

**CATHOLICISM IN CRISIS: *PRAXIS* AND *LEXIS* OF ANTANAS MACEINA**

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## ***Abstract***

*The thesis aims to answer the question why anti-modernist ideas were so tempting to the Catholic intellectuals. This problem is tackled from the perspective of intellectual history. The answer will be pursued by the examination of the political and social activities of Lithuanian philosopher Antanas Maceina, a prominent member of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals in the 1930s. The thesis answers the questions such as: what are the factors that lead to the combination of Catholicism and political anti-modernism to form radical right? What does determine the different political preferences of those who share the same Catholic background?*

## *Acknowledgments*

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## Introduction

“Nationality without religion is chauvinism.” (Maceina, 1929)

Antanas Maceina (1908-1987) is widely regarded as the most prominent Lithuanian philosopher in the twentieth century. In 2009 on the television show about Maceina's importance to Lithuanian intellectual history, philosopher Alvydas Jokubaitis stated that Maceina “with his *The Origins and Meaning of Philosophy* is the number one [philosopher in Lithuanian history – V. K.] [...]. I think he was weaker during the interwar period. [...] Yet with *The Origins and Meaning of Philosophy* he [...] is on the top.”<sup>1</sup> Maceina studied philosophy in Kaunas University, where in 1934 he defended his Doctoral Thesis “National Education.” There he also received a teaching position and was very active in the Catholic press. During the Second World War he moved to Germany, where he stayed for the rest of his life and was teaching philosophy in the universities of Fribourg and Munster. During the German years Maceina published his most notable studies, such as *The Philosophy of Religion* (*Religijos filosofija*, 1976), *The Origins and Meaning of Philosophy* (*Filosofijos kilmė ir prasmė*, 1978) and *Person and History* (*Asmuo ir istorija*, 1981).

In 1988, when the Lithuanian Philosophers Society was established, one of the initial events it organized was the readings of Maceina's works.<sup>2</sup> Although Lithuania was still under the Soviet rule, already in the 1980s Maceina was widely known among Lithuanian intellectuals.

<sup>1</sup> Tūkstantmečio pokalbiai su Alfredu Bumblausku, “Antanas Maceina” LRT video, 00:04:30, December 6, 2016: <http://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/31806>.

<sup>2</sup> Česlovas Kalenda, “Ką veikia Lietuvos filosofų draugija?” *Problemos* 48 (1995): 136.

Moreover, in 1992 a project to publish his complete works was initiated. When in 2008 the publishing of *The Complete Works* was finished, it encompassed fourteenth volumes, including almost all of his published books, articles, interviews and diaries, excluding his books and manuscripts written in German on Marxist philosophy.

Jokubaitis's comment reveals the general attitude towards Maceina in Lithuanian academy: because of his later works Maceina is still appreciated as an existentialist and religious thinker; however, the writings from his early period are perceived as unoriginal, politicized and thus unimportant in comparison to his later philosophical works. Interestingly, the second volume of *The Complete Works* that contains the books from his interwar period did not receive any introduction. This indicates that at the time of publishing Lithuanian intellectual circles were uncomfortable with the ideas that were presented in the volume. However, Maceina's writings from the interwar period are indeed important, since they indicate the views of the young generation of Catholic intellectuals which was publicly influential during the 1930s and politically active during the Second World War. In fact, Maceina signed the founding act of the Lithuanian Activist Front (Lietuvos Aktyvistų Frontas, LAF), the organization which was created to organize resistance against the Soviets that resulted in the June Uprising in 1941. After the Uprising, the members of the LAF formed a Provisional Government.

Some members of Maceina's milieu were very active in trying to gain political importance during the war. It is believed that Maceina is one of the authors of the LAF's ideological program. In the first days of German occupation the members of the LAF established the Provisional Government, whose legacy is strongly debated in scholarship since it attempted to collaborate with Nazi Germany. While the Provisional Government was trying to restore the state's independency, it did use Nazi rhetoric and showed its public approval of German foreign

policy. Moreover, during this period when the Provisional Government was trying to gain control of the country, there Jewish persecutions began in Lithuania. Thus, it is no surprise that the place of Provisional Government in Lithuanian history is still strongly debated. Therefore, an examination of political ideas of Maceina provides a better understanding of Catholic political engagement in the June Uprising and the roots of their ideological preferences.

This thesis examines the political ideas of Antanas Maceina during the interwar period. Although Maceina was also politically active during the period of 1940-1944, the paper will be limited to the period up to 1941, because a more comprehensive assessment is beyond the scope of this paper. In the thesis the ideas of Maceina will be showed in the political and intellectual context of the first half of the twentieth century. By contextualizing the political aspects of his writings, Maceina's philosophy can be considered as a response to the political crisis of the 1930s. In previous research Maceina's views are seen as static except for a difference between the prewar and postwar works but without a stated reason for this change. Such analyses are based only on his texts, neglecting the circumstances under which Maceina wrote them. Meanwhile, the thesis claims that in order to understand the author's intentions it is extremely important to understand social, political and intellectual contexts of interwar Lithuania. Moreover, such a contextual approach is particularly useful not only to understand the development of Maceina's ideas in the interwar period, but also to reveal reasons why Maceina later changed his political views, although this will not be directly addressed in this paper.

This contextual approach necessitates a closer look into the evolution of Maceina's philosophical views. In the interwar years Maceina belonged to a newly emerged circle of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals. The members of the group centered around their teacher Stasys Šalkauskis (1886-1941) who had a great influence on their views. The group tried to



influence public opinion by their contributions to the press. Maceina was the most well-known of Šalkauskis's students. Although Maceina's fame as a philosopher comes from his later writings, which he produced after the Second World War, Maceina became a public figure already during the interwar period. Therefore, it is important to understand the young Maceina's views for several reasons: firstly, the understanding provides knowledge about the entire intellectual climate of Maceina's milieu. Secondly, the understanding is crucial in order to grasp the reasons for later changes in Maceina's philosophical views. All of this is not fully addressed in the current research on Maceina. Thus, Maceina's works and ideas will be analyzed as a development within the historical context behind it, rather than as a static cluster of ideas.

The main limitation of such an approach is the inaccessibility of Maceina's unpublished material from the interwar and the war period. In one of his interviews Maceina said that at least some of his unpublished materials were lost during the First Soviet occupation in 1940-1941.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there is no complete picture of what Maceina read during this time, as his personal library from the 1930s did not survive. Because of this gap, it remains unclear if Maceina wrote anything during the German occupation and subsequently to what extent Maceina was involved in the creation of the LAF's ideology. Without a full knowledge on his writings, the study of Maceina's political involvement and ideological preferences during the Second World War remains incomplete.

Maceina himself commented on his interwar views only a few times. In 1968 at an interview with his close friend Jonas Grinius, Maceina described his *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie* as a

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<sup>3</sup> Juozas Grinius. "Pokalbis su profesorium Antanu Maceina jo 60 metų sukakties proga," *Draugas*, March 2, 1968.

book “not so much on social philosophy but more on philosophy on culture.”<sup>4</sup> When Maceina was asked if there is any relationship between his postwar lectures on dialectic materialism and his social and political views in late 1930s, he answered that during the interwar he knew about communism only “in general terms,” and that he went deeper into it only when he started to teach it in Germany.<sup>5</sup>

Maceina commented on the issue of his interwar views for the second time in 1983, when he agreed to answer questions in the liberal émigré newspaper *Horizons* [Akiračiai]. As the Chief Editor of the newspaper, Liūtas Mockūnas, later remembered, the editing board was very surprised that Maceina accepted their invitation. This was because this newspaper positioned itself as liberal and spoke out negatively about the role of Catholics in the June Uprising. Due to their political views, Mockūnas remembered, others had rejected such offers.<sup>6</sup> In this interview, Maceina spoke about his path as a philosopher. While trying to describe how his views changed over his life time, Maceina remembered his youth years. He stated that during the interwar period, he was inclined to “prophetism”:

Whoever is thinking about culture and philosophy usually starts guessing how culture will develop in the future. I also attempted to do this in my book *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie*. By comparing bourgeoisie with prometheanism I wrote that bourgeoisie as a historical form is already exhausted and, therefore, it will no longer preside in public life. It will be replaced by prometheanism which is an affirmation of heroic man who is related with militant turn away from God. This is where I missed: nearly 40 years after this ‘prophecy,’ bourgeoisie not only prevailed in the Western world, but even

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Liūtas Mockūnas. “Vienos knygos recenzijos istorija,” *Akiračiai*, January, 2000, 8-9.

communism, which I considered as a form of prometheanism, has become the most prominent manifestation of bourgeoisie. In my later writings there are no such ‘prophesies.’<sup>7</sup>

Because these émigré liberals did not know about the exact content of the book, as it was inaccessible to them, they did not ask more questions about this “prophetic” stance. Nevertheless, this answer remains the most detailed public account of Maceina on his own early political views.

Maceina’s legacy is strongly debated in the recent scholarly works. While some researchers regard him as the most prominent Lithuanian philosopher and see him as unduly marginalized,<sup>8</sup> others consider him to be a fascist thinker and ideological doctrinaire.<sup>9</sup> Typically, the considerations of the early political thoughts of Maceina are related to the question of nationalism. For example, this was done in a number of books and articles by Leonidas Donskis. For him, Maceina belonged to the conservative nationalists in the 1930s because he was concerned with the questions which were related to Lithuanian national culture.<sup>10</sup> In one of his articles, Donskis stated that “the social mythology of Maceina is ghostly, reactionary and dangerous to both Lithuania of the past and of the present.”<sup>11</sup> However, Donskis’s analysis lacks the broader perspective on the social and political developments and the public discourse

<sup>7</sup> Liūtas Mockūnas, “Per filosofą prasiveržia dvasinis nerimas,” *Pokalbių akiračiai: “Akiračių” interviu su išeivių kultūros veikėjais (1969-1989)* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1991), 223.

<sup>8</sup> Vytautas Radžvilas, “A. Maceinos kūrybos vertinimo klausimu: kada grius tylos siena?” accessed June 5, 2016, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2008-08-01-vytautas-radzvilas-a-maceinos-kurybos-vertinimo-klausimu-kada-grius-tylos-siena/3686>.

<sup>9</sup> Leonidas Donskis, “Antanas Maceina: doktrininis intelektualas XX amžiaus lietuvių kultūroje,” *Tarp Karlailio ir Klaipėdos: visuomenės ir kultūros kritikos etiudai* (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos univ. l-kla, 1997), 188-228; Liūtas Mockūnas, *Pavargęs herojus: Jonas Deksnys trijų žvalgybų tarnyboje*, (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1997), 56.

<sup>10</sup> Leonidas Donskis, *Identity and Freedom: Mapping Nationalism and Social Criticism in Twentieth Century Lithuania*. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 15-17.

