



# THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE 1918/1919

Ruth Leiserowitz

## Abstract

Historians have already shown how the Jewish minority contributed to the rebirth of the Lithuanian state in 1918. The beginning of the experiment to integrate the Jewish minority into the reemergent Lithuanian state, however, has often been told from the perspective of failure only. The article challenges this view, by describing how Zionism, the Jewish national movement, supported the emergence of the Lithuanian state. The author analyses how the Jews supported the newly created Lithuanian government by voting to send representatives to it, and by producing a document that improved the international position of the Lithuanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, and which was helpful for the international recognition of the young state.

**KEY WORDS:** Lithuanian Jews, Lithuanian-Jewish relations, Zionism, Paris Peace Conference, international recognition.

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## Anotacija

Istorikai jau yra parodę, kad žydų mažuma prisidėjo prie Lietuvos valstybės atkūrimo 1918 m. Tačiau eksperimento integruoti žydų mažumą į atsikuriančią Lietuvos valstybę pradžia dažnai nušviečiama kaip nesėkmė. Straipsnyje šiam požiūriui metamas iššūkis aprašant, kaip sionizmas, žydų tautinis judėjimas, rėmė Lietuvos valstybės atsiradimą. Autorė nagrinėja, kaip žydai parėmė naujai suformuotą Lietuvos vyriausybę, nusprendami pasiųsti į ją savo atstovus ir sukurdami dokumentą, kuris pagerino lietuvių delegacijos Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje tarptautines pozicijas ir šitaip padėjo pasiekti jaunai valstybei tarptautinį pripažinimą.

**PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** Lietuvos žydai, lietuvių ir žydų santykiai, sionizmas, Paryžiaus taikos konferencija, tarptautinis pripažinimas.

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## Introduction

It is well known that the Jewish minority contributed to the rebirth of the Lithuanian state in 1918, but little is known of the protagonists and processes of this participation. Lithuanian historians such as Tomas Balkelis,<sup>1</sup> Eglė Bendikaitė,<sup>2</sup> Vladas Sirutavičius,<sup>3</sup> Darius Staliūnas<sup>4</sup> and Vyngantas Vareikis<sup>5</sup> have worked on it. The works of Oscar Janowsky,<sup>6</sup> Mark Levene,<sup>7</sup> Klaus Richter<sup>8</sup> and Theodore Weeks<sup>9</sup> also contain references to these events, even though they often take a more general and external view of the question of the Jews. The focus in this text is above all on the year 1919, on the period after the actual world war, and I would like to use my description to show how, in the very place of Paris, which was then seen by the whole world, the Lithuanian Jewish (further Litvaks) and Lithuanian politicians entered into a 'pragmatic alliance', which was planned as a win-win situation, and also proved to be such at that moment. So I am referring above all to a presentation of selected events of 1919 outside Lithuania.

In the following, I will try to give an insight into the Jewish perspective on the events of that year, taking into account a brief prehistory, starting with a few remarks on the politicisation of Lithuanian Jews before 1918. Afterwards, I will trace various snapshots of the turn of 1919, before devoting myself to the main plot that shows Lithuanians and Jews at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

## The politicisation of Lithuanian Jews before 1918

The question of how the Litvaks behaved towards the emerging Lithuanian national movement has not yet been discussed in detail, says Motti Zalkin.<sup>10</sup> There are indica-

<sup>1</sup> BALKELIS, Tomas. *War, revolution and nation-making in Lithuania, 1914-1923*. Oxford, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> BENDIKAITĖ, Eglė. The Zionist Priorities in the Struggle for Lite, 1916-1918. In *A Pragmatic Alliance: Jewish-Lithuanian Political Cooperation at the Beginning of the 20th Century*. Ed. by Vladas SIRUTAVIČIUS, Darius STALIŪNAS. Budapest, New York, 2011, pp. 159-180.

<sup>3</sup> SIRUTAVIČIUS, Vladas. Lithuanian Administration and the Participation of Jews in the Elections to the Constituent Seimas. In *A Pragmatic Alliance...*, pp. 181-206.

<sup>4</sup> STALIŪNAS, Darius. Collaboration of Lithuanians and Jews during the Elections to the First and the Second Dumas. In *A Pragmatic Alliance...*, pp. 45-76.

