colonel Velykis, we know that 'Belarusians, or more exactly Russians, accounted for a significant part' of the officers who were in the army at that time.²⁸

The efforts by Lithuanian officers to keep separate and not linked to the Russian and Belarusian officers who were about to establish themselves in the General Staff is shown by the decision made at a meeting of Lithuanian officers in December 1919 to renounce military ranks in the Lithuanian armed forces, and to use the more general term 'officer' instead of the rank.²⁹ This was an attempt to avoid possible subordination and the tandems of foreign officers who had higher military ranks. The conflict between Gen-

¹⁹ KUBILIUS, J.[urgis]. Savojoj kariuomenėj. *Karo archyvas*, 1938, t. X, p. 166.

²⁰ Memoir manuscript of Vincas Grigaliūnas Glovackis, undated [1950s]. *Pasaulio lietuvių archyvas (Lithuanian World Archives)*, reg. nr. 14545, dėžė nr. 1, l. 9.

²¹ STOLIAROVAS, Andriejus. Lietuvos Respublikos kariuomenės generalitetas 1918–1940 m: nežinomi istoriniai fragmentai. *Karo archyvas*, 2014, t. XXIX, p. 353.

²² The name is unknown and not indicated in military historiography and encyclopaedic manuals.

²³ GRIGALIŪNAS-GLOVACKIS [Vincas]. Mano atsiminimai. *Mūsų žinynas*, 1923, t. V, nr. 15, p. 433.

²⁴ KUBILIUS, J.[urgis]. Atsiminimai iš pirmųjų kariuomenės kūrimosi dienų. *Mūsų žinynas*, 1923, t. V, nr. 15, p. 421–422.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 421–423.

²⁶ KUBILIUS, J. Savojoj kariuomenėj..., p. 168.

²⁷ JANKAUSKAS, V. Generolas leitenantas Mykolas Velykis..., p. 23.

²⁸ VELYKIS, [Mykolas]. Iš nesenos praeities. *Mūsų žinynas*, 1923, t. IV, nr. 12, p. 505.

²⁹ GUŽAS, Petras. Atsiminimai apie pirmąsias mūsų kariuomenės kūrimosi dienas. *Mūsų žinynas*, 1923, t. V, nr. 15, p. 447.

eral Kondratavičius and Russian, Belarusian and Lithuanian officers reveals that from the earliest days of the formation of the army, efforts were made by Lithuanian officers to prevent foreign officers from taking command of the army, despite the political decision to establish Belarusian military formations along with Lithuanian formations, at a ratio of one to two.³⁰ It also reveals the early national political divisions between Lithuanians and foreigners, in this case, officers of Russian and Belarusian nationality.

The second national-political conflict between officers took place at the end of December 1918 in the 1st Infantry Regiment. The conflict was initiated by Colonel Ladiga, who refused to obey an order from the commander of the regiment General Galvydis Bykauskas to march to Lentvaris.³¹ The colonel sent a letter to the Ministry of National Defence in which he accused the general of organising the regiment too slowly. The conflict was so heated that, to defend his honour, General Galvydis Bykauskas even challenged Colonel Ladiga to a duel.³² After investigating the events in the 1st Infantry Regiment, the Ministry of Defence removed General Galvydis Bykauskas from the command of the regiment, and attempted to appoint a new commander, a colonel from the Imperial Russian Army Valerijonas Ramanauskas.³³ However, Lieutenant Antanas Juozapavičius, the provisional commander of the 1st Infantry Regiment, opposed this appointment. Guided by national and political reasons, he asked Colonel Ramanauskas not to be appointed commander of the regiment, since his arrival would cause a lot of misunderstandings and discontent. In Juozapavičius' opinion, only an officer with excellent Lithuanian, and who was knowledgeable about the psychology of the modern soldier, could be a regimental commander.³⁴ Thus, the conflict also reveals that, despite having a Lithuanian surname and origins, former officers in the Imperial Russian army were unwelcome and unacceptable in the ranks of the emerging Lithuanian armed forces.

This is confirmed by the most prominent conflict caused by national and political factors between General Žukauskas and the officers of the middle generation of the Lithuanian army. The historian Piotr Łossowski has noticed that General Žukauskas was blamed for being well disposed towards Poland.³⁵ It should be admitted that

³⁰ LESČIUS, V. *Lietuvos kariuomenė...*, p. 76.

³¹ SURGAILIS, Gintautas. *Karininkas Galvydis Bykauskas Pirmojo pėstininkų pulko vadas*. Vilnius, 2014, p. 26–27.

³² Statement by the officer Antanas Juozapavičius, 13 January 1919. LCVA, f. 381, ap. 3, b. 35, l. 9–11.

³³ Valerijonas Ramanauskas, born in 1956 in Kaunas into an Orthodox noble family, graduated from Riga Infantry School, served in the army of the Russian Empire, joined the Lithuanian army on 11 January 1919, assigned to the 2nd Infantry Regiment, appointed commander of the 1st Infantry Regiment on 25 January 1919, and deputy head of the Line Division of the Ministry of National Defence on 7 March 1919, transferred to the supply unit on 21 March 1919, appointed inspector of the chief of staff of the army on 1 March 1920, made a lieutenant general on 14 May 1920. He was appointed to serve as a special officer of the Ministry of National Defence on 29 July 1921, as army shooting inspector on 21 January 1924, and relegated to the reserve on 30 April 1924 at his personal request.