<sup>11</sup> Leonidas Donskis, “Antanas Maceina,” 228.

of interwar Lithuania. The same can be said about the articles by Mockūnas, where he describes Maceina and the LAF as the examples of Lithuanian Fascism.<sup>12</sup>

The writings of Donskis and Mockūnas represent the view of the liberal stream of Lithuanian emigration, as formed in the group Santara-Šviesa. Ever since the end of the Second World War this group opposed to Catholic émigrés.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it is no surprise that both Donskis and Mockūnas do not miss a chance to bite their ideological opponents by exploiting the most controversial aspects of Catholic political views from the interwar period. However, to understand the development of Maceina's thoughts one needs to explore not only his main books and well-known articles, but also the articles that so far have been overseen by the scholars. Moreover, it is important to follow the actions which Maceina and his friends took during the Second World War. This will reveal a more comprehensive picture of Maceina's political thoughts, because it shows his more immediate reactions to the quickly changing political circumstances in Europe.

Donskis's critique of Maceina has triggered a strong response from other Lithuanian scholars. To mention just the most recent one, Justinas Dementavičius argues that the works of Maceina are an example of Catholic political thinking. For Dementavičius, organicist theories of Maceina and his milieu were in line with official Catholic doctrine.<sup>14</sup> Similar views are expressed by a series of scholars. Valdas Pruskus and Albinas Plėšnys explain Maceina's ideas by pointing out their similarity to Catholic social teaching.<sup>15</sup> However, they do not consider

<sup>12</sup> Liūtas Mockūnas, "Vienos knygos recenzijos istorija," *Akiračiai*, January, 2000, 7-9; Liūtas Mockūnas, "Prie lietuviškojo fašizmo ištakų," *Akiračiai*, February, 2000, 4-6.

<sup>13</sup> Kęstutis Girmius, "Žmogus, kuris pavargo netapęs herojumi," *Naujasis Židiys-Aidai*, July-October, 1998, 442.

<sup>14</sup> Justinas Dementavičius. *Tarp ūkininko ir piliečio: modernėjančios Lietuvos politinės minties istorija* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2015), 132-63.

<sup>15</sup> For example: Valdas Pruskus, "A. Maceina: rasizmas ir tautinės mažumos valstybėje," *Logos* 57 (2008): 44-57; Valdas Pruskus, "Jaunosios kartos katalikų intelektualų socialinės politinės aspiracijos tarpukario Lietuvoje," *Iš Lietuvos sociologijos istorijos* (Vilnius: Lietuvos filosofijos ir sociologijos institutas, 1996), 9-36; Valdas Pruskus,

similar cases of political Catholicism in other interwar European countries. The examples of Belgium and France show that there was a strong correlation between anti-modernist political rhetoric of a certain Catholic groups during the interwar period and their expressed support to the National Socialism during the Second World War.

The articles of another scholar Kęstutis Skrupskelis are particularly interesting because he defends Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals even though he assesses their writings in light of the events of the Second World War. Skrupskelis reacts to Donskis and Mockūnas by rejecting the possibility that Šalkauskis's students were leaning towards the Nazi ideas. His article on the war time writings of Juozas Girnius, who like Maceina belonged to the Catholic camp, is a good illustration of Skrupskelis position.<sup>16</sup> In the article Skrupskelis argues that Girnius's articles which praise Nazi politics and racial theories were originally intended as a presentation of Nazi ideas with the purpose to show the danger of such ideas. Skrupskelis argues that these articles were distorted by German censorship and this is why it appears as if the author adores Nazism. In Skrupskelis's article on Maceina, he points out that in 1939 Maceina was still arguing that state must be subjugated to person.<sup>17</sup> For Skrupskelis, Šalkauskis and his students defended Catholic social teaching and stood against German, Italian and the Soviet policies as well as against adherents of a strong state in Lithuania.

Another group of scholars see the interwar ideas of Maceina and his milieu about the organic state as part of a larger spectrum of Lithuanian Catholics' reflections on politics, society and

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"Intelektualų katalikų požiūris į rasių teroriją ir valstybę tarpukario Lietuvoje," *Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademijos metraštis* 30, 2007, 129-143; Valdas Pruskus, *Socailinė katalikybė tarpukario Lietuvoje: Jaunosios kartos lietuvių intelektualų katalikų įžvalgos* (Eikoma: Vilnius, 2001), 222-291; Albinas Plėšnys. "Kapitalizmas kaip liga Antano Maceinos *Socialiniame teisingume*," *Problemos* 74 (2008), 65-76.

<sup>16</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, "Juozo Girniaus karo meto rašiniai," *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, January-February, 2008, 42-55.

<sup>17</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, "Tariamasis jaunųjų katalikų kartos fašizmas," *Naujasis židinys-Aidai*, April, 1999, 227.

culture that were labeled under the title of ‘complete democracy.’ The term itself was coined by Stasys Šalkauskis who planned to write a book dedicated to political issues. However, Šalkauskis died without finishing his project about complete democracy and left only a plan of intended study on politics and a project on future Constitution.<sup>18</sup> The scholar of Lithuanian interwar thought, Algimantas Jankauskas, in his interviews and articles argued that the political manifestos and articles “Towards the Creation of Organic State” (1936), “Towards the Reformed Democracy” (1943-1944), and “Towards the Creation of Complete Democracy” (1954) written by Maceina and other students of Šalkauskis, form a one body of continuous Catholic political project that aimed to create “authentic democracy.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, in his interview Jankauskas stated that the ideas of complete democracy were still relevant and were waiting for their actualization.<sup>20</sup>

The same ideas about complete democracy as a continuous project that encompassed the interwar period as well as the postwar writings were repeated in the introduction, written by Jankauskas, Kęstutis Girnius and Laurynas Peluritis to the recent publication of *Lithuania that did not exist: Deliberations and Assessments on Complete Democracy*.<sup>21</sup> It is a collection of articles from the interwar and postwar years intended as the fourth volume in *The Anthology of*

<sup>18</sup> Algimantas Jankauskas, “Pilnutinė demokratija: Stasio Šalkauskio politinės minties palikimas,” accessed 1 July, 2016: <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2010-12-29-algimantas-jankauskas-pilnutine-demokratija-stasio-salkauskio-politines-filosofijos-palikimas/55245>.

<sup>19</sup> Algimantas Jankauskas, “Pilnutinės demokratijos idėja laukia sudabartinimo,” accessed July 1, 2016: <http://www.propatria.lt/2015/06/algimantas-jankauskas-pilnutines.html>; Algimantas Jankauskas, “Organiškos valstybės koncepcija Lietuvoje: kūrėjai, raida, vertinimai (I dalis),” *I laisvę*, December, 1995, 57-69; Algimantas Jankauskas, “Organiškos valstybės koncepcija Lietuvoje: kūrėjai, raida, vertinimai (II dalis),” *I laisvę*, January, 1996, 23-33.

<sup>20</sup> Jankauskas, “Pilnutinės demokratijos idėja...”

<sup>21</sup> Kęstutis Girnius et al. “Pilnutinė demokratija: kūrėjai, pamatinės idėjos, vertinimai,” *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. ed. Kęstutis Girnius, et al. (Vilnius: Vilniaus Universitetas, 2016) accessed 1 June, 2016: <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2016-05-23-pilnutine-demokratija-kurejai-pamatines-idejos-vertinimai/144584>;

*Lithuanian Political Thought*.<sup>22</sup> The editors of the volume treated the organicist theories of state from the interwar period and the Catholic political ideas from the post-war period as one unit. The same idea can be found in the article of Peluritis who asserted that during the interwar and the post war years Maceina and Girnius were arguing for cultural autonomy and the primacy of person over political institutions.<sup>23</sup>

However, a lack of contextualization raises serious doubts about the historical accuracy of the ideas stated by Jankauskas and other similarly-minded. Such ideas indicate the mistake that English historian of political thought Quentin Skinner called a “mythology of coherence” – it is made when historian of political thought assumes that during his life time political thinker never changed his mind. Given the very different circumstances in which these texts were written, it is difficult to believe that during the period of three decades Maceina and other Catholics were coherent in their ideas so that by 1954 they simply continued the same political project that was started in 1936. Surprisingly, no one really tried to trace the circumstances under which Maceina and Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis wrote the series of articles about “Towards the Reformed Democracy” during the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944. These articles significantly differ in their rhetoric from the previous works of Maceina. Additional research on the subject could provide important information about the ideological prefiguration of Maceina’s milieu during the war.

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<sup>22</sup> *Lietuvos politinės minties antologija I: Lietuvos politinė mintis 1918-1940*, ed. Justinas Dementavičius et al. (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2012); *Lietuvos politinės minties antologija II: Politinė mintis išėivijoje 1944–1990*, ed. Justinas Dementavičius et al. (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013); *Lietuvos politinės minties antologija III: Politinė mintis Lietuvoje 1940-1990*, ed. Justinas Dementavičius et al. (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Laurynas Peluritis, “Nepasaulėžiūrinė politika – naujojo politinio mąstymo projektas,” *Filosofija išėivijoje*, ed. Rūta Marija Vabalaitė (Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, 2016), 139-64.

In addition to the development of Maceina's ideas, the question about the impact of Catholic intellectuals on the June Uprising must be considered. One can easily notice that in recent research the intellectual origins of the Uprising are almost entirely neglected. This current state of the research on the Uprising corresponds to a general distrust in the field of history on the explanatory power of ideology. English historian of German politics and culture Roger Woods noted that frequently ideas and ideology are treated as "surface phenomena" which is seen as not providing enough information about the motives and purposes of historical actors.<sup>24</sup> For the same reason Lithuanian historians considered social, institutional and military contexts of the Uprising as more important than the ideology of its leadership.

The thesis attempts to include the ideological dimension in considerations of the Uprising. Given the fact that historians usually phrase the political thought of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals during the interwar period for its high intellectual quality, it remains an interesting question why the top Catholic intellectuals did not manage to refute Nazi ideology. Thus, the thesis will consider social and cultural circumstances that produced the intellectual climate in which Catholic intellectuals deemed Nazi ideas as acceptable. Due to this reason it is important to look at the interwar writings of Maceina who belonged to the Catholic milieu and significantly contributed by designing the main social and political ideas of the generation.

Maceina was very prolific during interwar period. During 1934-1940 Maceina published six books: *National Education* (*Tautinis auklėjimas*, 1934), *Introduction to the Philosophy of Culture* (*Įvadas į kultūros filosofiją*, 1936), *The Foundations of Primary Culture* (*Pirminės kultūros pagrindai*, 1936), *The Social Justice* (*Socialinis teisingumas*, 1938), *The History of Pedagogy* (*Pedagogikos istorija*, 1939), and *The Collapse of Bourgeois* (*Buržuazijos žlugimas*,

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<sup>24</sup> Roger Woods, *The conservative revolution in the Weimar Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 5.



1940). In addition, he also wrote a number of articles for the Lithuanian press. In contrast to his later writings which focused on religious philosophy and existentialism, during the interwar period Maceina dealt with the philosophy of culture.

The Lithuanian philosophy of culture is not generally considered in the framework of the anti-modernist ideas. However, in this thesis I will argue that the critique of modernity which dominated the philosophical discourse of the interwar period influenced the political actions and ideas of Maceina and his milieu during the end of the interwar period and the Second World War. I will argue that in the late 1930s Maceina was greatly interested in the political developments of the day and hence responded to them by changing his philosophical ideas. Both domestic and international politics had a great influence on his views on modernity. The key notions used by Maceina like idealism, materialism, atheism, reveal his concern with the decrease of religiosity in modern times. Maceina connects the evils of modernity with the rise of capitalism, and argues that the decrease of religiosity can only be stopped by spiritual renewal of Europe. In his book written in 1940 Maceina suggested that European culture would be saved by the realization of social justice and destruction of capitalist economics. Importantly, during all the period of interwar Maceina saw Lithuania as the part of Europe and advocated for Lithuania's integration into European culture and politics.