<sup>5</sup> TRUSKA, Liudas; VAREIKIS, Vyngantas. *Holokausto prielaidos: antisemitizmas Lietuvoje XIX antroji pusė - 1941 m. birželis = The Preconditions for the Holocaust: Anti-Semitism in Lithuania (Second Half of the 19th Century - June 1941)* (Totalitarinių režimų nusikaltimai Lietuvoje = The Crimes of Totalitarian Regimes in Lithuania, t. 1). Vilnius, 2004, p. 21-68.

<sup>6</sup> JANOWSKY, Oscar I. *The Jews and minority rights (1898-1919)*. New York, NY, 1966.

<sup>7</sup> LEVENE, Mark. Nationalism and its alternatives in the international arena: the Jewish question at Paris, 1919. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1993, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 511-531.

<sup>8</sup> RICHTER, Klaus. „Eine durch und durch demokratische Nation“. Demokratie und Minderheitenschutz in der Außendarstellung Litauens nach 1918. *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 2015, Jhg. 64, Hf. 2, S. 194-217.

<sup>9</sup> WEEKS, Theodore. Between Poland and Lithuania: Jews and the Vilnius Question, 1918-1925. In *A Pragmatic Alliance...*, pp. 207-230.

<sup>10</sup> ZALKIN, Mordechai. Lithuanian Jewry and the Lithuanian National Movement. In *A Pragmatic Alliance...*, p. 21.

tions that Litvaks had selectively supported the efforts of the Lithuanians in the first Duma election in 1905.<sup>11</sup> But Jewish public debates and writings before 1918 did not deal with the question of Lithuanians' quest for independence.<sup>12</sup>

Around the turn of the century, the Jewish national movement, Zionism, developed as a mass movement in the whole Pale of Settlement.<sup>13</sup> The Jewish workers' movement, the Bund, was important too.<sup>14</sup> Theodor Herzl also noticed this when he visited Vilnius in 1903. Already at the time, St Petersburg sent around a circular warning local authorities to keep a vigilant eye on Zionist activities, which were viewed as being 'in contradiction with the principle of the Russian state idea'. The outcome of the revolution of 1905 and the preparation of the first Duma elections precipitated the formation of parties: hence, also of Jewish parties. Jews and Lithuanians cooperated in the preparation of the first and second Duma elections, whereby Jewish voters decided to support the call for Lithuanian autonomy, one of the main political goals of the Lithuanians.<sup>15</sup>

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Zionists were elected in all the regions of the Russian Empire, including Shimshon Rozenbaum of the Minsk governorate, who would later go on to play an important role during the first years of the Lithuanian government.<sup>16</sup> Darius Staliūnas explains that this first cooperation between Jews and Lithuanians made it possible for the groups to get to know one another better, and to learn about their respective arguments.<sup>17</sup>

We will not be going into the situation of the Litvaks in the First World War here. On the eve of independence, the Lithuanians had their own opinion about the Jews, but obviously without speaking directly to them. Joachim Tauber mentions in his study about the Lithuanian Taryba minority and the national minorities that the Jews had a 'complete disinterest in Lithuanian independence and an affinity with Russia'.<sup>18</sup>

In September 1918, the Zionist Central Committee was founded in Vilnius under the leadership of the poet Leib Jaffe and the teacher Dr Joseph Berger. The Zionist Congress, which was organised by this committee, took place in Vilnius from 5 to 8 December 1918. At the congress, the decision was taken to support the Lithuanians in

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> ATAMUKAS, Solomonas. *Juden in Litauen. Ein geschichtlicher Überblick vom 14. bis 20. Jahrhundert*. Hrsg. von Erhard Roy WIEHN. Konstanz, 2000, S. 63.

<sup>14</sup> TAUBER, Joachim. 'No Allies': The Lithuanian Taryba and the National Minorities 1916–1918. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2007, vol. 38, no. 4, p. 435.

<sup>15</sup> STALIŪNAS, D. Op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> FISHMAN, David E. Nuo stadlanų iki masinių partijų: žydų politiniai judėjimai Lietuvoje. In *Lietuvos žydai: istorinė studija*. Sud. Vladas SIRUTAVIČIUS, Darius STALIŪNAS, Jurgita ŠIAUČIŪNAITĖ-VERBICKIENĖ. Vilnius, 2012, p. 259.