³⁴ Statement by the officer Antanas Juozapavičius, 13 January 1919. LCVA, f. 381, ap. 3, b. 35, l. 9–11, 30.

³⁵ ŁOSSOWSKI, Piotr. *Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1918–1920*. Warszawa, 1966, s. 124.

this claim is well grounded. It is revealed by several aspects of the activities of General Žukauskas. Firstly, in 1919, he published an article in the newspaper *Suvenytoji Lietuva*, edited by Jonas Aukštuolaitis, advocating a union between Lithuania and Poland. Secondly, in August 1919, he met with Major Tadeusz Kapczyński and Major Marian Kościalkowski, officers in the Intelligence Division of the Polish General Staff, when they came to Lithuania. Following these meetings, the general was ascribed the role of leader in the forthcoming uprising of the POW.³⁶ It is important to note that in letters of the 2nd division of the staff of the Polish armed forces, General Žukauskas was treated as a supportive person who allegedly would not campaign against Poland.³⁷ Most likely, this is why he was included in the plan for a coup. The logical continuation of these factors was the arrest of both aide-de-camps of General Žukauskas, General Vytautas Otockis and Colonel Leonardas Vojtekūnas, on the night of 28–29 August 1919, along with the arrest of members of the POW. Another argument that shows the involvement of General Žukauskas in the coup organised by the POW is the arrest of General Otockis after the intrusion of Liudas Gira with soldiers of the Kaunas commandant into the apartment of General Žukauskas.³⁸ General Žukauskas regarded these actions by Gira as a personal insult, and, in relation to the arrest, asked the President of the Republic Antanas Smetona to prosecute Gira for the unlawful arrest of General Otockis, and for the insult to General Žukauskas by calling him a 'Polish adherent who cannot be trusted', and a 'landowner of the Vitebsk governorate'.³⁹ Nevertheless, after his involvement in the POW's forthcoming coup, these epithets 'stuck' to General Žukauskas, and they represented perfectly the attitude of Lithuanian officers to his social background and political views. The pro-Polish views of the general caused dissatisfaction among Lithuanian officers,⁴⁰ followed by the dismissal of General Žukauskas⁴¹ and his adjutants from the army on 26 September 1919.⁴² However, General Žukauskas was steadfast in standing up for his dismissed aide-de-camps, and actively supported and defended Colonel Vojtekūnas in the trial of POW members in December 1920.⁴³ Thus, he indirectly confirmed his earlier favourable political preferences for Poland. Another prominent fact in this context is that, after his dismissal from the Lithuanian army, General Otockis joined the Polish army, in which he was known as Witold Dołęgo-Otockki.⁴⁴ Moreover, this was not an isolated case of General Žukauskas

³⁶ SURGAILIS, G. *Lietuvos kariuomenės vadai...*, p. 19–20.

³⁷ Information bulletin from the military command of the Polish government, 27 June 1919. *Centralny Archiwum Wojskowy (Central Military Archives, Warsaw)*, sygn. 301.8.297, s. 208.

³⁸ Report by General S. Žukauskas, 23 January 1920. *LCVA*, f. 483, ap. 8, b. 22, l. 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 8.

⁴⁰ BŪTĖNAS, Julius; MACKEVIČIUS, Mečys. *Mykolas Sleževičius: advokatas ir politikas*. Vilnius, 1995, p. 132–133.

⁴¹ SURGAILIS, G. *Lietuvos kariuomenės vadai...*, p. 27.

⁴² Report by General S. Žukauskas, 23 January 1920. *LCVA*, f. 483, ap. 3, b. 22, l. 8.

⁴³ [PAPEČKYŠ, Juozas] RAINYS, J. *P.O.W. (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa) Lietuvoje*. Kaunas, 1936, p. 96.

⁴⁴ STOLIAROVAS, A. *Lietuvos Respublikos kariuomenės generalitetas...*, p. 357.

demonstrating his sympathies and helping individuals of Polish nationality. For example, in November 1920, after the involvement of General Žukauskas, Walerianas, the son of the Pajuostis landlord Aleksander Meysztowicz, detained by the Intelligence Division, was released.⁴⁵

After the Panemunė soldiers' rebellion on 22–24 February 1920, General Žukauskas was once again appointed commander-in-chief, but several months later, on 14 June 1920,⁴⁶ he was forced to step down from the post for the second time. This time, he was appointed commander-in-chief and dismissed because of resistance from younger officers and threats of resignation. This is stated in the memoirs of General Stasys Raštikis.⁴⁷ He named General Ladiga, colonels Ignas Musteikis, Julius Čaplikas, Adolfas Birontas and Jonas Petraitis, and Major Vytautas Steponaitis as the most ardent in attacking General Žukauskas.⁴⁸ As we can see, the conflict between the older generation officer General Žukauskas and officers of the middle generation, and also the dismissal of Žukauskas from his command, was fuelled by the difference between national and political views, which was also presented in the previously discussed cases of General Kondratavičius and Colonel Ramanauskas.