### ***1. The Landscape of the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Contexts and Influences***

If one wishes to answer the question why Catholic intellectuals were eager to accept the ideology of Nazism, one needs to consider the relationship between radical political movements and intellectuals in the beginning of the twentieth century. While showing why fascism was attractive to French, German and Italian intellectuals, American historian of fascism George Mosse asserted that fascism was not “an aberration from the dominant current of European history and thought,” or a “merely pragmatic, activist response to the immediate historical situation.”<sup>25</sup> Contrary to this kind of explanations, Mosse argued that many intellectuals committed to fascism because they saw it as a mean to realize the values that they prized. These intellectuals disbelieved in the order that was formed after the First World War. As a rule, they saw that politics, economics and society in general became dysfunctional. For them, Nazism and fascism were movements that had a potential to revive the values of the past. They thought that the realization of these values would lead to the creation of the new type of society.

Mosse noted that fascist movements had their own national mystique, and nationalism was the most important component in their ideology. However, fascist movements also encompassed the elements of other ideologies and cultural movements, as romanticism, social Darwinism, and liberalism. Fascism provided the alternative to both Marxism and capitalism and opted for a “third way” with the vision about an organic national community. In this vision, national community was imagined as enclosed unit. To be born as a German or French meant to belong to a community that is inaccessible to others – one is either born in it, or is inherently alien to it. However, Mosse stressed that fascism does not necessary entail the element of racism, for example, Italian fascism was nonracist until 1938.

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<sup>25</sup> George Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), 95.

Fascism claimed to reestablish the true creativity which had been lost in the bourgeois society. The intellectuals imagined that a new society would transcend the class struggle, and then there would be an agreement between order and irrational creativity. As Mosse noted, they had a profoundly elitist understanding of culture, because intellectuals imagined themselves as the most creative individuals. In their thinking, elitism was combined with their adherence of a strong leadership. This strong leadership must implement these spiritual values and lead mankind into the golden age. Thus, intellectuals were attracted by the emphasis of an authoritarian leadership that was visible in the fascist organizations.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the features that are typical for German or Italian radical movements were visible in Lithuania as well. In the interwar period, key intellectual influences were coming from the Western countries as Lithuanian students were studying in Swiss, German and Belgium universities, and thus later transferred Western intellectual trends to Lithuania; for example, at that time social Darwinism was very popular in Lithuanian academia and Maceina frequently used organicist images. In organicist view, human society is subjected to the same laws of evolution as the rest of the nature. Thus, society develops according to the same principles as a plant. First introduced into social sciences by English sociologist Herbert Spencer, the evolutionary vision of society's development already on the turn of the twentieth century made impact on the nationalism in the whole Europe, as "organicist ideological inspiration and interest in socio-biological theories increasingly turned national homogeneity into a crucial condition for successful political existence."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>27</sup> Balazs Trencsenyi, et al. *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 343.

Moreover, Lithuanian academia was also influenced by the recent developments in German historical sciences. One can find the influences of the *Geistgeschichte* as well. This methodology was popularized by German Neo-Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey known for his project of descriptive psychology. Dilthey argued that human sciences must understand the structure of a human spirit by looking into its expressions that are prevalent in human actions and texts. According to Dilthey, “spirit” differs according to the historical period; hence, the *Geistgeschichte* classified history into different cultural epochs with different characteristic features. This categorization was visible in Maceina’s works as well. Maceina early experienced the influence of German pedagogical theories; for example, the impact of German theorist of pedagogy and psychologist Eduard Spranger, who was Dilthey’s disciple in Leipzig, on Maceina is visible during the interwar period.

Another important influence that came to Lithuania from Germany was the *Kulturgeschichte* which originated from the ideas of German historian Karl Lamprecht. Lamprecht in his works on the history of Medieval German cities connected cultural and socioeconomic history. Lamprecht’s idea that culture gives the meaning to human activities had very important political implication – Lamprecht claimed that culture and society are more important than political history. In the contrast to Lamprecht’s ideas, German historians in the end of the nineteenth century emphasized the importance of political history. As a result of the famous *Methodenstreit*, Lamprecht was ostracized from German academia; however, his ideas became influential in the history of art, economics, and even psychology. Thus, it is no surprise that Lamprecht’s ideas had influence on the intellectuals in Central Eastern Europe as well.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 569, 557.

In addition to the impact from German academia, Catholic intellectuals were also influenced by the teachings of the Catholic Church. In the end of the nineteenth century new trends in the Catholic social doctrine were introduced by the emergence of *Rerum Novarum*, encyclical of 1891. There Pope Leo XIII argued that the Church needed to find measures to fight against capitalism and its consequences – secularization and materialism. The period starting from 1880s until the First World War could be described as “Catholic modernism.”<sup>29</sup> After the publication of the encyclical the Church started to draw more and more attention to the economic inequalities and to the increasing numbers of the working class. Thus, the Church advocated for social and economic reforms that would reduce inequality and attract people to Catholic social ideas.

The Church denied both liberal economics as well as communist vision of society and expressed a willingness to find a “third way.” In *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) the Pope Pius XI argued that capitalism had already proved to be incompetent in reducing inequalities, while communism would only worsen the situation because it did not pay attention to the individual freedom. Therefore, the solution would be a certain re-Christianization of the society.<sup>30</sup> This re-Christianization meant a creation of corporative order of society that would increase cooperation between Catholics.<sup>31</sup> According to Pope Pius XI, the state must promote “harmonious cooperation of the Industries and Professions.”<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the Church encouraged the creation of organizations that would follow Catholic social teachings. These new organizations should promote Christian ethics and in this way would encourage a spiritual renewal.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 414.

<sup>30</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, accessed April 15, 2016: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

In terms of changes in the economic system, the Church was advocating for a certain connection between economy and morality. According to the teachings of the Church, economy must be subordinated to the moral good: “the particular purposes, both individual and social, that are sought in the economic field will fall in their proper place in the universal order of purposes, and We, in ascending through them, as it were by steps, shall attain the final end of all things, that is God, to Himself and to us, the supreme and inexhaustible Good.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, according to this understanding, the application of morals in the economics would lead to a more just distribution of wealth among the workers. The Church designed its social teaching in order to oppose the Communist and the Socialist ideas. With the new requirements to distribute wealth more equally, the Church aimed to reduce the relevance of anti-religious ideologies.

Another influence to Lithuanian Catholicism came from Poland, where Catholic modernists already in 1910s became pessimistic and started to talk about crisis of the society.<sup>34</sup> The same trend was visible among the Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals after the First World War and it remained predominant during all interwar period. The modern crisis was perceived as an undeniable fact. The considerations about the cultural crisis far exceeded the boundaries of the academia and could have been easily found in the cultural press.<sup>35</sup> For example, in 1936 the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences organized a conference on the “contemporary spiritual crisis.”

However, in Lithuania the perception about the modern crisis got specific distinctive forms. As noted Lithuanian historian of philosophy Arūnas Sverdiolas, Lithuanians were lacking the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Trencsenyi, et al. *A History*, 415.

<sup>35</sup> Arūnas Sverdiolas, *Kultūra lietuvių filosofų akiratyje* (Vilnius: Apostrofa, 2012), 140-41.

disappointment with progress.<sup>36</sup> At that time Lithuania was mostly agrarian country and therefore, complains about the crisis of the Western world did not reduce the willingness to modernize. In the context where modernization was still to be achieved, the main goal was to modernize without the negative effects of modernity. Thus, the decline of the West was perceived without its deterministic implications: there was a strong belief in Lithuania that modernity without its evils could be achieved. Lithuanian Catholics saw Lithuania as part of Europe and for them the decline of the West was not inevitable.

## ***2. Modernization as Herderian Project: Šalkauskis and the Idea of Synthesis***

The most systematic thinker who was dealing with the problem of modernization of Lithuanian culture was the prominent Lithuanian philosopher, Stasys Šalkauskis (1889-1941). In the conference on “contemporary spiritual crisis” Šalkauskis provided an analysis of the contemporary situation.<sup>37</sup> When talking about the history of Europe, Šalkauskis saw an opposition between the medieval theocentric worldview and the modern one, which in its nature is anthropocentric. While medieval culture was orientated towards transcendence, the modern culture was profoundly immanent. That is, modern man lost the sense that everything in the world is ordered according to God’s plan. With this a synthesis between the man and the nature was lost. Šalkauskis came to conclusion that nowadays life is subordinated to economics, contemporary art is decadent, and the hierarchy of values is lost. Thus, such modern trends should be avoided in the future.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Stasys Šalkauskis, “Ideologiniai dabarties krizių pagrindai ir katalikiškoji pasaulėžiūra.” *Raštai*, vol 5 (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), 274–318.

In short, Šalkauskis perceived the modern life as fragmented and according to him, Catholicism was able to provide the solution for this decline of Europe. Šalkauskis named the modern worldview as prometheanism and found it as disengaged with the natural world order. Šalkauskis argued that the evils of modernity could be avoided only if European culture would regain its orientation towards transcendence. In his analysis Šalkauskis emphasized the synthetic value of Catholicism. For Šalkauskis, Catholicism had the ability to integrate antithetical ideas. Because of this ability to synthesize, Catholicism could provide solution to the modern crisis. Thus, European culture must be built on the Catholic foundations. Moreover, according to Šalkauskis, Catholicism could provide a model to the Lithuanian national culture.

In the early 1930s, a prominent circle of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals was formed by professor Stasys Šalkauskis and his students. Previous works analyzing the intellectual contexts of Lithuanian interwar period have not placed importance on the Šalkauskis Circle, nor has the term itself been used. However, it is evident that gradually some members of the Circle became very influential in the public as they aspired to political changes and tried to organize Catholics into an opposition to the political regime. This political engagement of the Circle resulted in the manifesto “Towards the Creation of Organic State” (1936) which launched the public debate on the future of the state. Moreover, some members of the Circle were very active in politics during the Second World War.

Šalkauskis envisioned himself as a teacher of the nation. He consciously assigned himself the mission to educate the people. The influence of Šalkauskis’s ideas was also seen on Maceina’s works and life. Šalkauskis encouraged his students to engage in the creation of a national culture. He thought that Lithuanians needed to create the culture of the highest quality:



“Lithuanians are standing, we may say, at the beginning of their national, political and cultural revival. Any decision that will take roots in the society will influence its orientation.”<sup>38</sup>

According to Šalkauskis, Lithuanians had a task to create a synthetic culture. By this he meant that Lithuanians would create their national culture by the integration of the neighboring cultures of Germany, Russia and Poland. Elements of these would be creatively integrated into a new Lithuanian culture. This idea of synthesis meant openness to the foreign influences. Probably, it also had a big impact on Šalkauskis’s views of democracy, as he was a proponent of democracy: according to him, the Catholic nation should achieve social justice and have democracy.<sup>39</sup>

The idea of the synthesis of the West and the East reflects Šalkauskis’s personal experience. During his lifetime Šalkauskis got a chance to synthesize the educational experience from both the West (he defended his Doctoral Thesis in Switzerland) as well as the East (since he studied economics and law in Moscow and Samarkand). Noteworthy is that Šalkauskis wrote his Doctoral Thesis on the philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev, a religious thinker from Russia. Interestingly, Catholic Šalkauskis was eager to use the ideas of Orthodox Soloviev in order to promote universal Christianity.