<sup>17</sup> STALIŪNAS, D. Op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

the founding of their state, on condition that Jews were granted national autonomy.<sup>19</sup> Eglė Bendikaitė writes:

The first Zionist conference in Vilnius ended more than a yearlong process of Lithuanian-Jewish discussions and negotiations and produced a practical result: three Jewish representatives agreed to be coopted into the Lithuanian council, though without officially representing any Jewish organisation and without claiming to represent the entire Lithuanian Jewish community.<sup>20</sup>

This decision and its consequences represented a clear victory for the Zionists. Three people were chosen to represent the Jewish minority in Lithuania's newly created provisional government.<sup>21</sup>

The three were Dr Shimshon Rozenbaum, who was named deputy foreign minister, Dr Nachman Rachmilevich, who was given the position of deputy minister for commerce and industry, and Dr Jacob Wigodski, who became minister for Jewish affairs. The government's 12 December declaration on general policy, which soon followed, already contained the signatures of these three Jewish ministers. The first edition of the official bulletin of the government, *Vyriausybės Žinios*, appeared on 29 December 1918, and a Yiddish edition was also printed.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary sources report that the Taryba member Antanas Smetona, who would shortly thereafter become Lithuania's president, could not conceal his joy about this.<sup>23</sup> On 14 December 1918, Smetona declared that in the unclear situation in Eastern Europe following the German defeat, the young, multi-ethnic state could not do without the inclusion of the other ethnic groups living there.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, according to Smetona, the Jewish representatives hoped 'that what happened to them in Poland, Lviv and elsewhere will not happen to them here, and they will not be disappointed, but rather, working together, we will reach the goal to which we are marching, a free independent Lithuania'.<sup>25</sup> In this way, the Zionists in Lithuania, in particular, had already provided support for the founding of the state. Gringauz stated that 'at the time of the establishment of the Lithuanian state all the Jewish political groupings had already accepted the demand for autonomy.'<sup>26</sup> Additional support was to follow on the international stage.

<sup>19</sup> BALKELIS, T. Op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> BENDIKAITĖ, E. Op. cit., pp. 159–180.

<sup>21</sup> GRINGAUZ, Samuel. Jewish National Autonomy in Lithuania (1918–1925). *Jewish Social Studies*, 1952, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Lietuvos Valstybės Tarybos protokolai 1917–1918*. Sud. Alfonsas EIDINTAS, Raimundas LOPATA. Vilnius, 1991, p. 464.

<sup>24</sup> RICHTER, K. Op. cit., S. 203.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> GRINGAUZ, S. Op. cit., p. 228.

## Lithuanians and Jews at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference

On 11 November 1918, the first Lithuanian government under Augustinas Voldemaras came into being. The process of state formation was thus under way. Just two months later, on 18 January 1919, negotiations began at the peace conference in Paris. Thirty-two states took part, but Lithuania was not invited. Nonetheless, it sent a delegation to Paris, which had observer status and was supposed to represent the interests of the new state. In the eyes of the Entente powers, Lithuania was a state that had been established by the Germans. The Lithuanian delegation was at most consulted during some commission meetings. The delegation, which consisted of two groups, attempted to be active behind the scenes, to compose memoranda, to publish articles in the local papers, and to write up petitions.

The delegation was led by Augustinas Voldemaras, with Oskaras Milašius serving as his secretary, and it consisted of Lithuanians resident in the country and Lithuanians living abroad. Martynas Yčas, Tomas Naruševičius, Petras Klimas and Alfredas Jonas Tiškevičius belonged to the first group, but so too did Shimshon Rozenbaum, Max Soloveičikas and other people. The representatives of Lithuanians living abroad included Jonas Žilius, Bronius Kazys Balutis and Juozas Dobužinskis. The main objectives of the Lithuanian delegation in Paris were recognition of Lithuanian statehood, territorial expansion, independence from Poland, and Baltic unity. As Aldona Gaigalaitė has discussed, the Lithuanian government prohibited the delegation from undertaking negotiations about a Polish or Russian annexation of Lithuania.<sup>27</sup> The situation was complicated, moreover, since the new Polish state was seeking to re-establish itself within Poland's historical borders. Thus, in April 1919, Vilnius was occupied by Polish troops.