To summarise these conflicts among senior army officers, we can say that they were driven by the different political and ethnic attitudes of officers, and contradictions between the older and middle generation. The middle generation of officers, who formed the core of the army, considered the older generation to be strangers, representing the Russian or Polish nations, and therefore did not recognise their right to lead the Lithuanian armed forces, and sought to exclude them from responsible positions.

The beginnings of the Secret Officers Union: 'monarchists' versus 'nationalists'

The conflicts between senior officers in the Lithuanian army in 1921 included a larger number of officers and acquired more organised features. In 1921–1923, the army was joined by officers who were to take up two extreme positions in its structure. Many of them were young, nationally oriented, and educated at the Lithuanian Military School in a national spirit.⁴⁹ However, the number of officers who had served

⁴⁵ Report by the Intelligence Division on the search of Meysztowicz manor, 21 December 1921. *Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka, Rankraščių skyrius (Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Manuscript Division)*, f. 172, b.448, l. 1–2.

⁴⁶ ANIČAS, J. Op. cit., p. 80.

⁴⁷ RAŠTIKIS, Stasys. [Atsiminimai]. T. 3: *Jvykiai ir žmonės*. Čikaga, 1972, p. 90.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

⁴⁹ ZUPKA, Kazys; TAMULAITIS, Vytautas. *Pirmojo Lietuvos Prezidento Karo mokykla*. Kaunas, 1939, p. 45.

in the Russian army also grew; moreover, having more senior military ranks, the latter took the leading positions in the army. By the efforts of Colonel Konstantinas Žukas, General Leonas Radas Zenkavičius and Colonel Konstantinas Bobinskis joined the Lithuanian army.⁵⁰ General Kraucevičius, a former air force commander in the armies of Anton Denikin and Pyotr Wrangel, became the commander of the air service. General Antanas Martusevičius became commander of the artillery. General Maksim Katche became chief of staff of the army. And General Ramanauskas was appointed army inspector. Thus, officers who had previously served not only in the Imperial Russian army but also in the Red Army, in the military formations of Wrangel, Denikin and even Pavel Bermond-Avalov, took leading positions in the Lithuanian army. Naturally, this caused a lot of tension on national and political grounds.

In 1921, rumours began spreading in Lithuania that a secret monarchist organisation was operating in the country.⁵¹ It should be said that these rumours were caused by General Juozapavičius, Colonel Kliševskis, Colonel Zeneckis, Colonel Drejeris, Count Konstantinas Palenas, and many other former officers in the Imperial Russian and Bermond-Avalov Western Russian volunteer armies shuttling between Germany and Russia through Lithuania, and spending some time in Lithuania.⁵² The directory of the Lithuanian Political Police of 1920–1921 has a register of 144 names of monarchist officers who crossed Lithuania carrying printed matter.⁵³ According to the Political Police, their network was linked to the 'Russian monarchist organisation' Reichsarbeitsnachweis für Offiziere, which was actually a German association for the employment of retired officers. The association was suspected of using Lithuania as a bridge to former officers in Russia.⁵⁴ Visits by officers linked to monarchist organisations inspired rumours that a monarchist organisation was functioning in the Lithuanian army. However, according to the Political Police, the institution did not maintain contacts with officers serving in the Lithuanian army at that time. I too could not find data confirming clear links of this kind. Supporters of the monarchy were more interested in officers of the former Imperial Russian army who were unemployed after the war.⁵⁵

But General Ladiga took advantage of these rumours to remove the older-generation officers from leading positions, since he harboured a grudge against them. In 1921, when the older-generation General Kraucevičius was commander-in-chief of the army, General Ladiga had been accused of violating the Disciplinary Statute of the army, and printing forbidden information in the American-Lithuanian socialist

⁵⁰ SURGAILIS, Gintautas. Pulkininkas Konstantinas Žukas. In *Lietuvos krašto apsaugos ministrai...*, p. 73.

⁵¹ Report by the head of the Intelligence Division, 30 June 1921. LCVA, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 1682, l. 81.

⁵² Letter from the head of the Intelligence Division, 22 May 1922. LCVA, f. 383, ap.2, b. 273, l. 67.

⁵³ List of the monarchist file, 8 November 1920. LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 837, l. 1–2.

⁵⁴ Report by the minister of foreign affairs, 22 May 1922. LCVA, f. 383, ap. 2, b. 273, l. 255.

⁵⁵ Report by the minister of foreign affairs, 22 May 1921. LCVA, f. 383, ap. 2, b. 273, l. 61.

newspaper *Keleivis* about operational actions by the army and the appointment of its commanders.⁵⁶ In addition, he was constantly accused of failures in the struggles against the Poles in Suwalki.⁵⁷ Seeking his revenge, in August 1922, General Ladiga stated to the authorities that an indivisible party of 'Russian monarchists' had been established in Lithuania: it was led by the engineer Il'in, a former minister of transport in the Bermond-Avalov government, and members of this party were officers, so-called 'double or triple' patriots such as General Katche, General Martusevičius, and others.⁵⁸ Thus, the accusations by General Ladiga targeted officers of the older generation to be removed from senior posts in the army. He achieved what he wanted with these accusations, and both formerly senior Russian army officers were forced to leave the army.⁵⁹

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These practices became routine in the Secret Officers Union. The idea to create the organisation came up in 1920 among the younger generation of officers,⁶⁰ and the organisation formulated its most important goal in a proclamation printed in 1928. This claims that the organisation sought to 'Defend, liberate, connect, clean.'⁶¹ The last word *clean* was understood by members of the organisation as an attempt to clean up the army of the influence of foreigners and party people.⁶² This kind of activity was practised at the very beginning of the organisation, in 1920–1921, when members of the Secret Officers Union began to join 'conspiratorial triplets' and fought against individuals and everything that was non-Lithuanian.⁶³ The activities of the Secret Officers Union were focused on foreign officers from the very beginning. This is confirmed by reports of the Political Police. They state that the activities of the nationalist officers' organisation were limited to issuing and distributing⁶⁴ proclamations against Russian officers, and that the purpose of the organisation was to propagandise against foreign officers in the army, and to look for a way to clean the army of harmful and dangerous individuals.⁶⁵

Judging by the leaflets against older-generation officers circulated by the organisation, the nationalist officers identified their targets by employing political and ethnic arguments. In 1923, nationalist officers distributed a letter of protest in which they responded negatively to the appointment of General Žukauskas as commander-in-chief of the army, stating that 'We duly appreciate and respect him and his talent as

⁵⁶ Report by the state defence to the Court Martial, 26 August 1921. *LCVA*, f. 929, ap. 1, b. 131, l. 6–7.

⁵⁷ JANKAUSKAS, V. *Kario kelias...*, p. 311.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁶⁰ Proclamation by the Secret Officers Union, 20 April 1928. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 13, b. 39, l. 51–53.

⁶¹ VAIČENONIS, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁶³ Report by the head of the Political Police, 17, March 1924. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 648, l. 15–16.

⁶⁴ Agency Report by the Political Police, February 1924. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 51, l. 3–6.

⁶⁵ Report by the Political Police, June 1925. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 49–51.

a commander in war, but we cannot forgive his origins, which we must always bear in mind.⁶⁶ The proclamation was also directed against the older-generation officers. It stated: 'We have no time to sit and look at how the Galvanauskas, Šleževičius, Žukauskas, Zenkevičius, Kraucevičius and Boleckis are selling our dear land drenched in blood.'⁶⁷ The former prime minister Mykolas Sleževičius was accused in this proclamation of inviting 'General Radko Zenkowicz' to Lithuania, and Colonel Konstantinas Boleckis allegedly became the head of the Military Science Department thanks to some politicians. It was argued that although the commander of the Lithuanian army announced that he was Lithuanian, he was in fact a 'POWer'.⁶⁸ One year later, in 1925, a proclamation,⁶⁹ signed under the pseudonym of the Secret Officers Nationalists' Organisation, stated that foreigners, enemies and monarchists were gaining strength in the fragile organism of the country, and in particular in the army.⁷⁰ All of this indicates that the young members of the Secret Officers Union unit remained steadfast in their attitude towards the older generation, considering them to be an alien, hostile element in the Lithuanian army, and strove to fight against the presence of this element.

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One of the factors that triggered the actions of the organisation was the conflict between General Kraucevičius and young aviation officers, caused not only by national political interests but also by social reasons. Young aviation officers resented the protection of Russian and Polish officers given by General Kraucevičius, and, on the other hand, the pressure from Lithuanian officers everywhere and in every way. After becoming the chief of aviation, General Kraucevičius wanted to dismiss his Lithuanian adjutant Senior Lieutenant (Flying Officer) Simas Stanaitis,⁷¹ who had distinguished himself in aviation. He refused to promote Lieutenant Vytautas Jablonskis. And he appointed Polish-oriented officers of Polish origin as commanders of squadrons I, II and III, and offered them an opportunity to study on higher military technical courses. Aviation officers were also spreading rumours that General Kraucevičius russified Lithuanian military aviation, inviting Russian aviation mechanics and technicians, giving them executive positions, and turning Lithuanians into errand boys. The young military aviators did not like the toasts made by General Kraucevičius 'to friends suffering martyrdom under the Bolsheviks or in exile'.⁷² The younger generation of military aviators also noted that General Kraucevičius was illegally profiting from public property: he appropriated a parcel of land belonging to the aerodrome, he sold his own private timber to the air force after disguising its

⁶⁶ Agency Report, 22 October 1923. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 5190, l. 235.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 235.

⁶⁸ Proclamation by nationalist officers, 1924, no month. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 51, l. 2.

⁶⁹ Proclamation by the Secret Officers Union, approx. date 1925. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 11-15.

