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THE NORTHERN TRADE FAIR SOCIETY IN VILNIUS – AN INSTITUTION AT THE INTERSECTION OF ECONOMY, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION. OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE

| Abstract

- ▶ *Goal* – The aim of this article is to present the idea behind the Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius and the activities of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius.
- ▶ *Research methodology* – The article was written after archival and library research. The article is based mainly on the preserved archival sources and selected press information concerning the analysed initiative of the Northern Trade Fair and the Society.
- ▶ *Score/results* – The results of the research show the essence of the Northern Trade Fair and the role played by the Society in its organisation. The Society operated in the areas of economics, education, and culture in order to effectively organise the Fair.
- ▶ *Originality/value* – Issues related to the interwar economy of the Vilnius region and, more broadly, the North-Eastern Lands are of interest to researchers. This article is an attempt to examine in more detail the Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius and the activities of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius.

| **Keywords:** The Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, interwar Vilnius region economy, social organisations, interwar education, interwar period

1. Introduction

The Second Polish Republic was diverse and determined by the policies of the partitioning powers, which is why the Polish government attempted to standardise the economic, political, and social situation. The interwar period was a time of intensive economic reconstruction, the introduction of new technological solutions, and a clear tendency to popularise and promote regional and local products. The situation in the Eastern Borderlands was completely different from the rest of Poland. The area of the North-Eastern Lands, comprising the provinces of Vilnius, Nowogródek, Poleskie, and Białystok provinces, covered an area of 121 076 km² in the interwar period, which constituted about 1/3 of the entire area of the Second Polish Republic. Of the 5 million inhabitants living in this area, 4% made their living from trade, 10% from industry and crafts, and about 75% of the population made their living from agriculture [*Targi Północne...*, 11]. The lower competitiveness of the north-eastern lands compared to central Poland was a consequence, on the one hand, of the unfavourable shape of the eastern borders of the Second Polish Republic, where the Vilnius region was deprived of its markets and trade routes, and on the other hand, of the persistent economic backwardness resulting from the policy of the Russian partition [Srebrakowski, 2004: 781–782]. Local and economic authorities, including the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, and the Vilnius Chamber of Agriculture, were well aware of the need to improve the economic situation. To this end, the Association of Cities of the Vilnius and Nowogródek Provinces was also established, bringing together 19 borderland cities and towns with the aim of contributing to their economic and cultural development by developing a joint strategy for the development of the Vilnius region [Magistrat miasta Wilna, 1930]. Despite their commitment, organising numerous meetings, conferences, lectures, and publishing articles in trade press, the proposed activities were mostly regional in nature. The proposed initiatives did not have a decisive voice in the central arena of the Polish economic policy, when measures were taken that were intended to promote the economy of the Second Polish Republic. Therefore, following the example of the Poznań International Fair and the Lviv Eastern Fair, representatives of Vilnius' economic circles and the intellectual elite sought opportunities to organise similar events in Vilnius. As early as 1928, the Northern Trade Fair began to be organised in Vilnius, which, owing to the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius established in 1937, began to more intensively promote the ideas of economic development in the north-eastern lands.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the idea of the Northern Trade Fair and the activities of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, which set the direction for the further development of the economic initiative. The article was written after thorough archival and library research, based on preserved archival sources and press information found in publications such as “Kurjer Wileński, Nowogródzki, Grodzieński, Suwalski, Poleski i Wołyński”, “Przegląd Wileński: tygodnik polityczny, społeczny i literacki” and “Rolnik: tygodnik rolniczy ilustrowany poświęcony sprawom gospodarstwa wiejskiego z jego wszelkimi gałęziami”.

The subject matter has not yet been the subject of any in-depth scientific analysis. Although the economy of the Vilnius region is a subject of research interest, all editions of the Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius have not been the subject of a monograph. An noteworthy paper on the subject is the article from 2004 entitled *Targi Północne w Wilnie w latach 1928–1939*, written by A. Srebrakowski.

The presented issue was developed on the basis of the available source materials, widely scattered across libraries. The information published in the Kurjer Wileński newspaper, especially from 1938–1939, during the active period of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, as well as in the trade press, was particularly valuable. The Statute of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, published in 1938, as well as reports and programs, were also used. Another valuable source was the publication *Targi Północne w Wilnie: czym były – czym są – czym mają być* [Eng. *The Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius: What They Were – What They Are – What They Are to Be*], published in Vilnius in 1939 by the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, which provided a reliable overview of the activities of the Northern Trade Fair. A list of source materials can be found in the bibliography. Due to the innovative nature of the topic, this article is the first attempt to address this issue and thus heralds further analysis of the activities of the Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius.

2. The Idea and the beginnings of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius

The first idea to organise the Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius appeared in 1926 in Warsaw, when Professor Stefan Ehrenkreutz of Stefan Batory University, a professor of law at the Institute for Research on the Economic Situation of the Eastern Lands, proposed organising an Exhibition of the Eastern Lands of the Republic of Poland. Originally, the exhibition was to be organised in the capital, but as a result of strong pressure from entrepreneurs and scientists in Vilnius, who obtained honorary patronage for the event from Marshal Józef Piłsudski, they decided to

organise the initiative in Vilnius. This was particularly important because the North-Eastern Lands, which were covered by the Northern Trade Fair, were areas with a tradition of textile industry (e.g. Białystok) and developing wood, paper, linen, food, electrical, and haberdashery industries. The north-eastern lands were agricultural in nature, hence the agricultural economy was modernised through the expansion of infrastructure and networks of agricultural organisations and the establishment of agricultural schools. In addition, the north-eastern lands, as well as Vilnius itself, were characterised by tourist attractions, and by the developing forms of sightseeing strengthened regional values. The geographical location of Vilnius, as the northernmost Polish city, also opened up new opportunities for economic contacts with the countries of north-eastern Europe. It is also worth mentioning that an additional argument in favour of organising the fair was the Vilnius fair tradition, which dates back to the 15th century, when Kazimierz Jagiellończyk established two-week fairs in Vilnius, one in January on the Epiphany and the other in August on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the 17th century, the tradition of the Kaziukas Fair was initiated, commemorating the canonization of Prince Casimir and his recognition as the patron saint of Lithuania. However, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, as a result of military operations, the position of the Vilnius fairs changed and they began to take on a more local character. The partition of the country almost completely interrupted the fair tradition and halted international trade. As a result of a decision by the authorities, the Russian partition began to organise annual month-long St. George's Fairs [Pol. *Jarmarki Świętojęskie*] in April. However, these fairs were definitely national in character and served as a space for the Russian government to sell domestic goods. In addition, fairs and markets were also common in other towns in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and their tradition survived and remained popular in the interwar period.

Considering the above reasons, the pre-war Vilnius was to become a city continuing the market traditions and at the same time setting new directions for action in the economic reality of the time. The idea of the Vilnius Northern Trade Fair and Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition arose from the need to emphasise the importance of Vilnius as a major industrial and commercial centre on the economic map of the Second Polish Republic. The event was also intended to be the culmination of many years of intensive efforts to strengthen the economic development of the Vilnius region. The aim of the fair was to bridge the geographical gap and to establish economic cooperation between the Baltic Sea countries, which made the Northern Trade Fair unique and did not compete with

the Poznań or Lviv Fairs. This was all the more so because the first decade of the independent Second Polish Republic was a period of relatively good economic conditions, when the country was becoming increasingly vibrant in every area. The aim of the Fair was to showcase the progress made by the Vilnius region in agriculture and the agricultural industry, to familiarise farmers with the latest agricultural machinery and tools, to promote mutual understanding of the needs of farmers, producers, and consumers, and to familiarize merchants from the Baltic countries with the Polish industry [Vade Mecum..., 1928].

3. Four editions of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius

The 1st Northern Trade Fair was organised by the Vilnius City Council in co-operation with the local economic institutions and lasted from August 18 to September 9, 1928. A 1 200 m² pavilion was set up in the Bernardine Garden in the city centre, and the buildings of the Industrial and Commercial School, the Summer Theatre, and the Faculty of Fine Arts of Stefan Batory University were also used. Sixteen industrial and commercial sections participating in the 1st Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius were arranged in this space. Many exhibitors also built stands on the premises, a large part of which was devoted to the Breeding Exhibition. It should be noted that the 1st Northern Trade Fair attracted more interest than the organisers had originally planned, with around 180 000 people attending. Nevertheless, there were also critical voices in the press at the time, saying that the event did not attract much interest from abroad. [“Przegląd Wileński...” 1928: 3–5].

The next, 2nd Northern Trade Fair took place two years later, in 1930, from September 14 to 28. The organisers paid special attention to issues related to the linen industry, which was to become the leading economic sector in the North-Eastern Lands of Poland. To this end, an Exhibition of Folk Art and Folk Industry was organised, with a focus on flax and the flax industry. In addition, the 2nd Northern Trade Fair featured companies and institutions from the metal and metal-technical industries, land improvement, construction, electrical engineering, automotive, textile, chemical, agricultural, wood, leather, ceramic, confectionery, manufacturing and clothing, pharmaceutical and cosmetic-perfumery products, and monopolies. Glassworks, manufacturers of sports equipment and bicycles, musical instrument factories, and furniture factories also exhibited their products at the Fair. The decorative and handicraft industry was represented by

21 exhibitors involved in handicrafts. There were also representatives of the paper and publishing industries. In total, over 200 exhibitors presented their products [II Targi Północne..., 43–60].

Another three years had to pass before the next, 3rd Northern Trade Fair was organised, which took place in 1933, lasted from August 26 to September 10, and was accompanied by the Linen Exhibition in Vilnius. It was also organised under the patronage of Józef Piłsudski and Lucjan Żeligowski, who was a promoter of the Polish linen production. The exhibition program was enriched with lectures and film presentations on flax cultivation, processing, and weaving, and an 8-day linen course was organised, which included teaching: flax cultivation, spinning and weaving principles, fabric standardisation, flax processing, the use of flax in fashion and the military, and ways to increase the efficiency of flax and hemp cultivation. In addition, participants of the Fair could purchase a guide to the linen exhibition, as well as publications and the magazine “Przegląd Lniarski” [Eng. *Linen Review*] published by the Linen Society. The main purpose of the exhibition was to promote flax cultivation and convince the community of the Vilnius region to use linen, which, owing to textile technologies, could be used in a wide range of clothing industries, as well as to encourage farmers to improve the conditions for flax cultivation. It was also about drawing attention to the fact that since linen production was one of the main branches of the state economy, the cultivation of flax and the production of linen fabrics could be the main area of economic development for the Vilnius region, which ranked sixth in Poland in terms of flax and hemp cultivation [Przewodnik po wystawie..., 1933: 5–6]. As part of the Northern Trade Fair, the following exhibitions were also organised: Fishing, Beekeeping, Poultry and Fur Animals, as well as a display of craftsmanship from the Vilnius region. Helena Wolska wrote in an agricultural weekly magazine about her impressions of the 3rd Fair, saying that “The Fair pavilions, scattered among the greenery in the Bernardine garden, create a picturesque and impressive whole. There is considerable activity everywhere. (...)”¹ [“Rolnik: tygodnik rolniczy...”, Vol. 65, 1933, No. 38: 603].

The next, 4th Northern Trade Fair was organised from September 17 to October 2 1938, after a five-year break. As part of the Fair, an exhibition of poultry, pigeons, dogs, fur animals, and horses was organised. In a smaller pavilion, the Social Insurance Company organised a Hygiene Exhibition, where special attention was paid to social diseases. The fair was accompanied by additional attractions,

¹ Pol. “Pawilony Targów, rozrzucone wśród zieleni w ogrodzie po bernadyńskim, tworzą całość malowniczą i efektowną. Wszędzie znaczne ożywienie. (...)”.

such as harvest festivals, boxing competitions, revues, and fashion shows, as well as an outdoor display of Władysław Ludwik Anczyc's play "Łobzowanie" and a bustling with joy lunapark.

The last, 5th Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius began on August 19 and it was supposed to last until September 3, 1939, but was cut short by the outbreak of World War II. It was to include trade fair sections and exhibitions in the fields of industry and trade, agriculture, crafts, and small industry, combined with the 5th International Fur Fair and Auction, Pig Exhibition and Auction, National Medicinal Herbs, Mushrooms and Vegetable Preserves, Horse Breeding Exhibition, National Poultry, Dog and Fur Animal Exhibition, Beekeeping Exhibition, Forestry and Hunting Exhibition, and Fishing Exhibition. The fair was to be accompanied by events such as the National Beekeepers' Convention ["Kurjer Wileński...", No. 217 of 1939: 4] or the National Congress of the Young Village Association in connection with the 20th anniversary of the ZMW, combined with harvest celebrations and an artistic program. In addition, participants of the Fair could enjoy attractions such as: "Fun Fair" [Pol. "*Wesołe Miasteczko*"] with an amusement park and circus, a fashion show, boxing competitions, and theatrical performances featuring artists from the Vilnius region, Warsaw, and the Baltic-Scandinavian countries.

Table 1. Interest and Participation of Exhibitors at the Northern Trade Fair in 1928–1938

TARGI	UDZIAŁ WYSTAWCÓW										Ilość zwiedza- jących	WYSTAWY ZORGANIZOWANE W RAMACH TARGÓW PÓŁNOCNYCH
	OGÓŁEM	WEDŁUG BRANŻ W % ¹⁾				WEDŁUG ZIEM W % ²⁾						
		Przem. i hand.	Rolni- ctwo	Rze- miosło	Kul- tura	Pln- wsch.	Centr.	Zach.	Połud.	Za- gran.		
I-e 1928 r. 18.VIII — 9.IX	316	34	38	—	7	63	20	6	8	3	Okolo 180 tys. osób	1. Wystawa Rolniczo-Przemysłowa
II-e 1930 r. 14—28.IX	185	100	—	—	—	60	19	3	10	6	Okolo 107 tys. osób	1. Wystawa Sztuki Lniarskiej i Prze- mysłu Lndowego
III-cie 1933 r. 26.VIII — 10.IX	232	69 ¹⁾	30	—	—	68	17	8	7	—	Okolo 150 tys. osób	1. Wystawa Lniarska 2. Wystawa Rybacka 3. Wystawa Pszczelarska 4. Wystawa Hodowlana i Remont Kon- 5. Wystawa Drobin i Zwierząt Futer- kowych
IV-te 1938 r. 17.IX — 2.X	203	67	22 ¹⁾	8	2	47	20	18	15	—	Przeszo 100 tys. osób	1. Wystawa Drobin, Psów i Zwierząt Futerkowych 2. Pokaz i Remont Konj 3. Wystawa Higieniczna

¹⁾ Łącznie z rzemiosłem. ²⁾ Łącznie z eksponatami handlowymi.

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Source: original table from [Targi Północne w Wilnie....: 5].

As can be seen from the above data (Table 1), the interest in the Fair was considerable. The first Fair was visited by approximately 180 000 people, the second by approximately 107 000 people, the third by approximately 150 000 people, and the fourth by over 100 000 visitors. Each year, over 200 exhibitors presented their products (in 1928 there were 316 exhibitors, in 1930 – 185; in 1933 – 232; and in 1938–203), mostly from the north-eastern lands.

4. Activity of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius

Despite constant interest in the Fair, its frequency was not consistent. As a result of the lack of a suitable venue, the deteriorating economic situation, ongoing conflicts between the organisers, and the lack of a permanent organisational team, the organisation of the Northern Trade Fair was suspended for over five years, which greatly weakened the initiative. The next Fair in Vilnius was not organised until 1938, a year after the establishment of the Northern Trade Fair Society, which replaced the organising Committees.

The issue of the Northern Trade Fair became an increasingly important matter in the economic development policy of the Vilnius region. The following entities became interested in and took charge of the organisation of the Fair: the Vilnius City Council and local economic authorities, including the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Agriculture, and the Chamber of Crafts. In order to develop the idea of the Vilnius Fair, local authorities established the “Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius” [Pol. *Towarzystwo Targów Północnych w Wilnie*] at a meeting on March 22, 1937, as a permanent institution tasked with organising the Northern Trade Fair, exhibitions, and shows in Vilnius every year. The 4th Northern Trade Fair in 1938 was organised for the first time by the Northern Trade Fair Society, which was established for this purpose.

The Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius was a permanent organisation, registered and operating on the basis of the Statute of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius. The purpose of the Society was to improve the economic condition of the North-Eastern Lands by organising trade fairs, exhibitions, shows, and other events promoting the economy. The Society intended to achieve its statutory goal by promoting fairs in the press and trade periodicals, participating in meetings, conferences, and public and occasional speeches. The founding members of the Society were people from the Vilnius City Council, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Vilnius Chamber of Agriculture, and the Chamber of Crafts

[*Statut Towarzystwa Targów...*, 1938]. Kazimierz Grodzicki, the Vice-President of the City of Vilnius, was elected the President of the Society's Board. Picture 1 shows a photo of the grand opening of the 4th Northern Trade Fair, with the president of the Society, Kazimierz Grodzicki, the third from the right.



Picture 1. Grand Opening of the 4th Northern Trade Fair. Source: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe [www 1].

The three vice-presidents of the Society were: Mieczysław Żejmo, a member of the Board of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Władysław Szumański, the former president of the Chamber of Crafts, who could also be replaced by Alojzy Niemiec, the director of the Chamber of Crafts in Vilnius, and Senator Władysław Kamiński, the president of the Vilnius Chamber of Agriculture. Wojciech Gołębio-wski, the councilor of the city of Vilnius, became a secretary, and Edmund Kowal-ski, a honorary member of the Association of Christian Merchants and Industrial-ists, held the position of the treasurer. In addition to the presidium, the following were elected to the board: T. Nagurski, the vice president of Vilnius, J. Cholem, member of the board of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Vilnius, Ł. Kruk, the vice-president of the Chamber of Crafts in Vilnius, Col. B. Wędziagolski, a member of the Board of the Vilnius Chamber of Agriculture, Maj. S. Krassowski,

a representative of the army, Piotr Hermanowicz, a representative of the Christian Craftsmen's Union, J. Oskwarek-Sierosławski, the director of the Polish Bank in Vilnius, W. Łuczyński, a lawyer in Vilnius, Ł. Chomiński, the president of the Grain, Commodity, and Linen Exchange in Vilnius. Among the deputy members of the board were: S. Barański, a member of the Board of the Vilnius Chamber of Agriculture in Vilnius, and M. Biernacki, the director of P.K.O. in Vilnius. The revision committee consisted of: M. Bohdanowicz, the president of the Association of Polish Industry of the Eastern Lands in Vilnius, E. Kudrewicz, the councillor of the city of Vilnius, E. Prużan, the vice-president of the Association of Jewish Merchants in Vilnius, W. Tomaszewski, the director of the Association of Christian Merchants and Industrialists in Vilnius, J. Uziąło, the vice-president of the Chamber of Crafts in Vilnius, E. Kukulak, the director of the Bank of the Union of Profit-Making Companies in Vilnius. The role of deputies of the Revision Committee was filled by J. Szabad, the advisor to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Vilnius, and T. Teńczyński in Vilnius. The executive body of the Northern Trade Fair Society was the Fair Management, which included the secretariat, the accounting, press and the propaganda department, the exhibition department, and the technical and artistic department. The press and publicity department was responsible for preparing and disseminating press releases concerning the progress of organisational work. The Fair included thematic exhibitions organised by the exhibition Committees responsible for financial and organisational matters. In addition, the Society's activities were supported by advisory bodies dealing with informational and artistic issues. The press and propaganda committee consisted of: Dr. Walerian Charkiewicz, the president of the Vilnius Journalists' Syndicate; F. Hryniewicz, a member of the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius; K. Ołdziejewski, the head of propaganda for the Northern Trade Fair; W. Patrycy, the director of Pat in Vilnius; Ł. Pągowski, a representative of the Vilnius Station of Polish Radio; K. Sakowicz, a publisher and editor of "Przegląd Handlowo-Gospodarczy" [Eng. *Trade and Economic Review*] in Vilnius, and engineer R. Węckowicz, the editor of "Tygodnik Rolniczy" [Eng. *Agricultural Weekly*] in Vilnius. The Technical and Artistic Committee, as an advisory body on matters relating to the planning and expansion of the Fair grounds, outdoor advertising, stand equipment, decorations, events, and publications, included: engineer S. Bukowski, the city architect, as the chairman of the Committee, and four other members. In addition, the Society cooperated on an ongoing basis with the League for the Promotion of Tourism, the Vilnius Region Tourist Propaganda Association, "Orbis", the Vilnius School Board, and with other social organisations.

One of the first activities of the Society was the development of the area for the Northern Trade Fair in 1938. The place where the Fair had previously been organised, i.e. the post-Bernardine garden, proved to be insufficient for such a widespread initiative. The Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius received 8 hectares of land from the Vilnius city council, a square between the then Legionowa and Wiwulski streets, which facilitated the organisation of subsequent fairs. It was not yet possible to build a permanent building, because in 1938 the plans for the construction of the Northern Trade Fair grounds were ready and a tender was announced for the facilities for the new Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius grounds on Wiwulski Street. However, the area, which was already owned by the Northern Trade Fair Society, was developed in a modern way: sewage, electricity, and its own railway siding were installed, and two temporary pavilions were built. A restaurant, a café, and many pavilions and kiosks of various companies were built on the square. The space of the plot was developed in a very modern way, attractive to visitors and comfortable for exhibitors. Despite the makeshift conditions, it met the expectations of the audience.

Due to the Society's activities, the entire concept of the 4th and 5th Fairs was well thought out, and the information dissemination department functioned very effectively, publicising the event in the local press. The Society saw the need to involve the public in the organisation of the fair, as exemplified by the Herbal Fair Poster Competition, announced in the pages of *Kurier Wileński* ["Kurjer Wileński..." No. 45 (4721), 1939: 8]. The Society's activities are noticeable in the organisation of the fair. They are methodical and well thought out. An example of this is the organisation of the 5th Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius, which was preceded by an analysis of needs conducted by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Vilnius, which showed great interest in the Fair from Finland, Italy, Hungary, Spain, the United States, Japan, Germany, and England. The program of the 5th Northern Trade Fair was systematic and concrete.

5. Conclusions

The Northern Trade Fair in Vilnius began to make its mark on the city's economic landscape, becoming an important factor in the economic life of the North-Eastern Lands. Undoubtedly, the initial lack of systematic organisation, unplanned long-term activities, the lack of a concrete vision and mission for the Fair, and the failure to fully utilise the potential of local government delayed the full

development of the initiative. The next three editions of the Northern Trade Fair were organised by ad hoc organising Committees, which was not great for the organization of the event and did not allow for long-term planning. It was difficult to maintain the continuity of work, and it was not possible to use the grounds, pavilions, and other facilities outside the time of the fair. Therefore, an association was needed to consolidate the organisation of the Fair. It was only after the Fair was taken over in 1937 by the Northern Trade Fair Society in Vilnius, established for this purpose, based mainly on the City Council and the Vilnius Chambers: the Industry and Trade, the Agricultural, and Craft Chambers, directed the organisation of the Fair, which became a permanent initiative with a crystallised organisational form and work program. The Society established its financial foundations, carried out the adaptation and construction investments, and gained popularity and trust in numerous economic circles in the country and abroad. The Northern Trade Fair thus became an undeniable instrument of the economic exchange between industrialised Western and Central Poland and the agricultural regions of North-Eastern Lands. They also became an important area of economic contacts between Poland and Lithuania. The proximity of Vilnius to the Baltic-Scandinavian countries, the normalisation of the Polish-Lithuanian economic relations, and finally, the conclusion of a trade and tourism agreement with Lithuania, provided an opportunity for the Fair to play an important role in economic exchange. As a result of the subsequent political events, the further development of the Fair was abruptly interrupted.

It is also worth noting that the Society used educational forms to promote its idea. For example, during the 5th Northern Trade Fair, as part of educational exhibitions, participants could also attend lectures and film presentations on flax cultivation, processing, and weaving, and those interested were given the opportunity to participate in an 8-day flax course consisting of 58 educational hours. In addition, vocational schools took part in the Fair, presenting their products, but also bringing students on school trips to familiarise them with the economy of the Vilnius region. The Society used various forms of promoting economic initiatives, operated in the field of education and culture, and became a kind of umbrella organisation setting further directions for the development of the Northern Trade Fair, which was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

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