These facts reinforced the legitimating strategy of an independent Lithuania as a haven of democracy and a model state with respect to the protection of minorities. Klaus Richter underscores that this occurred in sharp contrast to Poland, 'whose push into ethnically non-Polish areas, against the background of anti-Jewish pogroms in Lviv, Pinsk and Vilnius, was increasingly viewed internationally as chauvinistic'.<sup>28</sup>

So much for the Lithuanian delegation. Now, what role did Jews play overall at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference?

Thanks to Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' plan and the proclaimed right to self-determination of peoples, the Jewish question was also exceedingly present at the Paris peace negotiations. Moreover, no one could predict how the newly founded states would deal with their Jewish minorities. The Paris Peace Conference was really

<sup>27</sup> GAIGALAITĖ, Aldona. *Lietuva Paryžiuje 1919 metais*. Kaunas, 1999, p. 24–63.

<sup>28</sup> GRINGAUZ, S. Op. cit., p. 228.

the very first occasion when the Jews as a national group could raise their voice in the international arena.

Joanna Żyndul has correctly noted that the politicians of the Ukraine and Lithuania were dependent on their minorities. The 'Committee of Jewish Delegations to the Paris Peace Conference' (Comité des délégations Juives) was confronted with this problem. The delegations included Zionists, Folkists, religious and patriotic Jews, but also Western liberal Jews: the whole spectrum was represented.<sup>29</sup> They were led by the Zionists: the American Jewish Congress (AJC), but also representatives of the Joint Foreign Committee of British Jews (JFC) and representatives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU). How the composition of the Jewish delegation came into being, as well as the battles over political direction they fought out among themselves, played only a very subordinate role. The international arena in which they appeared, on the other hand, was of great importance. What was at stake in Paris was thus 'context not content'.<sup>30</sup>

At the Paris Peace Conference, it became clear that there was a need for a framework of protective rules for Jews and other ethnic minorities in the newly emergent states, in order to be able to implement the overall construct of the negotiated peace agreements. To this extent, a window of opportunity opened here for the Jewish delegations to act. But this also meant that the dialogue between the Jews and the representatives of the new states was intensified.

What happened now in practice? The British diplomatic historian Harold Temperley, who was a member of the British delegation, has given a precise description of the atmosphere of those months in his diaries:

At meals, and when off duty, there was no convention to forbid discussion of the business in hand. A unique opportunity was thus given to every specialist of grasping the relation of his own particular question to all the others involved, and of seeing its place in the vast problem of reconstruction before the Congress. So great a diversity of minds has seldom been associated on a single task under one roof. Men who never imagined they had anything in common began to discover how much in common they really had. In friendly informal intercourse they came to see how they differed, and also to appreciate the sincerity of views which were not theirs.<sup>31</sup>

The atmosphere was thus extremely positive and allowed for many discussions, even though it was not easy precisely for the Lithuanian delegation, since many participants in the conference had long avoided even using the name of Lithuania.

<sup>29</sup> LEVENE, M. Op. cit., p. 513.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 514.

<sup>31</sup> TEMPERLEY, Harold W. V. Preface. In *A history of the peace conference of Paris*. Ed. by Harold W. V. Temperley. London, 1920, pp. v-vi.

There were also tensions between the Polish and Lithuanian representatives. The Polish delegation tried to defame the new Lithuanian state, which had not yet been recognised, as hostile to Jews. The 'Paris Declaration' of 5 August 1919 represented a breakthrough.