⁷⁰ Proclamation by the Secret Officers Union, 17 December 1925. *LCVA*, f. 929, ap. 1, b. 481, l. 48-50.

⁷¹ Agency Report by the agent Klevas, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 55.

⁷² *Ibid.*

quality, he used army horses to plough private gardens, and he used the meadow at the Aukštoji Freda aerodrome to graze his own cows.⁷³ The animosity of young military aviators towards General Kraucevičius is also proven by a Political Police note of 1925. It states that the situation in aviation was untenable, as the opposition to General Kraucevičius amounted to about 40 officers.⁷⁴ They even learned that aviation officers were allegedly going to set off an explosion in General Kraucevičius' apartment.⁷⁵ The growing dissatisfaction among nationalist officers and the escalation of the national, political and social conflict between young military aviators and the general of the older generation is reflected in a proclamation by a group of national officers. It addressed the top leaders⁷⁶ of the state, urging them to start the serious work of cleaning up the country of foreigners. Information that I discovered shows that the authors of the proclamation succeeded in reaching General Ladiga, the chief of the General Staff, who was referred to in a report by the Political Police as a person 'failing to maintain his stance and succumbing to alien influences'.⁷⁷

Bearing in mind the conflict between General Ladiga and the officers of the older generation described at the beginning of the article, and the favourable political circumstances (the Christian Democrat Leonas Bistras as minister of defence, and General Ladiga who was considered to be favourable to the Christian Democrats), it can be stated that the proclamation by nationalist officers inspired General Ladiga to engage in cleaning up the older generation of officers, and playing the card of the monarchist organisation again. On 2 October 1925, the press announced the tracking down of a monarchist organisation in Lithuania.⁷⁸ In response to this, on 17 October, Bistras, the minister of defence, asked the Ministry of the Interior to provide the names of soldiers and officers belonging to the monarchist union.⁷⁹ However, he did not get a response from the Political Police, and the efforts by General Ladiga were limited to the dismissal of several senior officers. It is noteworthy that the Political Police itself stated in its internal correspondence that there were no soldiers of the Lithuanian army in the monarchist organisation.⁸⁰ In my opinion, this confirms the theory that the argument of the monarchist organisation was used to artificially accuse officers of the older generation of disloyalty to the Lithuanian state, and to remove them from the army. Obviously, political conflicts between senior officers in 1921–1925 began to take on the features of a social conflict, and went beyond the boundaries of the senior military.

⁷³ Agency Report by the agent Savanoris, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 66–69.

⁷⁴ Agency Report by the agent Klevas, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 54.

⁷⁵ Report by the Political Police manager, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 57.

⁷⁶ Agency Report by the agent Klevas, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 54.

⁷⁷ Report by the head of the Political Police, undated. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 49–51.

⁷⁸ Report by the head of the Political Police, 8 October 1925. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 8586, l. 42.

⁷⁹ Letter from the minister of defence, 17 October 1925. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 8586, l. 118.

⁸⁰ Report by the head of the Political Police, 8 October 1925. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 8586, l. 42.

Social features of generations of officers

After discussing in the first two sections the circumstances of conflicts between senior officers in 1921–1925, and naming the political, national and social arguments employed in these conflicts, I will now attempt to divide the participants in these conflicts into generations. The division is based on attributes characterising different generations of officers proposed by Vytautas Lesčius.

I will assign generals Žukauskas, Kraucevičius, Martusevičius, Radus Zenkavičius and Katche, and Colonel Ramanauskas, to officers of the older generation; and colonels Ladiga, Čaplikas, Adolfas Birontas, Jonas Petraitis, Jonas Steponaitis, Musteikis, Nagevičius, Nastopka, Kubilius and Skorupskis to officers of the middle generation. The ranks of the younger generation have the fewest people mentioned in the article; however, among them, I can distinguish Major Ignas Slapšys, captains Juozas Matulevičius and Antanas Steponaitis, and lieutenants Mačiuika and Kiaunė, all of whom are mentioned in the report by the Political Police as core members⁸¹ of the Secret Officers Union. Therefore, they represent the generation of younger officers.

An analysis of the conflicts shows that during the period analysed, the younger and middle generations stuck together in their conflicts with the older generation of officers.⁸² The conflicts under discussion indicate that distinctions of political attitudes, national attributes and belonging to a 'different' social stratum were often exploited with respect to the older generation. In order to verify how much these 'accusations' were appropriate, and if they can be used to justify the grouping of generations of officers, I carried out a prosopographic study. Taking into account the political and social accusations exploited in the conflicts, this investigation was limited to criteria of social origin, religion, language, military education, service in the armies of different countries, and links with the Lithuanian national movement or national military units of officers.

A detailed biographical analysis of officers involved in the conflicts reveals that generals Žukauskas, Martusevičius, Kraucevičius, Katche and Radus Zenkavičius, and Colonel Ramanauskas,⁸³ members of the older generation, came from the social class of landowners, had a high-level military education in Russian military educational institutions, and were Orthodox or Protestant. These qualities allowed them to acquire a military education in Russian military educational establishments, and

⁸¹ Report by the head of the Political Police, 24 March 1924. *LCVA*, f. 378, ap. 2, b. 9085, l. 17–18.

⁸² VAIČENONIS, J. *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁸³ Prosopographic data was collected on the basis of: ANIČAS, J. *Op. cit.*; ASEVIČIUS, Vytautas et al. *Lietuvos kariuomenės karininkai 1918–1953*. T. 1–8. Vilnius, 2001–2008; Service record of Antanas Martusevičius, 15 July 1922. *LCVA*, f. 930, ap. 2M, b. 59, l. 2–5; Service record of Maksim Katche, 16 October 1922. *LCVA*, f. 930, ap. 2K, b. 78, l. 2–6; Service record of Leonas Radus Zenkavičius, 8 October 1922. *LCVA*, f. 930, ap. 2R, b. 9, l. 1–4; Service record of Valerijonas Ramanauskas, 14 January 1929. *LCVA*, f. 930, ap. 2R, b. 17, l. 3–8.

to aim for the top positions in the reinstated Lithuanian army. The older generation of officers had served not only in the army of the Russian Empire, but also in Denikin's and Wrangel's military formations, and even in the Red Army. Accordingly, they joined the ranks of the Lithuanian army in 1921–1923, after the end of the civil war in Russia. Not only were these officers fluent in Russian or German, but they were also married to Orthodox or Protestants of Russian or German origin. Understandably, therefore, they communicated in Russian or German among themselves and in their families, while their Lithuanian was poor, thus leading to discontent among the middle and younger generations of officers.

The middle generation of officers, represented by colonels Ladiga, Čaplikas, Birontas, Petraitis, Musteikis, Nagevičius, Nastopka and Kubilius, and Major Steponaitis,⁸⁴ were different to the older generation both in their social origin and their religious stance. Most of this generation came from the social class of farmers. Moreover, most were Catholics. They had either already graduated from Russian military educational institutions after the revolution of 1905, when Catholics were admitted to Russian military schools, but not military academies,⁸⁵ or had attended training courses for teachers and students established in Russia during the First World War.⁸⁶ For these reasons, they did not have the highest military training, and, having only a junior officer's rank, could not compete with the older generation of officers for the top positions in the army. Officers of the middle generation are characterised by political activities relating to organisations of the Lithuanian national movement after the Great Seimas of Vilnius and revolutionary events in the Russian Empire in 1905, or participation in the activities of Lithuanian national military units that formed in the Russian Empire after the February revolution of 1917. Officers of the middle generation joined the Lithuanian army in 1918–1919, mainly as volunteers invited by the State Council of Lithuania. Thus, there are fairly clear differences between members of the middle and the older generation of officers, in social origin, religion, language, national identity and national activities.

The younger generation of officers, Major Slapšys, captains Matulevičius and Mačiuika,⁸⁷ and Lieutenant Kiaunė, were Catholics, the sons of farmers, who had not served in the army of the Russian Empire, but had joined the Lithuanian army as volunteers. They all graduated from the Military School of Lithuania in 1919–1920,

⁸⁴ Prosopographic data was collected on the basis of: *Generolo Gydytojo Vlodo Nagiaus Nagevičiaus gyvenimo ir darbų apžvalga*. Red. B. MATULIONIS, Putnam, CN, 1962; JANKAUSKAS, V. *Kario kelias...*; ASEVIČIUS, V. et al. Op. cit.; Service record of Adolfas Birontas, 22 March 1933. LCVA, f. 930, ap. 2B, b. 174, l. 2–7; Service record of Stasys Nastopka, 18 October 1925. LCVA, f. 930, ap. 2N, b. 79, l. 1–5.

⁸⁵ LESČIUS, V. *Karininkų rengimo pradžia...*, p. 7–12.

⁸⁶ LESČIUS, V. *Lietuvos kariuomenė...*, p. 162.

⁸⁷ Prosopographic data were collected on the basis of: ASEVIČIUS, V. et al. Op. cit.; Service record of Antanas Mačiuika, 21 January 1936. LCVA, f. 930, ap. 2M, b. 15, l. 40–51.

where the national consciousness was the cornerstone of officer training.⁸⁸ The youngest generation of officers had fought on the front line against the Bolsheviks and Bermond-Avalov military units. Thus, they had a hostile attitude not only to the Russian and Polish armies, but also to those serving in Bermond-Avalov formations. The social difference and hostility between this generation and the older generation of officers was even greater than between the older and the middle generation. On the other hand, the differences between the middle and the younger generation were not insurmountable, and this may explain why the members of the middle and younger generations acted together.

Perhaps the best testimony to the divisions between different generations of officers is illustrated by several extracts from memoirs written by officers from the different generations. According to the older generation Colonel Teodoras Reingardas, a former Imperial Russian naval captain, 'Service in the Lithuanian army was not very close to my heart, because it was not what I was accustomed to. It was difficult for me to accept the democratic element, the absence of discipline and the dependence of a career on party sympathies in the democratic Lithuanian army.'⁸⁹ In turn, the younger generation aviator Captain Leonardas Peseckas believed that General Kraucevičius was 'a little wary of Lithuanian village lads who fancied flying, and rather sympathised with the sons of former tsarist officials, the offspring of the aristocracy, such as Dobkevičius.'⁹⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Antanas Macelis, who volunteered in the time of independence, was even more critical of the older ones. In his opinion, 'There was no spiritual connection between them and us. Their gods were vodka, women, cards and money, while we who had left school as volunteers inspired by an idea, avoided them as rotten infectious creatures. Only a few of us took on their gods, in an attempt to be treated like men, but none succeeded in becoming as sophisticated as they were.'⁹¹

Therefore, the results of the prosopographic analysis confirm the grouping of officers based on an analysis of the conflicts. They show that conflicts between senior officers should be linked not only to their ethnic and political affiliations, but also to the different origins and social environment in which members of the different generations evolved. The accusations made against the older generation by the younger and middle generations in the conflicts were based not only on political but also social contradictions. All this presupposes that the fragmentation of the military leadership was determined not only by short-term political considerations or national self-determination, but also by long-term societal traits and contradictions characteristic of the different strata of societies.

⁸⁸ ZUPKA, K.; TAMULAITIS V. Op. cit., p. 45.

⁸⁹ REINGARDAS, Teodoras. *Jūrininkas, karininkas, mirtininkas: prisiminimai*. Sud. Juozas KALVELIS. Šiauliai, 2000, p. 111.

⁹⁰ PESCKAS, Leonardas. *Karo lakūno pasakojimai: atsiminimai*. Kaunas, 1992, p. 55.

⁹¹ MACELIS, Antanas. *Atsiminimai*. Parengė Gedminas RUDIS. Vilnius, 2015, p. 107.

Conclusions

The establishment of the modern Republic of Lithuania and its army was accompanied by the consequences of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the decline of its army in the final phase of the Great War. For these reasons, in 1918–1921, senior officers of the Lithuanian army, in addition to volunteers invited by the State Council of Lithuania, included officers who had had different positions in the Imperial Russian army, the Red Army, Bermond-Avalov, Wrangel, Kolchak or Denikin military formations, with differing political views, and representing the aristocratic social class. The same Lithuanian army brought together farmers and landowners, Catholics and Orthodox, Lithuanian speakers and non-Lithuanian speakers, and Polish and Russian-speaking officers. Moreover, because of their differing education, they had different opportunities to assume leading positions in the army. This study confirms that three different generations of officers formed in the Lithuanian army on the basis of these differences.

Political and social differences between the older, middle and younger generations led to a lack of confidence, interpersonal conflicts and politicisation among the officers. Conflicts between the officer corps led to the formation of the Secret Officers Union, a radical organisation of officers of the younger generation, whose members from 1921 engaged in organised activities against the 'older' generation of officers, veterans of the First World War and the Russian civil war. The latter were considered to be a hostile element in the army of the Republic of Lithuania, which was created on a national basis.

Officers of the middle generation joined the younger generation in their opposition to the older generation. However, only the younger generation had no experience of service in the Great War. Therefore, experience of military service in the First World War itself did not become the basis for subsequent conflicts between officers. However, officers of the middle generation often had experience in the ranks of Lithuanian national formations that were established after the February revolution of 1917 in Russia, or they were otherwise engaged in the implementation of the ideals of the Lithuanian national movement before 1918. This activity was contrary to the aspirations of professional officers of the older generation who had trained in Imperial Russian military schools, and, on the other hand, close to the goals for which volunteers with no experience in the Russian army during the Great War fought in 1918–1920.

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„TAUTINIAI LIETUVIAI“ PRIEŠ „IMPERINIUS RUSUS“? KARTŲ KONFLIKTAI TARP LIETUVOS AUKŠTOSIOS KARININKIJOS

Kęstutis Kilinskas

Santrauka

Lietuvos karo istoriografijoje ir aukštosios karininkijos biografijose aptinkame duomenų, rodančių, kad po Pirmojo pasaulinio karo besikuriančios Lietuvos kariuomenės karininkų korpusas socialiniu ir tautiniu požiūriais buvo nehomogeniška grupė, kurią sudarė trijų karininkijos kartų (senosios, vidurinės ir jaunosios) atstovai. Istoriografijoje taip pat aptinkame pavienių faktų ir fragmentiškų įžvalgų, rodančių konfliktiškus ir sudėtingus skirtingoms kartoms priskirtų aukštųjų karininkų santykius. Vidmantas Jankauskas pažymėjo nesutarimus tarp generolo Kazio Ladigos ir generolo Jono Galvydžio-Bykausko bei pulkininko Teodoro Daukanto. Gintautas Surgailis atkreipė dėmesį į priešpriešą, tvyrojusią tarp jaunosios karininkų kartos ir istoriografijoje vadinamų „senųjų“ generolų Silvestro Žukausko ir Juozo Kraucevičiaus, ir įtampos persmelktus pulkininko Konstantino Žuko bei majoro Antano Merkio santykius. Gedimino Rudžio nuomone, jaunuosius 1926 m. gruodžio 17-osios perversmą rengusius ir Slaptajai karininkų sąjungai priklausiusius karininkus žeidė tai, jog aukštose kariuomenės pareigose „tiek daug rusiško ir lenkiško raugo karininkų“. Jaunosios karininkijos priešišumą seniesiems karininkams ir jų siekį išvalyti kariuomenę nuo svetimtaučių įtakos pažymėjo ir Jonas Vaičenonis. Minėtų karininkų tarpusavio nesutarimai ir konfliktų priežastys istoriografijoje aiškinamos remiantis priešingomis senosios kartos karininkų tautinėmis ir politinėmis orientacijomis atsikuriančios Lietuvos valstybės ir lietuvių tautos atžvilgiu. Šie istoriografijoje aptikti fragmentiški duomenys apie karininkų konfliktus skatino straipsnyje iškelti ir patikrinti dvi hipotezes. Pirmą, ar konfliktai karininkų korpuso gretose buvo sukelti trumpalaikių, konkrečius įvykius supusių aplinkybių, ar vis dėlto buvo nulemti gilesnių socialinių ir politinių prieštaravimų, būdingų skirtingoms karininkų kartoms? Antrą, ar skirtingų kartų karininkijos konfliktai turėjo įtakos Slaptajai karininkų sąjungai, kurios nariais istoriografijoje laikomi jaunosios kartos karininkai, susikurti?

leškant atsakymų į šiuos klausimus, tyrimas buvo atliekamas dviem etapais: pirma, siekta identifikuoti aukščiausias pozicijas kariuomenėje užėmusių karininkų tarpusavio konfliktų priežastis, nustatyti jų dalyvius ir pagal konfliktuose išsakomus kaltinimus karininkus sugrupuoti. Antra, pasitelkus prozopografinį tyrimo metodą siekta išanalizuoti aukštųjų karininkų biografijas, atskleisti jų politinio ir socialinio tapatinimosi bruožus bei palyginti juos su konfliktų analizės metu nustatytomis konfliktuojančiomis karininkų grupėmis.

Atliktas tyrimas atskleidė, kad moderniosios Lietuvos Respublikos ir jos kariuomenės kūrimąsi lydėjo Rusijos imperijos griūtis ir jos kariuomenės irimo baigiamąjoje Didžiojo karo fazėje sukeltos pasekmės. Dėl jų 1918–1921 m. Lietuvos kariuomenės aukštųjų karininkų gretose, šalia Lietuvos Valstybės Tarybos pakviestų savanorių, susitelkė ir karininkai, užėmę skirtingas pareigas Rusijos imperijos kariuomenėje, Raudonojoje armijoje, Pavelo Bermondto-Avalovo, Piotro Vrangelio, Aleksandro Kolčiako ar Antono Denikino karinėse formuotėse, turėję besiskiriančias politines pažiūras ir atstovavę aristokratijos

socialiniam sluoksniui. Lietuvoje vienoje kariuomenėje atsidūrė ūkininkai ir dvarininkai, katalikai ir stačiatikiai, lietuviškai kalbantys ir lietuvių kalbos nemokantys, lenkiškai bei rusiškai kalbantys karininkai. Be to, dėl skirtingo išsilavinimo jie turėjo skirtingas startines galimybes užimti vadovaujančias pozicijas kariuomenėje. Šis tyrimas patvirtino, kad visų šių skirtumų pagrindu Lietuvos kariuomenėje formavosi trys karininkų kartos.

Senosios, vidurinės ir jaunosios kartos politiniai bei socialiniai skirtumai lėmė nepasitikėjimą, tarpusavio konfliktus ir politikavimą karininkų gretose. Karininkijos tarpusavio konfliktų pagrindu formavosi radikali jaunosios kartos karininkų organizacija Slaptoji karininkų sąjunga, kurios nariai nuo 1921 m. ėmėsi organizuotos veiklos prieš „senosios“ kartos karininkus – Pirmojo pasaulinio karo ir Rusijos pilietinio karo veteranus. Tautiniu pagrindu kuriamoje Lietuvos Respublikos kariuomenėje pastaruosius imta laikyti priešišku elementu.

Vidurinės kartos karininkai opozicijoje senajai kartai blokavosi su jaunąja karta. Tačiau tarnybos Didžiajame kare patirties neturėjo tikrai pastaroji. Todėl karinės tarnybos patirtis Pirmajame pasauliniame kare savaimė netapo pagrindu vėlesniems karininkų konfliktams. Tačiau vidurinės kartos karininkai dažnai jau buvo spėję dalyvauti lietuvių tautinių dalinių, po 1917 m. Vasario revoliucijos pradėtų kurti Rusijoje, gretose arba buvo kitaip prisidėję prie lietuvių tautinio judėjimo idealų įgyvendinimo dar iki 1918 m. Savąja idėja ši veikla buvo priešiška tam, už ką kovojo senosios kartos Rusijos karo mokyklose išlavinti profesionalūs imperijos karininkai, ir artima tam, už ką 1918–1920 m. kovojo savanoriai, visai nepatyrę tarnybos Didžiajame kare Rusijos kariuomenėje.