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***In search of the traditions in political thinking:  
studies of enlightenment's political thought in Lithuania***

*Vilius Mačkinis*

The article presents the research into the historic period of Enlightenment done in Lithuania, describing the main findings, questions and ideas, which have a connection with the political thinking of the period. First, the general Lithuanian historiography as well as main issues and problematics of the research into Lithuania's XVIII century are presented. Second, the role of Vilnius University as the peripheral centre of Enlightenment is discussed. Finally, main studies dealing with the period in the fields of history, history of literature and philosophy are analysed. In this overview article the main attention is devoted to research studies (monographs) and to particular research directions taken by Lithuanian scholars with an attempt to connect different research contributions into singular tradition of Lithuanian political thought, in which political ideas of the XVIII century are still lacking the assessment of their importance.

***Unity of Europe according to Oscar Milosz:  
political reflections of the poet***

*Rosita Gaškaitė*

The article examines the heritage of poet, mystic and diplomat Oscar Milosz (1877–1939) from the point of politically significant ideas. The aim is to grasp the understanding of the unity of Europe from the selected political articles “Deux messianismes politiques” as well as metaphysical poems

“Ars Magna” and “Les Arcanes”. The premises of Miłosz are situated in the intellectual context of European unity ideas of his contemporaries. The analysis shows that Miłosz is critical about the situation of interwar Europe that he faces. As an alternative to this he suggests the unity in spiritual and political sense. It is argued in the paper that poet tries to capture the main questions of his epoch, although in a very exclusive manner, by lumping together geopolitical, mythological, messianistic arguments.

***Manifestations of regional and strategic cooperation  
in the programs of Poland's Parliamentary parties***

*Mindaugas Norkevičius*

This article analyses programs of Poland Parliamentary political parties, which exclude vectors of foreign politics in the context of regional collaboration. The most important concept in this article is the analysis of political parties and their ideologies which show their importance in forming foreign politics in Poland. Priority areas of foreign politics in Poland are presented in the text. Analysis was conducted using analysing programs (2011) of Parliamentary parties such as Civic Platform, Law and Justice, Democratic Left Alliance and Polish People Party. The case of Palikot's movement is absent in the article due to the fact that the vector of foreign politics is not excluded in its program. The main priorities of Poland's foreign politics, its position in forming and performing the politics are analysed in the text. The focus of it is on how these priorities are presented in the programs of Parliamentary parties.

***The power debate in social and political theory***

*Vytautas Isoda*

Power is one of the basic, but at the same time one of the most disputed concepts in political science, as well as other social sciences contiguous to it. The article starts by reviewing an ongoing debate between political scientists and sociologists which started around 1960s – the so-called “faces of power debate” – and moves on to evaluate the conceptual relation between power, on the one hand, and authority and coercion on the other. The somewhat modest goal of this endeavour is to design a taxonomy of, as well as to

mark the limits of the concept in question. “Authority” and “coercion” (meaning “physical force”) are thus chosen as conceptual markers, the former corresponding to the maximum power with minimum opposition and the latter denoting the complete loss of power in exchange for sheer physical control over outcomes. This is not the only perception of power typical to the political science discourse; some political scientists, namely scholars of international relations, identify the exercise of power precisely with physical coercion by which certain object of value is secured. However, most of the more sophisticated accounts of power in social and political theory favour the conceptual limits proposed in this article.

### *Meaning of life in the modern concept of politics*

*Romualdas Bakutis*

The study examines the place of meaning of life in the modern concept of politics. Although the predominant view nowadays in Western society outlines that meaning of life is a private matter and any wish to solve it would lead to totalitarian consequences, this research contests such position by, firstly, showing that every political theory at its core is guided by a necessity to resolve the problem of nihilism and, secondly, tracing the revolutions of theological and political thinking, which explain why modern political theorists and politicians do not talk about meaning of life.

The research consists of two parts. The core thesis of the first one states that meaning of life is the point of exit for every political theory and order because if political thought wants to prove that it is right, it must justify why its proposed order of things is necessary. This can be done only by proving that political thought reflects the purpose of human life which actually is meaning of life. If a political body or political philosophy cannot prove this, it will always be possible to reject their arguments by stating that they are meaningless to humans.

At least theoretically such harmony between meanings of human and state existence was achieved by pre-modern Greeks, Romans and Medieval Christendom. In ancient Greek and Christian philosophy it was perceived that the material world is grounded by some metaphysical entity which gives every being on this side certain place and purpose. Therefore, if political

philosophy wanted to understand how societies must be governed, thinkers, firstly, would need to find what place for men was conceived by higher entities in otherworldly dimensions.

However, this concept was problematic because sooner or later it should have been realized that humans cannot comprehend God's perfection. Therefore, the concept of God is equal to the concept of nonexistence and such type of metaphysical entity could not give a purpose to the world. Furthermore, after the fall of finalistic worldview it was impossible to prove the old political order and, hence, new search for the meaning of life in the political order began.

Essential role by trying to reunite meaning of life and politics was performed by scientific worldview. Science enabled the reconstruction of meaning of life by 2 aspects: firstly, it changed the finalistic understanding of the world by causal and, therefore, it granted a possibility by manipulating cause and effect to recreate every social and natural order. Secondly, after theologians established God as nonbeing, scientists gave a way to provide a frame to the world. Moreover, some of them even envisaged the trend of progress in historical processes which paved a way to fulfil the ultimate purposes of humanity, therefore, meaning of life not in another but in this world.

This created conditions for the idea that society should be permanently improved and the ultimate goal of such improvement is the salvation of every individual in this world. Although supporters of liberalism and socialism have a different understanding of this final stage of human development, both of them aim not at preparing individual for the salvation in another reality but they think that ideas of the heaven should be established in this world.