The document 'On the Situation of the Jews in Lithuania' was drafted by Shimshon Rozenbaum for the Lithuanian delegation led by Antanas Voldemaras.<sup>32</sup> It was addressed to the Comité des délégations Juives, and relied on the principle of quid pro quo. In it, Lithuanian Jews were promised broad rights to autonomy, which were to be anchored in the constitution and laws. In return, the Jewish Committee promised to support the position of the Lithuanian delegation during the peace conference.<sup>33</sup> The historian of law Samuel Gringauz enumerates what the Lithuanian Jews were promised:

(1) Proportional representation in parliament, administration, and the judiciary. The establishment of a Jewish ministry to deal with Jewish affairs. (2) Full rights as citizens for the Jews together with the right to use the Yiddish language in public life and in governmental institutions. (3) Autonomy in all internal matters, such as religion, social services, education, and cultural affairs. The Kehillot and the National Council were to constitute the operating agencies of Jewish autonomy. They were to be governmental bodies patterned after the example of territorial autonomy with the right to issue ordinances which would be obligatory both for the Jews and the government agencies.<sup>34</sup>

With the support of their Jewish colleagues, the Lithuanian politicians used democratic means to achieve recognition of their independence. Klaus Richter notes that this was 'above all [about] a strategy of legitimation for foreign policy purposes'.<sup>35</sup> By virtue of it, the Lithuanians and the other Baltic republics were able to distinguish themselves from the Poles. On 24 September 1919, Great Britain granted Lithuania de facto recognition, and the delegation was finally taken into consideration at the peace conference. Gringauz summed up in retrospect: 'Among the new states Lithuania was the only one where Jewish autonomy attained strong and visible expression.'<sup>36</sup> Here I can also underline once again that the affiliation of the city of Vilnius was a major bone of contention between Poland and Lithuania. Jews represented a large group of inhabitants at that time (43.5%).<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, Lithuanian representatives played the Jewish card to the Polish delegation. They did it because

<sup>32</sup> LEVIN, Dov. Rosenboim, Shimshon. In *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, retrieved 10.9.2018, URL <[http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Rosenboim\\_Shimshon](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Rosenboim_Shimshon)>.

<sup>33</sup> TRUSKA, L.; VAREIKIS, V. Op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>34</sup> GRINGAUZ, S. Op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>35</sup> RICHTER, K. Op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>36</sup> GRINGAUZ, S. Op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>37</sup> BRENSZTEJN, Michał Eustachy. *Spisy ludności m. Wilna za okupacji niemieckiej od. 1 listopada 1915 r.* Warszawa, 1919, s. 31.

the constellations were favourable during the peace conference in Paris, where the Jewish question was discussed openly for the first time. The Lithuanian delegation also had a representative who was able to formulate this argument professionally. In the long term, however, the Lithuanian state lost Vilnius, and thus a large percentage of its Jewish minority, making the Jewish card meaningless after a few years.

## Conclusions

How can we sum up? Let us turn here again to Samuel Gringauz, the historian of law and future judge from Memel (Klaipėda). He summarised this phase of Lithuanian-Jewish cooperation as follows:

Thus, the years 1918 to 1920 witnessed a confluence of factors that favored autonomy. The desire of the Jewish community for national self-government which stemmed in turn from the national autonomist and Zionist trends, coincided with the political tradition of Lithuania's leaders and with the country's political needs. Out of this combination of factors evolved the socio-political experiment of 'Jewish national autonomy'.<sup>38</sup>

The later failure of this experiment already belongs to another historical chapter. Much too often, the beginning of the experiment is only recounted from the perspective of this failure. Let it here be noted: at two relevant points, Zionism, the Jewish national movement, supported the emergence of a Lithuanian state. First, by the vote to dispatch its representatives to the newly created government, and, second, by producing a document that improved the international position of the Lithuanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference and was thus helpful to gaining recognition for the new state. In conclusion, an ancillary factor should also be mentioned. Interestingly, the processes involved in the striving for autonomy in the countries was linked with the fact that Jews in these countries '[were] fixed more firmly and explicitly in the nationality of the lands of their birth [than] they had ever been before'.<sup>39</sup> The Jewish activist Lucien Wolf, who spent time as a political observer at the peace conference, already described this phenomenon in 1920. It would apply for many Lithuanian Jews. This is an important observation. But this phenomenon as well can only be described in a separate chapter.

<sup>38</sup> GRINGAUZ, S. Op. cit., pp. 231–232.

<sup>39</sup> Wolf to George Wolf, 9 April 1920, quoted by LEVENE, M. Op. cit., p. 526.