This interest in Russian thinkers was not an exception among Šalkauskis generation. In fact, Soloviev was very popular among the Lithuanian students at the time and a number of them wrote their Doctoral Theses on his ideas.<sup>40</sup> Until the end of the First World War Lithuania was a part of the Russian Empire and Russia’s cultural influence was visible among the intellectuals

<sup>38</sup> Stasys Šalkauskis, “Kultūros filosofija,” *Raštai* Vol. 1 (Vilnius: Mintis, 1990), 164-65.

<sup>39</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, *Ignas Skrupskelis*, 170.

<sup>40</sup> Romanas Plečkaitis, “The Development of Professional Philosophy at the University of Lithuania,” *Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas*, ed. Jūratė Baranova (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), 52.

who were educated in Russian universities. However, the influences for Maceina's generation came mostly from the West. Students of Šalkauskis got their secondary education in independent Lithuania and then travelled to study in Western Europe.

Amongst his generation only Maceina experienced the influence of Russian thinkers. Maceina's interest in the Russian culture can be seen as a sign of the exceptionally strong impact of Šalkauskis, as Maceina never went to Russia. Even in the late 1930s, Maceina was drawing heavily on the ideas of such Russian thinkers as Nicolay Berdyaev and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. As Lithuanian Catholics have not developed their own national tradition of Catholic theology, Maceina was free to combine his Catholicism together with Russian theological influences. This use of Russian religious thinkers is an exceptional case compared with other Catholic countries.

By contrast to the older generation, the Circle's main influences came mostly from Germany and France. For example, the dominant trend in Lithuania during the interwar was the philosophy of culture with Oswald Spengler being very popular. In his book Spengler qualified culture as an organism that is subjected to the cycle of life. Just like a year has four seasons, for Spengler, every culture is divided into its childhood, youth, maturity and old age. For him, every culture has its moment of birth, and the moment of death. Spengler associated the old age with civilization, and old age meant its decline. When culture ceases to be organic, it changes into civilization. This scheme served for him to point out that with modernity Europe entered into a phase of civilization, and thus decline of the West is inevitable. It goes without saying that the decline of the West was the underlying topic of most of the academic output in Lithuanian academia during the interwar period.

### 3. *Under the Influence of Šalkauskis*

The Circle was primarily preoccupied with the questions of national culture. This is confirmed in the memoirs of Maceina. Already in emigration, in his letter written on January 18, 1949 Maceina reflected the emergence of the Circle. According to him, the Circle originated around 1933. Maceina identified the Circle simply as preoccupied with cultural activities. In his letter Maceina emphasized the fact that the Circle was not an institution of any kind.<sup>41</sup> It was an informal group of like-minded individuals who became influential in the public arena. In the same letter Maceina stated that if Lithuania had stayed independent, there would have not been any doubts that the members of the Circle would have sooner or later entered into the country's political life.<sup>42</sup>

The Circle actively discussed alternatives to both parliamentary democracy and the ruling authoritarian regime. The starting point for the group was considerations about the relationship between culture and religion – the main topic of Šalkauskis's works.<sup>43</sup> The group saw the Catholic faith as an antidote to the evils of modernity. According to this idea, the future of Europe should be linked with the spiritual guidance of the Catholic Church. Naturally, the Circle was advocating for the creation of a national identity based on Catholicism. This provided the basis for the critique of the ruling authoritarian regime. In the early 1930s, the Circle was devoted to Catholicism, while nationalism was seen as a potential danger.

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<sup>41</sup> Antanas Maceina and Pranciškus Juras. *Antano Maceinos laiškai prel. Pranciškui Jurui*. ed. Antanas Liuima (Vilnius: Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akad. 1997), 26.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>43</sup> Artūras Sverdiolas, *Kultūra lietuvių filosofų akiratyje* (Vilnius: Apostrofa, 2012), 49-55.

The influence of Šalkauskis is easily traceable in the writings of Maceina. Šalkauskis's openness to the other cultures is seen in Maceina's considerations about the relationship between the nation and religion. Maceina was well-aware of the negative consequences of nationalism. In 1929, Maceina looked very negatively upon the French nationalist thinker Charles Maurras and the politics of *Action Française*. For him, the integral nationalism of Maurras is contradictory to the Church teaching.<sup>44</sup> For Maceina, "nationality without religion is chauvinism." Maceina was arguing that the French intellectuals subjugated Catholicism for purposes of the nation and this subjugation means that they saw religion merely as a tool. Therefore, they are not real Catholics. Furthermore, Maceina pointed out that four books of Maurras are added to *Index Librorum prohibitorum*, and The Catholic Church excommunicated him and the organization. Thus, Maceina was in line with the official position of the Catholic Church. Maceina saw the ideas of *Action Française* as an example of "secularized Catholicism, which is a clear sign of liberalism." Maceina ended his article by stating that the French case showed the common tendency in Europe where "respectful nationalism drifts towards byway, religion is pushed to the side, and the nation is made into the idol."<sup>45</sup>

In his article "National Vocation" written in 1933, Maceina argued that a wrongly-understood nationalism would increase "national egoism."<sup>46</sup> Here he made a distinction between two kinds of nationalism. One, the egoistic nationalism, is harmful because it increases the hostility among different nations. Maceina advocated for another kind of nationalism. This second kind of nationalism is respectful of others. The second kind of nationalism is beneficial because it helps nations to individualize and reveal their own unique features. As we can see, Maceina

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<sup>44</sup> Antanas Maceina, "Action Francaise arba nacionalizmo ir katalikybės konfliktas prancūzuose," *Ateitis*, July-September, 1929, 320-23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Antanas Maceina, "Tautinis pašaukimas," *Židinys*, August-September, 1933, 97-114; October, 241-51.

understood the emergence of nationalism in romantic terms. Just like the German romantic philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, Maceina saw national community in linguistic and cultural terms, and insisted that the development of a national culture is beneficial to humanity in general. In Maceina's view, a rightly-understood nationalism creates the "community of a higher degree" among the nations. The article ended by statement that the young generation should find what the national vocation of Lithuanians was.<sup>47</sup>

Because of the influence of romanticism, Maceina warned about the negative consequences of nationalism in his article written in 1934. For Maceina, nationalism was dangerous because it treated nation as an absolute. Also, nationalism denied the "content of humanness," and lead into the imperialism.<sup>48</sup> Maceina saw nationalism as the biggest threat to his times. He thought that nationalism was dangerous because it had potential to stop the development of the culture. If it would continue developing, ethnocentric life would lead towards the destruction of the culture, first of all of the European.<sup>49</sup>

Just like Šalkauskis, the members of the Circle were seeking positions which would make a public impact. In 1933, three members of the Group, Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, Jonas Grinius, and Ignas Skrupskelis, became part of the Department of Philosophy and Theology. In 1935, Maceina was also appointed to a teaching position in the Department. Moreover, the Circle was active in the Lithuanian Catholic press. Not only were they were contributing articles, but some managed to become the Editors of Catholic journals: Ignas Skrupskelis got the position in *Židinys* [Hearth], and Juozas Keliuotis became the Chief Editor in *Naujoji Romuva* [Naujoji Romuva]. In the situation where all of the political parties except the ruling

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Antanas Maceina, "Nacionalizmo padariniai," *Židinys*, May-June, 1934, 480-88.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

one were illegal, the press gained a much bigger political importance than it would have gained in the normal political conditions.<sup>50</sup>

These publications in the press were an effective way to form public opinion and express the political discontent with the ruling regime. In 1931, the members of the Circle launched a new journal dedicated to the culture named *New Romuva*. The name *Romuva* refers to pre-Christian religion in Lithuania. It probably reveals their emphasis on ethnicity and the aspirations to contribute to the national culture. In the first issue its Chief Editor Juozas Keliuotis wrote: “we are catching up with Western Europe very fast. We want to reach the peak of its culture; to acquire its dynamics,” and “to enter into the wonderfully rich circle of the most cultivated nations.”<sup>51</sup> *New Romuva* received the support of Kaunas archbishop and some high-rank officers,<sup>52</sup> moreover, the aims of the journal had a certain flavor of Šalkauskis’s ideas. In February 23, 1936 the journal published their manifesto “Towards the Creation of the Organic State,”<sup>53</sup> which triggered discussions in the press. The manifesto was a critique of the current state of affairs and a project for further political changes. The members of the Circle were advocating for the creation of an organic state as a new form of government. Šalkauskis not only signed it, but also strongly supported the manifesto.<sup>54</sup> The ideas of the manifesto will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, *Ignas Skrupskelis*, 312.

<sup>51</sup> Juozas Keliuotis, “Editorial,” *Naujoji Romuva*, January, 1931, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Tamošaitis, Svareuskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 161.

<sup>53</sup> “Į organiškiosios valstybės kūrybą,” *Lietuvos politinės minties antologija*. ed. Justinas Dementavičius et. Al. (Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2012), 551-64.

<sup>54</sup> Stasys Šalkauskis, “Romuviečių deklaracija,” *Naujoji romuva*, March 15, 1936, 241-46.

#### 4. Towards the Politics?

In a period of great uncertainties in Europe which prevailed during the rise of the German National Socialism in the West and the Soviet regime in the East, Lithuanian foreign policy was led by a long-term territorial conflict with Poland. The peculiar position of Lithuania between these three powers resulted in a permanent sense of insecurity. In January 26, 1934 Germany and Poland signed the mutual non-aggression treaty, which raised public awareness in Lithuania. As Lithuania had territorial disputes with both of the countries, it was perceived as a danger to the interest of Lithuania. It also did not go unnoticed in the statement by Adolf Hitler when in May 21, 1935 he asserted that Germany would sign the mutual non-aggression treaty with every country, except Lithuania. It is worth to mention that two months prior to this, German troops maneuvered near to the Lithuanian boarder.<sup>55</sup>

The Lithuanian intellectuals felt the constant threat of these three powers. This greatly influenced the academic discussions at the university. In the interwar period, Lithuanian philosophy was dominated by reflections on the essence and meaning of culture, while the main topic was a modern crisis of Western culture. Izidorius Tamošaitis, who was teaching philosophy at the time, stated that: “Today, even sparrows on the roofs start chattering about crisis.”<sup>56</sup> While advocating for social and political changes, the Circle joined the discussion about the decline of the Western culture. In their vision, Europe would undergo the spiritual revival under the guidance of the Catholic faith. For example, a member of the Circle Ignas Skrupskelis spoke hopefully about the revival of Thomism in the French speaking countries:

<sup>55</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, *Ignas Skrupskelis*, 216.

<sup>56</sup> Quotation from: Sverdiolas, *Kultūra*, 141.

“Our times are the times of economic recovery, political strengthening and social reorganization; therefore there is a need for constructive, systematic, dogmatic philosophy.”<sup>57</sup>

The manifesto was initiated by the members of the Šalkauskis’s Circle. It was prepared during a series of meetings in the end of 1935 and the beginning of 1936. Among the sixteen who signed the manifesto, some of them became influential in the public life and formed the opposition to both the regime and the conservative groups of the Catholics. Antanas Maceina was one of these who signed. It seems that the final version of the manifesto was written in the Maceina’s flat, when during the final discussion about the distinction between the individual and the person Maceina “gave the clear definitions.”<sup>58</sup>

As the authors of the manifesto declared, it was “inspired by the fear of new war, nihilism and deepening economic crisis.”<sup>59</sup> The authors of the manifesto rejected both democracy and authoritarianism, and wanted to introduce a new form of a state – the organic state. They defined the nation as an organic being: the nation is not established but it is a result of its own development: “the state is the expression nation’s right to exist.”<sup>60</sup>

The manifesto emphasized the importance of freedom of creativity. The freedom is ensured by the distinction between the individual and the person. According to the authors, a human being is both the individual and the person. The individual is related to the natural and economical side of life, while the person is a creator of culture. In the organic state both the individual and the state are subjected to the person. However, the authors of the manifesto were suggesting

<sup>57</sup> Ignas Skrupskelis. “Santrauka de Reynold Gonzague. Grįžimas prie tomistinės filosofijos šalyse, kur kalbama prancūziškai,” *Židinys*, April, 1929, 368-71.

<sup>58</sup> Juozas Eretas, *Stasys Šalkauskis, 1886-1941* (New York: Ateitininkų federacija, 1960), 183.

<sup>59</sup> “Į organiškiosios valstybės kūrybą,” 551-64.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



that Smetona and the ruling party were subjugating the person to the state. According to the authors, this did not leave room for cultural autonomy and eventually the state will decline.

The cultural autonomy could be maintained by using the distinction between the individual and the person. An organic state would maintain this distinction and allow for national creativity. In this vision, the state would be in charge of the economic, domestic and foreign affairs, but it would remain silent in matters of ideology. In the organic state, the sphere of ideas is entrusted to communities which are independent from the state; such as religious communities. The authors of the manifesto envisioned the organic state as based on a corporatist model of society. The manifesto was concluded with the statement that “during the elections to the Parliament, all the citizens should have the proper part of the influence; it should be exercised on the one hand through corporative order by the various occupational, social and economic units, and on the other hand, through the cultural autonomy by the ideological-cultural groupings which exist organically within the nation.”<sup>61</sup>

Here the Circle was drawing heavily on the French personalist ideas, inspired by the French philosopher Jacques Maritain, who in 1936 published a book titled *Integral Humanism*. In the book Maritain argued that human is both spiritual and natural being, and in order to be fully human one needs to fully recognize ones spiritual side. This was profoundly anti-materialistic position that advocated for the superiority of religious communities over society. For Maritain, the state needs to recognize moral superiority of Catholicism. The Circle took these ideas in order to defend the autonomy of the Catholic Church against Smetona, because the regime put efforts to reduce the public influence of the Church by taking over Catholic education network. There were even rumors that Smetona was eager to close the Department of Theology-

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Philosophy in Kaunas University, as the department was under the direct jurisdiction of the Church. The personalist ideas provided the Circle with exceptionally Catholic argumentation. Moreover, the proclamation of the manifesto may be connected with the aims of the Circle to gain the authority within the Catholic organizations. It would be interesting to trace if this defense of the Church increased the public authority of the Circle in the eyes of the other Catholic groups in Lithuania.

The Circle was not aiming to enter the party politics, even if some expected that they will do this. As reports show, after the manifesto the Lithuanian internal intelligence expected that the Circle would ask the permission to set up a Catholic party.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, the manifesto was issued at the same time when Smetona declared new elections to the Parliament.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, in the beginning of 1936, the Christian Democrat Party (*Krikščionys demokratai*) and the Peasant Popular Union (*Valstiečiai liaudininkai*) were abolished – these were the last opposition parties still present in political life. So, in the beginning of 1936, there were no parties in the Lithuanian state anymore, except the ruling party of the National Union (*Lietuvos tautininkų sąjunga*). Moreover, there were some voices from the former members of Christian Democrat Party that the Circle would join the National Union.<sup>64</sup> Thus, it could be assumed that the announcement about the new parliamentary elections may have contributed to the publication of the manifesto. However, under the conditions of authoritarian rule the participation in politics was possible only if the Circle would have reconciled their position with Smetona.

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<sup>62</sup> Ramūnas Labanauskas, “Jaunųjų katalikų sąjūdis. Politinės formavimosi aplinkybės 1935-1936,” *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, June-July, 2006, 256.

<sup>63</sup> Tamošaitis, Svarauskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 156.

<sup>64</sup> Mindaugas Tamošaitis, Artūras Svarauskas, “Lietuvos politinių partijų jaunosios kartos radikalėjimas,” *Istorija* 68, (2007): 53.

Moreover, the Circle was well-aware of the similar cases in Europe, when young Catholic intellectuals became politically active and joined the opposition parties. In Belgium in 1935 a Catholic group formed around the newspaper *Christus Rex* under the leadership of Leon Degrelle. They established their own political party and had great success in the parliamentary elections. Leon Degrelle promoted the renewal of Belgium. As Mindaugas Tamošaitis and Artūras Svarauskas noted, *Christus Rex* and of Šalkauskis's Circle were very similar, including their political languages. Both were emphasizing the importance of the nation, fighting against the corruption of the older Catholic generation, and maintained the tendency towards non-partial politics.<sup>65</sup>

Notably, *New Romuva* dedicated even several articles to the Belgian case. As Ramūnas Laskauskas noted, some members of the Circle were personally familiar with Degrelle, when they had established connections during their study years in France.<sup>66</sup> For example, in June 1936 the member of the Circle Stasys Yla shared his memories about the meeting with Degrelle when Yla studied in France.<sup>67</sup> Articles about the Belgian party's performance were published occasionally until 1936, when the party was condemned by the Belgian bishops.<sup>68</sup> The fact that *The Twentieth Century* eventually stopped the publications about the Belgian party after it was condemned by the Church indicates that the Circle wanted to remain in line with the official position of the Catholic hierarchy.

Contrary to some expectations, the Šalkauskis's Circle did not establish their own political party. Because of the political circumstances, there were no opportunities for a competitive

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Labanauskas, "Jaunųjų katalikų sąjūdis," 256.

<sup>67</sup> Stasys Yla, "Mano pasimatymas su rexistų vadu L. Degrelle," *XX amžius*, June 27, 1936, 3; Stasys Yla, "Mano pasimatymas su rexistų vadu L. Degrelle," *XX amžius*, June 30, 1936, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Tamošaitis, Svarauskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 157-58.

participation in the politics. Thus, the Circle chose to act differently and in June 1936 established its own daily newspaper, *The Twentieth Century*.

### **5. *The Twentieth Century and Demands for Social Justice***

The Circle continued their meetings even after the publication of the manifesto “Towards the Creation of Organic state.”<sup>69</sup> They wanted to continue the dissemination of the corporatist ideas in the press, and prepared a series of articles on this topic. During these meetings, the Circle decided to establish its own newspaper, *The Twentieth Century* [XX amžius], and Maceina was among its founders. As indicated from the chosen title, the emphasis of the daily newspaper was on the current affairs. The newspaper was dedicated mostly to foreign news, and showed a lot of attention to international politics. *The Twentieth Century* was very distinctive among the other Lithuanian newspapers, since it had foreign correspondents in various places of Europe and therefore, published reports about the latest political events from all over the continent.

The establishment of the newspaper was a sign of the split in the Šalkauskis’s Circle. Part of the group was advocating for reconciliation with the authoritarian regime, while the other part was asking for social and political changes. Maceina belonged to the second group. Already being in emigration, Maceina claimed that the aim of *The Twentieth Century* was to spread the ideas of the manifesto.<sup>70</sup> In the first issue the Editorial stated that “twentieth century impresses [...] with its great intensity and the speed with which new ideas rise and dynamically break when they are realized in life and when they fight with one another.”<sup>71</sup> There was also stated that complete submission to the influences of the West and the East would be disastrous, so it is

<sup>69</sup> Tatjana Maceinienė, *Ne tikrovės drumzlėse, o idealo šviesoj* (Vilnius: Katalikų pasaulis, 2004), 60.

<sup>70</sup> Antanas Maceina and Pranciškus Juras. *Antano Maceinos laiškai prel. Pranciškui Jurui*. ed. Antanas Liuima (Vilnius: Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akad. 1997), 36.

<sup>71</sup> “Editorial,” *XX amžius*, June 24, 1936.

necessary to search for a “synthetic way.” Moreover, the newspaper aimed not only to inform about the latest events, but also “to show their inner meaning.” It was stated that the national culture and Catholicism were the main values of the newspaper.<sup>72</sup> Besides the news from abroad, until the beginning of 1938 Maceina was also concerned about the domestic affairs, such as the position of Catholics in Lithuania and the matters of Theology-Philosophy Department of Kaunas University.

However, foreign developments became more and more pressing and the newspaper paid more and more attention to the foreign affairs. In March of 1938, Poland sent an ultimatum to Lithuania to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Lithuanian side accepted it, which meant that *de facto* Lithuania renounced its territorial claims over the Vilnius region. Thus, such political development had a huge impact on public opinion.<sup>73</sup> The news was met with a great criticism of Smetona’s regime for its inefficiency in the foreign politics.

This was happening at the time when Europe was alarming about the rising danger of German militarism. In March 1938, Austria was already a part of Germany, and the Sudeten crisis was emerging. In September 1938, *The Twentieth Century* wrote that the proclamation of the war was just a matter of time. As Skrupskelis pointed out, the issue of September 26, 1938 was dedicated almost entirely to the Sudetenland crisis.<sup>74</sup> Germany’s foreign policy caused serious doubts about the security of Lithuania. The position of France and Britain signaled that in the case of a military conflict between Germany and Lithuania, Western countries would not interfere. This was very clear to Maceina and the others as well.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Kęstutis Skrupskelis, *Ignas Skrupskelis*, 308.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 309.

Along with the changes in international sphere, Maceina modified his views on the role of Catholicism. In September 27, 1937 Maceina still advocated in favor of Christianity. In his article, “The Importance of Catholic Institutions to Lithuanian Nation” he stated that a “turn away from Christianity would be a danger for independence. The paganism that comes from the West, and the atheism that comes from the East, bring not only worldview but also political captivity.”<sup>75</sup> However, later writings of Maceina, especially his books *The Social Justice* and *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie*, show that the developments in international politics reduced his belief in the spiritual superiority of the Catholic belief. Slowly he came closer to the idea that modernity must be left behind and totally new forms of social and political order must be created. These new forms would have nothing to do neither with modernity, nor with Catholic social teaching.

Maceina and the other members of the Circle thought that the Catholic Church would be unable to solve the problems of modernity. Thus, Maceina started to defend the position of religion against the self-interest of high-clergy. The beginning of the tension between some part of the Šalkauskis’s circle and the hierarchs of the Lithuanian Catholic Church can be traced back already to 1935. Then three members of the group, Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, Grinius, and Skrupskelis, published the article called “Abolish the Evil from Ourselves (1 Cor)”.<sup>76</sup> The article criticized the Lithuanian Catholic Church for its inability to come to terms with the needs of the twentieth century, in the discrepancy between the teachings of the Church and its actual works, and the misuse of the Church finances.

In December 1936, during the annual assembly of Lithuanian Catholics, Maceina gave a lecture on social justice, where he suggested nationalization of the property of the Church. It seems that

<sup>75</sup> Antanas Maceina, “Katalikiškų institucijų svarba lietuvių tautai,” *XX amžius*, September 29, 1937, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Juozas Ambrazevičius, et al. “Panaikinkite piktą iš savo pačių tarpo (1 Kor),” *Židinys*, April, 1935, 337-63.

this lecture of Maceina was inspired by the events in Spain, where Civil War broke out in July 1936. In Spain, the Church became the target of the left-wing attacks whose ideas gained the support in the Spanish assembly as well. In response to this, Maceina suggested reforms for both the current economic system and the Church. According to the report in *The Twentieth Century*, Maceina urged for changes in the Church: “we have too much gold in the altars, so let us change it into bread until the hungry have not destroyed it.”<sup>77</sup> Maceina argued that until now, Catholics were not giving enough attention to the “social question.” Moreover, he required reconsideration of the Capitalist principles of economics. In addition to his, Maceina named the Catholics who disagreed with his ideas a “religious bourgeoisie,” who “are lagging behind for a half of the century.”<sup>78</sup>

These ideas about social and economic reforms were fully developed in his book *The Social Justice* published in the beginning of 1938. In the book combined cultural history, economical history and psychology. As the subtitle, *The Collapse of Capitalism and the Principles of a New Social Order*, indicates, in the book Maceina presented his vision of a new society that was ruled by the brotherly love of Catholics. Maceina argued against capitalist spirit which emerged in Europe because of the influence of Aristotelian philosophy. Maceina stated that poverty cannot be completely abolished; however, according to Maceina, social problems could be solved from a moral point of view. According to him, a social problem is essentially a moral problem and it can be solved by the re-spiritualization of Christian society. Thus, Maceina asked for a social transformation which would be possible after the spiritual renewal of the people: “the social problem can be solved only through permanent evolution and by taking

<sup>77</sup> “Katalikų vadų suvažiavimas,” *XX amžius*, December, 30, 4.

<sup>78</sup> Tamošaitis, Svareuskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 171.

necessary reforms; first of all, it can be made within the human soul and after this in the outer order.”<sup>79</sup>

In Maceina’s view, Christians would need to take their responsibility in changing the word order: “The Christian ethics and economics are destined to participate in this evolution and to prepare the necessary reforms.”<sup>80</sup> In his view, the bourgeois society was in decline and its dissolution had already started. Now, the Church needs to distance itself from the bourgeoisie and to begin social reforms that eventually would lead to the creation of the new social and economic order. Maceina argued that the Catholic Church must oppose capitalism, communism and nationalism by emphasizing the importance of the person: “Christianity is the only personalistic worldview and thus the only bulwark against materialistic, biologic and nationalistic collectivism.”<sup>81</sup>

Maceina saw capitalism as the cause of secularization. He argued that religion flourished in natural communities, such as family and nation. Meanwhile, capitalism eroded such communities and both family and nation ceased to be organic. Maceina saw that under the conditions of capitalism nation turned into the masses. Capitalism manifested itself in depersonalization and mechanization of human life.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the re-spiritualization of society would lead to the restoration of all the natural communities. Moreover, Maceina was dissatisfied with the Catholic social practices and argued for Church reforms: “Nothing

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<sup>79</sup> Antanas Maceina, „Socijalinis teisingumas,“ (Kaunas: Sakalas, 1938), 7.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 55.



alienates people from Christianity as much as the capitalist spirit of Catholics.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, Maceina proposed his version of “the third way.”

Maceina argued that the “social question” must be solved as soon as possible; otherwise, Christianity would lose the battle against atheistic ideologies. Maceina tried to solve “the problem of modernity” by suggesting to converge of the private and the public. Maceina’s theory of justice was a fusion of organicist theory with some elements from socialism: organic society would be attained by the implementation of social justice and reordering of society. In his view, society must be reorganized in such a way that the self-interest of the short-sighted individuals would be replaced by the neighbor-loving ethics of the Catholicism. In Maceina’s vision of a new society that is based on the selfless love, *caritas*, the state would take away from individual one’s idle assets and equally redistribute them among the people. The people must have as much wealth, as they need to satisfy their necessary the needs of life. Moreover, people could get additional wealth if it was necessary to fulfill their public duties. The historian of Romanian interwar literature Marta Petreu noted that socialist elements such as elimination of personal property and nationalization of banks were typical elements of the radical right rhetoric.<sup>84</sup>

In Maceina’s view, the Church was not performing its duties properly, thus he was calling for reforms: “in order to solve social question and organize society according to Catholic principles, the Church must become the example in the first place.”<sup>85</sup> He believed that by their actions Catholics would inspire the changes in the rest of the society. Maceina thought that if Catholics would start organizing according to these principles, the movement would grow

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>84</sup> Marta Petreu, *An Infamous Past: E.M. Cioran and the Rise of Fascism in Romania* (Chicago : Ivan R. Dee, 2005), 162.

<sup>85</sup> Antanas Maceina, „Socijalinis teisingumas,“ (Kaunas: Sakalas, 1938), 221.

organically and in the end of this organic evolution all the society would accept the Catholic social principles. Noteworthy, Maceina warned that if Catholics would not start changes, then a real revolution would start.

In his vision, the communities of believers would form councils that would be responsible for the administration of the Church's property. This council would be established as an official institution within the Church that would consist only of laymen. They would collect idle assets from believers and distribute them equally among all believers, including priests. Maceina thought that this equal distribution of wealth among the priests would prevent the high priesthood from financial wastage. Thus, Maceina blurred the boundaries between the Church and the community of believers.

Maceina specified that the council should be comprised of those who were educated in the special Catholic schools and had knowledge of Catholic social and economic theories. It is easy to recognize that here Maceina had in mind such people as he himself and the other members of the Circle – these were the people who had studied in Catholic universities both in Lithuania and abroad, and were familiar with current Catholic political trends. For Maceina, such councils would not only distribute the surplus produced in the society, but also would control the society of believers and would perform other acts of *caritas*.

In addition, Maceina emphasized the importance of work: “work must not only create culture, but also improve the personality.”<sup>86</sup> Here Maceina understood the creative power of humanity in Berdyaev's terms. For Berdyaev, men are essentially free to create something what is entirely new. Berdyaev argued that just like God, man creates out of nothing.<sup>87</sup> Maceina agreed

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>87</sup> James McLachlan, “Nicolas Berdyaev's Existentialist Personalism,” *The Personalist Forum* 8 (1992): 60.

with this idea and argued that God did not finish the creation of the world and it is the task of humanity to complete the creation. For Maceina, humanity creates the world by work and each individual creates oneself by work as well. Thus, Maceina believed that each person has an ability of self-creation. Needless to say, such ideas were far from the Catholic understanding of the human nature. However, in order to understand if this idea was important to the rest of the Circle as well, further investigation is needed.

The demand to change the social system was a shift from what was declared in the manifesto “Towards the Creation of Organic State.” When in February 1936 the Circle published the manifesto, it asked for political reforms. In December 1936, in his speeches and lectures Maceina was requiring the reorganization of the society, where would be no clear boundaries between the public and the private, the Church and the society. It seems that Maceina spoke with an approval of the other members of the Circle.<sup>88</sup> Maceina’s lecture on social justice that was given in December 29, 1936 was accompanied by the article in *The Twentieth Century* written by Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis who suggested to start looking for “those who are responsible by pointing the finger into oneself,”<sup>89</sup> and proposed that Catholics should assume their responsibility for the political situation of the day.

As one might expect, such ideas of Maceina were ignored by the Church authorities. After his lecture on social justice in the Catholic assembly, the pro-Church press called Maceina a “freemason” and “Judas.”<sup>90</sup> As The Department of Philosophy and Theology was under direct jurisdiction of the Catholic Church of Lithuania, Maceina entered into conflict with his employers. Maceina was warned by the archbishop that he would lose his job at the university,

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<sup>88</sup> Tamošaitis, Svarauskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 170.

<sup>89</sup> Quotation from: Tamošaitis, Svarauskas, *Nuo Kazio Griniaus iki Antano Smetonos*, 154.

<sup>90</sup> Antanas Maceina, “Žmonės, kuriuos išaugino nepriklausoma Lietuva,” *Darbininkas*, March 19, 1968.

if he did not change his ideas.<sup>91</sup> However, Maceina became even more pessimistic about the future of Europe and began to consider the alternatives to Catholicism.

### ***6. The Rise of Bolshevism and Nationalism as an Opportunity in Europe***

In the spring of 1937, Maceina gave lectures on the decline of the West. The course was titled “Bourgeoisie, Prometheanism, and Christianity.” In 1940, these lectures were published as a book under the title *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie*. In this highly eclectic book Maceina predicted the collapse of the existing world order, after which a totally new era would come and creativity would spring. Maceina spoke about the three spiritual types, as bourgeoisie, prometheanism, and Christianity, that are competing between each other in the history of Europe. According to Maceina, the Christian spirit was predominating in the Middle Ages, the promethean in the Renaissance, and the bourgeois spirit since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Maceina noted that high tensions between competing ideas led to the eruptions of the creative forces of humanity. Thus, the historical moments when these tensions are at their high-points are also full of creativity. Maceina identified the current situation of Europe as full of such tensions. Moreover, according to him, the main features of the time were an extraordinary development of technology and the emergence of the “social problem.”<sup>92</sup>

Maceina thought that he was living in a special period of history, when the fate of Europe was to be determined. Maceina was convinced that at certain periods of history humans need to decide which spirit will become prevalent in the culture. He argued that bourgeoisie, prometheanism, and Christianity become apparent in the historical reality through the choices of every individual. Maceina used the analogy between human history and human soul: “every

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>92</sup> Antanas Maceina, *Buržuazijos žlugimas* (Sakalas: Kaunas, 1940), 25.

human within oneself is bourgeois, Prometheus, and Christian.”<sup>93</sup> Thus, each human being is governed by one of these ideas. As in history, these three spirits are fighting with each other in the soul of each human. There comes a moment, Maceina continued, when everyone needs to decide which one of these spirits to choose: “it is the time of profound and painful conflicts. However, it [the time – V. K.] is inevitable.”<sup>94</sup>

For Maceina, bourgeois spirit is responsible for all the evils of modernity. He identified these evils with bourgeois values, capitalism, democracy, and secularization. All of these stems from the bourgeois spirit. Maceina argued that the bourgeois spirit destroyed individual differences and also hierarchical organic order. Maceina identified democracy as a manifestation of the bourgeois spirit. Maceina linked democracy with moral relativism.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, “whole philosophy of democratic state grows from utilitaristic bourgeoisie. Capitalism and democracy go hand in hand. Capitalism is manifestation of utilitarianism in economic field, while democracy is manifestation of utilitarianism in social field.”<sup>96</sup>

According to Maceina, the main feature of bourgeois spirit is triviality – bourgeoisie lives as if there are no eternal truths and ideas. When it comes to religion, bourgeois society forgets the transcendental realm. Maceina complained that the bourgeois sees religion in terms of usefulness; religion is appreciated because of its social functions and not because of its holy character. The sign of such attitude is a spread of religion through the missionaries in the New World and in Africa.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 102.

At the same time, Maceina was convinced that bourgeois society was destined to collapse. Maceina stated that Spengler was right when he spoke about the decline of the West; however, Maceina reformed this Spengler's idea by arguing that only the bourgeois West will come to its end. For Maceina, the First World War ended the domination of bourgeoisie in Europe: now all three spirits are fighting between each other in order to become prevalent in the social and political life. Maceina believed that he was living on the verge of a new period in the European history. As the future is undecided yet, it is extremely important to make right individual decisions. The victory of one of these groups in the social and political realm will be decisive to the future of Europe.

Maceina was convinced that after the collapse of bourgeois society the spirit of prometheanism will become dominant. Maceina identified Catholic spirit with the Catholic Action organizations that were spreading across the Europe, prometheanism with nationalism and Bolshevism, while the bourgeois spirit was still dominating in the society, and it could be found in every class of society.<sup>98</sup> According to Maceina, "present history is created by the men of action."<sup>99</sup> It is easy to understand that these "men of action" are guided by Bolshevik and nationalist ideas. Moreover, these ideas would transform the world: "it seems that prometheanism is destined to create a new style of life in Europe, and maybe even in the whole world."<sup>100</sup>

Maceina predicted that not only prometheanism would destroy bourgeois forms of life, but it also would help to a religious revival. Maceina criticized Christianity because in the present life Christianity manifested through the historical forms that were characteristic to the bourgeoisie.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 27-32.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 33-35.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

As Christianity became bourgeois, Maceina saw it as having lost its creativity and became mechanic. Maceina argued that in its authentic form Christianity was concerned with the transformation of each individual's inner world. However, the adherents of mechanistic religiosity are only concerned with subjugation of the people and their obedience to the commandments of the Catholic Church. Thus, mechanistic religion is concerned only with public rituals. For Maceina, under these rituals people hide their lack of faith. He saw that the hierarchy of the Church was responsible for the situation. Maceina named this position of the Church hierarchs as clericalism. He argued: "it is true that religious community lives in this world. However, its roots and principles are not from this world. Thus, it is inappropriate to use the means of this world to maintain discipline and order among its members."<sup>101</sup> Maceina saw the Christianity of the first ages as an example of an organic religiosity. Meanwhile, by using laws and power clericalism constrained the religious community into artificial forms. Thus, Maceina denied the Church's claims to temporal power.

Maceina saw the creativity of prometheanism and its destructive potential as a chance for Christianity: prometheanism would exercise its power by destroying the bourgeois forms of Christianity and would allow the spiritual revival of religion. Thus, the rise of nationalism and Bolshevism would be beneficial to Christianity. It would cleanse the Christianity from all the impurities it adopted through the ages. Through this, Christianity would lose its stagnating forms and become organic again. It is important that Maceina neither believe, nor did he wish that Christianity one day would regain its positions and power in the society. Maceina believed that prometheanistic ideas would be dominant in the social and political spheres, while Christianity could maintain its "spiritualistic" importance.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 144.

Moreover, Maceina also argued that there would be no place for Catholic philosophy, as it was also the expression of the bourgeoisie spirit: “every philosophical school is bourgeois. And the more the school is rigid, and the more its proponents are attached to the ideas of its founder, the more it is bourgeois. In this respect, there is no other school that is as rigid, formed, unified, and bourgeois as the *Thomistic* school of philosophy [italics are in the original – V. K.].”<sup>102</sup> For him, even the authorities in theology are the expression of the uncreatively of bourgeois spirit.

Maceina’s vision about the decline of the existing world was connected with his reevaluation of nationalism. In July, 1938 one of the Catholic journals, *Hearth* [Židinys], published an issue dedicated to the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christianization of Lithuania. It was dedicated to the considerations of the relationship between the Lithuanian nation and the Catholic faith. Maceina wrote an introductory article subtitled *The Attempt of Lithuanian Historiosophy* to that issue. There Maceina argued that “nation gives to religion a concrete way of expression.”<sup>103</sup> Differently that in his writings prior to 1936, in this article Maceina began emphasizing the positive effects of nationalism. In March 1939, Maceina wrote that “the limits of the state must coincide with the limits of the nation,” and “all the foreigners must be either assimilated or displaced to their countries.” Otherwise, they would be only guests who would be using the rights of the guests. In the same article, Maceina was urging to create a mono-national state. In Maceina’s view, only in this way would the Lithuanian state become Lithuanian in its full sense.<sup>104</sup>

It seems that before the outbreak of the Second World War, Maceina was searching for alternatives to the political projects that have been realized in Italy, Germany and the Soviet

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 194-95.

<sup>103</sup> Antanas Maceina “Krikščioniškasis turinys ir lietuviškoji forma: Lietuviškos istoriosofijos bandymas,” *Židinys*, July, 1938, 3-16.

<sup>104</sup> Antanas Maceina, “Tauta ir vasybė,” *Naujoji Romuva*, March, 1939, 227-30.



Union. In his article of June 17, 1939 Maceina argued that only the maintenance of the distinction between the person and the individual may provide a successful counter-project to the political systems of these countries. Maceina stated that state and ideology must remain separated.<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, Maceina rejected Thomism and at the same time continued to use neo-Thomistic personalism that was advocated by Maritain and his distinction between the person and the individual.

### ***7. The Beginning of the Second World War: Maceina, Ideology and the Uprising***

In June 1940, when Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union, Maceina was the only one from the Circle who went abroad. Maceina moved to Berlin and soon was followed by his wife with children. Interestingly enough, he fled from Lithuania alone leaving his family in Lithuania and his wife with the children was able to join him only with the generous support from Maceina's friends. In Berlin Maceina was trying to get a visa and leave to Argentina, where his wife's sister lived.<sup>106</sup> However, his efforts were unsuccessful.

At this very period Maceina became politically active. During his time in Berlin, Maceina established relations with other Lithuanian émigrés who also found their shelter in the city. He started to visit the Lithuanian representative in Berlin, Kazys Škirpa. Škirpa was hosting meetings of politically minded émigrés in his flat. The main topic of these meetings was war and the situation in Lithuania. During these meetings they developed an idea to establish a quasi-official organization that would initiate contacts with German officials. Their aim was to

<sup>105</sup> Antanas Maceina, „Tai, kas mus jungia,“ *Lietuvos žinios*, June 17, 1939, 37.

<sup>106</sup> Tatjana Maceinienė, *Pašauktas kūrybai: Antanas Maceina. Filosofo asmenybės interpretacija* (Vilnius: Aidai, 2000), 86-87.

persuade Germans to help Lithuanians to fight against the Soviets and to re-establish the Lithuanian state. Škirpa was convinced that the war between Germany and the Soviets would soon begin. Thus, he hoped that such an organization and his own active communication with Germans would open a possibility to use the help of German military troops for the restoration of Lithuania's independence. Therefore, Škirpa was creating an impression that the organization assumed the functions of the Lithuanian government in exile.

With Škirpa and others discussing future tasks of the organization, Maceina argued that firstly the group needed to create a political program. In his opinion, the organization can be created only if it had clear objectives and ideology. Maceina thought that they may need several meetings to create a clear plan. Moreover, Maceina showed his skepticism about the need for the organization. According to him, if after the war in Eastern Europe small countries would not become completely independent, it was useless to create such organizations that would not establish real power.<sup>107</sup> However, the organization in Berlin was created. Moreover, Maceina was among those who signed the document of its establishment. This document stated that the Lithuanian Activist Front under the leadership of Škirpa was appointed to fight for the “liberation of Motherland Lithuania from the yoke of Soviet communism.”<sup>108</sup> Moreover, Maceina was among five persons who were appointed to the governing body of the LAF where Maceina became the head of the Ideology Committee.<sup>109</sup>

The members of the LAF in Berlin had very different political ideas as they belonged to both the left and the right. However, efforts were made to create a cohesive ideology. As the head of

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<sup>107</sup> “L. A. F. Steigiamojo susirinkimo, įvykusio 1940 m. lapkričio mėn. 17 d., Berlyne, Achenbachstr. 1, Protokolas,” *Sukilimas*, ed. Kazys Škirpa, (Washington: Kazys Škirpa, 1973), accessed June 5, 2016: <http://www.partizanai.org/failai/html/skirpa-sukilimas.htm#91>.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

the Ideology Committee Maceina together with two others, Klemenstas Brunius and Antanas Valiukėnas, were preparing a program for the LAF. Importantly, Briunius and Valiukėnas did not belong to the Catholic intellectuals. Brunius was the proponent of the Lithuanian nationalist ideologue Augustinas Voldemaras and his far-right organization Iron Wolf (*Geležinis vilkas*). Meanwhile, Valiukėnas was an adherent of the nationalism which during the interwar years was represented by Smetona's National Union. Moreover, Škirpa confirmed that he also made some "minor" changes in the text.<sup>110</sup> Thus, the real authorship of the Program cannot be attributed to Maceina alone. This also partially explains the nationalist tones of the Program. The Program was completed in half a year. It is known from Maceina's wife diary that the Program caused huge disagreements among the participants, and it was rewritten several times. She writes that there were so many disagreements that "Antanas is joking that Mr. Škirpa may be left alone; a commander without subordinates."<sup>111</sup> Thus, it is unclear how many changes were made to the original version proposed by Maceina.

In the final version of the Program it stated that the actions of the LAF are based on "Lithuanian nationalism, the laws of Christian morals and social justice." According to the Program, the main purposes of the LAF were these:

- The LAF aimed to re-establish the Lithuanian state on the new basis. The LAF would organize and express the will of the nation;
- Moreover, the LAF aimed to protect "the noble customs of the Lithuanian nation, maintain its high moral character, preserve its racial purity and maintain its historical dignity;"

<sup>110</sup> "Baigiamosios pastabos," *Sukilimas*, ed. Kazys Škirpa, (Washington: Kazys Škirpa, 1973), accessed June 5, 2016: <http://www.partizanai.org/failai/html/skirpa-sukilimas.htm#572>.

<sup>111</sup> Tatjana Maceinienė, *Pašauktas kūrybai*, 93.

- The LAF aspired to deepen Lithuanian culture and strengthen the eternal Lithuanianess. Moreover, the organization would work creatively for the benefit of the Lithuanian nation as well as humanity.<sup>112</sup>

The Program is different from earlier Maceina's writings. For example, the Program gave the definition of a nation. It is written that the LAF "considers the nation as created by blood, soil and historical destiny," that has undeniable right to preserve and develop its national culture.<sup>113</sup> Such definition differed from the previous ideas of Maceina. Earlier Maceina defined nation and culture in organicist terms and the references to land were missing. Furthermore, the earlier writings of Maceina lacked biologisms, while the Program refers to racial purity. Moreover, Maceina in his writings from the late 1930s argued that culture develops independently from the state. For him, national culture was possible because of personal creativity of the people. Šalkauskis's circle expressed this idea already in their manifesto in 1936. Meanwhile, the LAF's program stated that the state is "the necessary condition to disseminate the national culture." In the Program, creativity is transferred from the person to the national community. Besides these differences, there are some common points between Maceina's previous writings and the Program. Just like Maceina's books, *The Social Justice* and *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie*, the Program emphasized the importance of social justice. For example, it stated that company workers must have "right to participate in the company's profits."

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941 Germany declared war against Soviet Union and at the same day German troops invaded Lithuania. In the morning of June 22 with the news about the outbreak of the war, the Lithuanian part of the LAF began the uprising against retreating Soviet troops. By the

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<sup>112</sup>Lietuvių aktyvistų fronto programa. *Sukilimas*, ed. Kazys Škirpa, (Washington: Kazys Škirpa, 1973), accessed June 5: <http://www.partizanai.org/failai/html/skirpa-sukilimas.htm#567>.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

evening of the same day, the LAF already had control over some strategic objects in Kaunas, including radio.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, through a radio broadcast the leader of the LAF in Lithuania Leonas Prapuolenis declared that Lithuania restored its independence and now is governed by a Provisional Government: “Young Lithuanian state enthusiastically promises to join the organizing of Europe on the new bases. Lithuanian nation that was tortured by Bolshevik’s terror determines to create its own future on the basis of ethnic unity and social justice.”<sup>114</sup> The leadership of this uprising tried to create a functioning governing body as quickly as possible. The members of the LAF expected that Germans would recognize the legitimacy of the Provisional Government. In Kaunas they established the Cabinet of Ministers, where Maceina was delegated as a Minister of Education in the new Lithuanian government. Moreover, the other member of Šalkaukis’s circle, Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, was elected to be the Prime Minister. Already on June 24<sup>th</sup> the LAF established their own newspaper, *Towards Freedom* [Į laisvę] that indicated the ideological preferences of the LAF. Moreover, the Provisional Government ordered to all former civil servants of the Lithuanian state to come back to office. Thus, the Provisional Government intended to restore the former sovereignty of the state.

However, Germans wanted a complete obedience from the Lithuanian side, thus the Provisional Government was unsuccessful in their control of the country. Maceina was forced to stay in Berlin, as Germans did not allow him to leave the country. The same happened to Škirpa. The Provisional Government was finally abolished by Germans in September and the leadership of the Uprising went to underground.

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<sup>114</sup> “Atstatoma laisva Lietuva,” *Į laisvę*, June 24, 1941.

## 8. *Aftermath*

On September 3, 1941 Maceina received a letter from Maceina's good friend Lithuanian Prime Minister Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, inviting him to a teaching position at newly formed Vilnius University starting from the autumn semester. Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis thought that an official letter would convince German authorities and Maceina would be permitted to leave Germany. However, the procedures took longer than planned and Maceina came back to Lithuania only on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Maceina was only slightly late for the semester, as instead of September 15 the studies started in October. In Kaunas, Maceina taught introduction to philosophy, and classes on the poetry of Rilke.<sup>115</sup> Maceina not only retained his position at university, but even became the Head of the Philosophy Department before Germans closed the University in 1943.

Other than teaching at the university, we know only a few facts about Maceina's activities after his return to Lithuania. Just after the comeback, Maceina joined his Catholic friends in the underground activities. After the Provisional Government was abolished, Maceina together with the other Catholic intellectuals, such as Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis and Zenonas Ivinskis, established the Lithuanian Front (Lietuvių Frontas, LF), the organization that positioned itself against both the Soviets and the Nazi Germany. It is clear from the publications in their newspaper, *Towards Freedom*, that Maceina's milieu started looking to the Allies as the new possible liberators of Lithuania. Probably, Maceina agreed with this position as well. Interestingly, Maceina did not publish, or at least he did not sign, any articles in the newspaper

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<sup>115</sup> Tatjana Maceinienė, *Pašauktas kūrybai*, 99-103.

until the October of 1943. Only when Maceina together with Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis started publishing a series of articles called “Towards the Reformed Democracy” his name appeared.<sup>116</sup>

In comparison to previous writings of Maceina, these articles were an obvious turn from his earlier rhetoric and ideas. In the articles the authors expressed their belief that after the war Europe would become democratic. Moreover, they provided new interpretation of Lithuanian interwar period politics – for them, all parties except the ruling National Union, were in favor of democracy. Moreover, they saw that the interwar period politics in Lithuania were undermined by the disagreements on the role of religion in the public sphere. They proposed that in the new democratic Lithuania religion would have a right of expression in the public sphere, but belonging to a religion would be a matter of a personal choice. This, they thought, would allow people to organize themselves into parties according to their political views, and not according their religious views. The new political system would consist of a combination of political parties and professional unions.

The rhetorical change of Maceina’s milieu was related to two important reasons. First of all, Nazi Germany refuted any possibility of cooperation with Lithuanian intellectuals. Thus, the positive attitudes towards German politics were changed into disappointment. It became clear that neither Germans nor the Soviets would see Lithuania as independent state. Secondly, in the autumn of 1943, it was evident that Germany was losing the war. At the time Mussolini was already overthrown, and German forces were stuck in Russia. Under these circumstances the Catholics turned to the Allied Powers. Meanwhile, the Soviets were perceived as an enemy and

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<sup>116</sup> “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, October 30, 1943; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, November 23, 1943; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, December 18, 1943; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, January 15, 1944; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, February 10, 1944; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, March 5, 1944; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, March 27, 1944; “Į reformuotą demokratiją,” *I laisvę*, April 29, 1944.

it is no surprise that when in the end of 1944 the Soviets entered Lithuania, Maceina left the country. Maceina fled to Germany, where he stayed for the rest of his life.



## ***Conclusions***

The analysis of Maceina's philosophy showed that during the interwar period Maceina shift his ideas from initial notions of universalistic nationalism represented in the philosophy of Herder to social Darwinism. Maceina became frustrated with the conservatism of the Catholic Church and gradually lost his belief that the Catholic Church could provide the answer to the challenges of modernity. In 1940, Maceina argued that Catholicism would regain its spiritual importance only with the help of Bolshevism or nationalism. Importantly, Maceina never ceased to advocate for Lithuania's integration into European culture and politics. This could be the reason why during the Second World War Lithuanian Catholics were eager to join Nazi Germany – they wanted that Lithuania would be part of a new Europe.

In the articles from the early 1930s Maceina was advocating for a creation of the national culture. This was due to the influence of his teacher, Stasys Šalkauskis. According to Šalkauskis, Lithuanians had a task to create a synthetic culture. By this he meant that Lithuanians would create their national culture by the integration of the neighboring cultures of Germany, Russia and Poland. In Šalkauskis view, Catholicism could provide the role model to the Lithuanian national culture, as it had a great potential to integrate antithetical ideas. For Šalkauskis, Catholicism provided the basis of which European culture must be created.

It is clear that in the beginning of 1930s Maceina was aware about the negative consequences of nationalism and argued against the hatred of nationalism. Maceina and his friends were very close to the ideas of Šalkauskis. The realization of Šalkauskis's agenda is visible in the Catholic journal dedicated to culture, *New Romuva*. Following his teacher, Maceina in the beginning of 1930s argued that each national culture is valuable and nationalism that causes strife between

different nations is dangerous. He thought that nationalism was dangerous because it would lead towards the destruction of the culture, first of all of the European.

However, around 1936 the first differences between Šalkauskis and his students appeared. While Šalkauskis was primarily concerned with the introduction of Lithuania into the family of European culture, after 1936 Maceina thought that Catholics need to fight against secularization and solve the “social problem.” In December 1936, Maceina gave a lecture on social justice, where he suggested distributing the Church property among the poor.

In *The Social Justice* and especially in *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie* Maceina combines cultural history, economical history and psychology. Maceina argued that social justice could be achieved by the re-spiritualization of Christian society. Maceina proposed a Catholic socialist vision of the new society. He tried to solve “the problem of modernity” by suggesting to converge the private and the public. Maceina’s theory of justice was a fusion of organicist theory with some socialist elements. In his view, organic society would be attained by the implementation of social justice and reordering of society.

Maceina urged that the Church would initiate the reforms among the believers and gradually society would organically adopt the Catholic ideas of social justice. Maceina stated that social reforms would be started by Catholics and later they would spread outside their denominational boundaries. Maceina argued that the Catholic Church must oppose capitalism, communism and nationalism by emphasizing the importance of the creative spirit of the person. Maceina sympathized with working movement; however, he neglected materialism which he saw as an ideology of working class. Instead, he advocated that the Church would take the necessary

social reforms and would “re-spiritualize” the working class. This sympathy to the working class came from the Catholic social teaching promoted by Leon XIII and Pius XI.

The rejection of these ideas were rejected by conservative Catholics lead Maceina and his milieu into disappointment of the Catholic Church. Just before the Second World War, Maceina started to understand that the Catholic Church was unable to solve the problems of secularization. Maceina’s last book of this period *The Collapse of Bourgeoisie* showed that he envisioned the new world order which had nothing to do with the traditional forms of the Catholic philosophy. These visions were far from both the ideas of Šalkauskis and Catholicism. Maceina’s belief in the possibility of organic changes in society was no longer present. Thus, he argued that the rise of Bolshevism and Nazism is a chance for Christianity. Maceina believed that Bolshevism and Nazism would erase bourgeois society and bourgeois religiosity. He stated that after the rise of a new world order, Catholicism would be able to regain its spiritualistic importance.

Interestingly, Maceina rejected Thomism as bourgeois form of philosophy and at the same time continued to use neo-Thomistic personalism and distinction between the person and the individual. Maceina combined this personalistic distinction with Russian theology – the emphasis on human creativity lead Maceina to agree with Berdyaev that human creates out of nothing and each person has an ability of self-creation. Obviously, these ideas were far from the official teachings of the Catholic Church. This was possible due to the fact that Lithuanian Catholics lacked national tradition of Catholic theology. Thus, Maceina was free to combine Catholicism with Russian theological influences.

Maceina's vision about the decline of the existing world was connected with his reevaluation of the nationalism. In the late 1930s, Maceina began to emphasize the positive effects of the nationalism. In March 1939, Maceina wrote that "the limits of the state must coincide with the limits of the nation," and "all the foreigners must be either assimilated or displaced to their countries." Therefore, it is evident that instead of a romantic notion of culture, which was prevalent in Maceina's writings from early 1930s, now he saw the nation rather in the light of social Darwinism – ethnic minorities will always remain foreign to the organic national community. This sociological view here would suggest that Maceina saw the hatred between different nations as unavoidable. Thus, in this way the first anti-Semitic references in Maceina's texts appear.

Importantly, Maceina and his milieu did not aim to real political power until the June Uprising in 1941. However, during the Uprising Maceina's milieu became very important. Maceina contributed to the establishment of the Lithuanian Activist Front and he was a co-writer of their program. The LAF Program states that the actions of the LAF are based on "Lithuanian nationalism, the laws of Christian morals and social justice." The authors of the text saw the state as the motivation of national creativity. Moreover, the Program aimed to preserve the racial purity and contained the same organiscist concept of the society that was prevalent in Maceina's writings during the late 1930s. However, in the LAF program these elements are combined with racist rhetoric.

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