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## ŽYDŲ INDĒLIS Į LIETUVOS NEPRIKLAUSOMYBĘ 1918–1919 METAIS

Ruth Leiserowitz

## Santrauka

Faktas, kad žydų mažuma prisidėjo prie Lietuvos valstybės atsiradimo 1918 m., yra plačiai žinomas. Mažiau yra žinoma apie sprendimo dalyvauti kuriant valstybę pirmėivius ir su šiuo dalyvavimu susijusius procesus. Straipsnyje gilinamasi pirmiausia į 1919 m. ir bandoma parodyti, kaip konkrečiai Paryžiaus taikos konferencijos scena buvo išnaudota Lietuvos žydų ir lietuvių politikams pereinant į „pragmatinės sąjungos“ būvį, į kurį žiūrėta kaip į galimybę be pralaimėjimo ir kuris iš tiesų pasirodė toks besąs. Pirmojoje straipsnio dalyje glaustai atskleidžiamas žydų požiūris į Lietuvos valstybę 1918–1919 m., atkreipiant dėmesį į šio požiūrio formavimosi priešistorę, pradedant Lietuvos žydų politizacija prieš 1918 m. Antroji straipsnio dalis per kelias momentines 1918–1919 m. įvykių nuotraukas pereina prie pagrindinio siužeto – lietuvių ir žydų santykių 1919 m. Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje.

Kai 1919 m. sausio 18 d. Paryžiuje prasidėjo derybos, jose dalyvavo 32 valstybės, bet Lietuvos niekas nepakvietė. Nepaisant to, Lietuvos vyriausybė pasiuntė delegaciją į Paryžių, kur ji veikė stebėtojo statusu ir turėjo atstovauti naujos valstybės interesams. Antantės šalių požiūriu, Lietuvos valstybę sukūrė vokiečiai. Daugių daugiausia su Lietuvos delegacija buvo konsultuojamasi per paskirų komisijų susitikimus. Iš dviejų grupių sudaryta delegacija savo ruožtu bandė veikti užkulisiuose, kurti įvairius memorandumus, spausdinti straipsnius vietos laikraščiuose ir rašyti peticijas.

Kokį vaidmenį Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje 1919 m. vaidino žydai? Apskritai Ukrainos ir Lietuvos politikai buvo priklausomi nuo savo mažumų. Žydų delegacijų komitetas (*Comité des délégations Juives*) Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje su tuo susidūrė. Konferencijos metu tapo aišku, kad, siekiant įgyvendinti bendrąjį suderėtų taikos sutarimų sumanymą, naujai atsirandančiose valstybėse būtina žydus ir kitas tautines mažumas ginančių taisyklių sistema. Žydų delegacijoms tai sukūrė palankią progą veikti. Tačiau kartu tai reiškė, kad žydams ir naujųjų valstybių atstovams reikėjo suintensyvinti dialogą.

Žydai, konkrečiai Lietuvos sionistai, jau buvo pareiškę paramą kuriant Lietuvos valstybę. Tokį sprendimą priėmė 1918 m. gruodžio 5–8 d. Vilniuje vykęs sionistų suvažiavimas, kurį surengė 1918 m. rugsėjo mėn. Vilniuje Leibo Jaffės ir mokytojo Josepho Bergerio įkurtas Centrinis sionistų komitetas. Kai kurie Lietuvos Tarybos nariai, pvz., Antanas Smetona, neslėpė džiaugsmo, kad mainais į tautinę autonomiją žydai jungėsi prie naujai suformuotos Lietuvos vyriausybės: Simonas Rozenbaumas tapo užsienio reikalų ministro pavaduotoju, Nachmanas Rachmilevičius – prekybos ir pramonės ministro pavaduotoju, o Jokūbas Vigodskis – žydų reikalų ministru.

Rengdami vadinamąją Paryžiaus deklaraciją, žydai parėmė Lietuvą ir tarptautiniu lygmeniu. 1919 m. rugpjūčio 5 d. deklaraciją Lietuvos delegacijai, vadovaujamai Augustino Voldemaro, parengė S. Rozenbaumas. Ji buvo skirta Žydų delegacijų komitetui ir rėmėsi principu *quid pro quo*. Lietuvos žydams šioje deklaracijoje buvo žadamos plačios autonominės teisės, kurios turėjo būti įtvirtintos Konstitucija ir įstatymais. Mainais Žydų delegacijų komitetas pažadėjo remti Lietuvos delegacijos pozicijas Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje.