

ALGIMANTAS KATILIUS \*

## Rev. Prof. Jonas Totoraitis MIC: Ideas and Conceptions

Rev. Jonas Totoraitis MIC (1872-1941) was a student of the Seinai priest seminary and Fribourg University. He expressed himself in various areas of life, was socially active. One should consider the social activity of priests at the beginning of the twentieth century as one of the distinctive features of the nationally conscious clergy. This social activity was expressed the most through the founding of various societies and the participation in their activities. As we know the Seinai diocese from the national viewpoint was twofold – populated by persons of Lithuanian and Polish nationality. The Poles and Lithuanians lived compactly. Therefore the clergy of this diocese manifested themselves in the social life of both Lithuanians and Poles. The Lithuanian clergy of the Seinai diocese participated the most in the activities of the “Žiburys” (Light) society<sup>1</sup> while the Polish clergy in the “Catholic Union”<sup>2</sup>. One should note that Lithuanian origin clergy also worked in Polish parishes and participated in their social life.

The chosen topic has already been written in historiography. In his monograph Aurelijus Gieda wrote about the idea formulated by J. Totoraitis to establish a separate society to study history<sup>3</sup>. Another idea or more precisely conception was to establish an alignment of priests, which had to carry out the task of strengthening the Catholic faith. The author of this article has written about this question<sup>4</sup>.

---

\* Algimantas Katilius – The Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, Lithuania  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4942-5053>; e-mail: [katilius1@gmail.com](mailto:katilius1@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Šapalas, „Žiburio” draugija ir jos mokyklos, Marijampolė 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Guzewicz, *Związek katolicki w diecezji sejneńskiej czyli augustowskiej*, „Studia Elckie” 12(2012), p. 129-157.

<sup>3</sup> A. Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja. Istorikai ir istorika Lietuvoje 1883-1940 metais*, Vilnius 2017, p. 140-146.

<sup>4</sup> A. Katilius, *Seinų vyskupijos dvasininkų pastoracinė, socialinė ir kultūrinė veikla XIX a.–XX a. pradžioje*, „Terra jatwezenorum” 10(2018), d. 1, p. 170-196.

This article will discuss the activities of J. Totoraitis in one specific aspect, i.e. discussing his raised ideas and conceptions. We will first look at the idea stated by J. Totoraitis to establish a society based on the professional (of a historian) considerations to investigate the history of Lithuania. The founding of such a society may have been too early and did not provide any positive results at that time. Another of his conceptions flowed from his understanding of the duties of the clergy – to establish a special organization (association) of priests. This project had reached its stage of organization: the statutes of the priests' association were adopted and printed, meetings were taking place. However, the organization died out never having been developed. Another area in which J. Totoraitis manifested himself was the organization of youth. Here he accomplished more in the theoretical area – the publication of the study “Catholic Youth Associations” in the journal “Vadovas” (Leader). It was later printed as a separate booklet “The Guardianship of Youth and Its Associations”. J. Totoraitis in addition to theoretical reasonings also undertook practical activities organizing youth. This activity of his should be assigned to the social activities of the Church.

The ideas and proposals raised by J. Totoraitis in the early twentieth century were in accordance with the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the time, which was based on the encyclicals promulgated by Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius X. The sign of the time was the Catholic involvement in solving social and even political problems of society at large. All of Europe was exposed to different forms of activities undertaken by the Catholic Action. Lithuania was no exception in this regard. There the beginnings of the Catholic Action-inspired activities were mostly represented by the creation of various societies in the early twentieth century. Therefore, the ideas and objectives raised by J. Totoraitis were of great importance within the context of the social life of the time.

### **The society to investigate the history of Lithuania**

The birth of the idea of this society has to be tied with the professional preparation of J. Totoraitis to undertake the work of a historian. He understood that one could accomplish more by uniting the even not numerous investigators.

In 1905 he announced in the first daily Lithuanian newspaper “Vilniaus žinios” (News of Vilnius) the article “Let Us Take Care of the History of Lithuania”<sup>5</sup>. At the beginning of the article he states that there are not many writings devoted to the history of Lithuania. He attributed the works of Simonas Daukantas among the main ones, but they were written a long time earlier and no longer conform to the requirements of the science of history. “Now we should again – wrote J. Totoraitis – carry out the work anew using all the measures of critical investigation. One should once more write a history going

---

<sup>5</sup> J. Norus [J. Totoraitis], *Rūpinkimės Lietuvos istorija*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 63, p. 1.

deeper into the past of our nation and unveiling it more clearly. But the fulfillment of such a task, especially in our situation, goes beyond the power of the individual. As in all branches of work, also here, many workers working together can accomplish what one person is unable to do”<sup>6</sup>. Some could contribute to the activities of the society with work, others with money. There are not many persons engaged in the investigations of history, but there are more who are concerned with the history of Lithuania, but it would be difficult to say how many such persons there would be. Some could unite into one society and work together. Persons who would care for the history of Lithuania should each year pay even a small contribution to the society’s treasury. With the collected funds one could publish a newspaper especially devoted to history. The benefits of such a publication would be great because it would publish articles related to various questions of history. This would make it easier for specialists of history to prepare “graduate studies, to unite them and would make a beginning for our historical investigations, while among the intelligentsia it will awaken a greater desire to know our past”<sup>7</sup>. The established society could gather all kinds of news about Lithuania’s past, sources, and evaluate them critically. In addition to the newspaper the society could publish historical works. In order to establish the society, first of all possible members of the society should respond and express an opinion about this undertaking. The editorial board of “Vilniaus žinios” is invited to mediate this issue.

And in fact considerable responses to the raised idea reached the editorial office of “Vilniaus žinios” which were published in the newspaper. The first to respond was Vladas Nagevičius. He noted that the undertaking to establish a historical society “will not die in the pages of the newspaper, but will find an echo in the hearts of all Lithuanians, of all who are concerned with our history, culture and sciences”<sup>8</sup>. V. Nagevičius offered to found a “historical-archeological society.” In his opinion the purpose of such a society would be: the scientific investigation of Lithuania’s history; the collection, description and care of relics of Lithuania’s past; the establishment of a particular newspaper; eventually the founding of a Lithuanian-national museum<sup>9</sup>. The Rev. Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas also did not remain indifferent<sup>10</sup>. J. Tumas was more concerned with ethnographic matters. He wrote: “We are more in need of an ethnographic newspaper in general and especially of a newspaper for language because ethnographic ancient ideals, not looked after and pounded by life melt as spring snow”<sup>11</sup>. He called for a “historical ethnographic” newspaper and a “Historical-Ethnographic Science Society”. Engagement in ethnography

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> V. Nagevičia, *Atsiliepiamas ant d-ro Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 69, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Kun. J. Tumas, *Istoriškai-etnografiškas laikraštis*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 79, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

would result in much more than just matters of history. Therefore a wider profile society would have more members and that would be useful when publishing a newspaper<sup>12</sup>. In the discussion Jonas Burba offered different places for history and ethnography than J. Tumas had suggested. In his opinion one had to establish an “ethnographic-historical society”<sup>13</sup>. According to J. Burba the work of an ethnographic-historical society would be more varied and therefore more interesting for the broad public than just a historical society. A participant in the discussion writing under the pseudonym Old Man but Still Alive regretted that there were few supporting the idea proposed by J. Tumas<sup>14</sup>. A. Gieda said that G. Landsbergis-Žemkalnis joined the discussion about the idea by in some way agitating for a more diverse understanding of the importance of cognitive history<sup>15</sup>. But this provision remained peripheral in the context of the discussion in question. The future signer of the Act of February 16 Jurgis Šaulys also participated in the discussion. Summarizing the previously discussed thoughts that the offered suggestions were devoted to investigations of the past, the collection of antiquities, folklore, history, archeology etc.<sup>16</sup> All that is necessary and important. However: “We in any way, in my firm opinion can not and do not have to limit it down to only investigations of the past, if only for that period., – we will not do this if we do not want to live with sweet memories of ancient times. We have not only our past – we are living and moving and feel so much lust and energy that we want to keep living, we also want to have our future. Thus speaking only about matters of science we cannot forget that and must always mention that/... We now have to engage in those fields of science which our lives require today. We not only do not know our history as we should (although more than anything else!) – we do not know our land, the life of our people, our statistics and also such other necessary things. They are those urgent fields of our scientific work, on which feet we also have to stumble”<sup>17</sup>. For this J. Šaulys suggested not establishing separate societies, but one joint science society, while the individual branches of science would have sections and classes. There is no need that in that society of science there would immediately be all the classes, they could appear according to need. There were also concrete proposals how one could contribute after the founding of the society. An author calling himself Šilgalis pointed out that as much as he was able he would collect old songs, tales, proverbs and that he had already collected some<sup>18</sup>. Jonas Šliogeris also called for the founding

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Aurelijus Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 141-142.

<sup>13</sup> J. Bur. [Jonas Burba], *Prie d-ro Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 85, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Senis Betgyvas [Gabrielius Landsbergis-Žemkalnis], *Prie D-ro Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 99, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Aurelijus Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bekampis [Jurgis Šaulys], *Mūsų mokslo reikalai*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 105, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Šilgalys, *Prie etnografiškai-istoriškos draugijos kurimo*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 123, p. 1.

of a broader society, not just of history and ethnography<sup>19</sup>. The last one to make a statement in the discussion of “Vilniaus žinios” was Jonas Basanavičius. First of all he thought that it would be too early for a society “to only investigate our history, the very society would be too specialized, its program too narrow. There are not yet any real historical investigations in Lithuania. Eventually specialists of the science of history will appear, but it was still too early to establish a society for them. J. Basanavičius offered to found a society which should be called a “society of science” and not hide under the name of some science. In his statement Basanavičius mentions also his attempt in 1902 to establish an “ethnographic friendship”. But this endeavor result in a fiasco. Further in his article he presented the already published in “Varpas” in 1902 program, consisting of fifteen points. Summarizing this program he wrote: “The Lithuanian Science Society should first of all be concerned with interrogations: a) the peculiarities of the nation and its passion, b) the histories of Lithuanians and c) their spiritual and medieval cultures. Together this Society should be concerned with (a) the collection of various, above-mentioned items about the national museum and library and b) the establishment of a special organ for the sound recording of the collected written materials”<sup>20</sup>. According to J. Basanavičius one needed to study the past more deeply than the new times because there are historical sources remaining about them<sup>21</sup>. The deeper history is explained more by folklore sources and therefore the most important purpose of the society will have to “most likely be involved with Lithuanian onomatology, the collecting of songs and stories, which, after the flow of the quasi-cultures of our time will so quickly die and disappear. Therefore – it seems to me – the folkloristic part of the program is most important and one should care about it on those feet not on the founding of the society, not waiting as Rev. Tumas is also promoting, but establishing a newspaper especially for that matter, about which I had been agitating in the past; although without good success”<sup>22</sup>. Summarizing the discussion about the idea raised by J. Totoraitis A. Gieda presented the important conclusion that history as specialized knowledge did not yet have the critical mass of persons having special education, who could establish the society. On the other hand at the beginning of the twentieth century “a society devoted especially to history could appear designed politically even more than an ethnographic or folkloristic society”<sup>23</sup>. Thus the society proposed by J. Totoraitis was not created, and one stayed with the idea of the society of science proposed by J. Basanavičius.

<sup>19</sup> J. Šliogeris, *Prie d-ro J. Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 152, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> J. Basanavičius, *Dar kartą apie įsteigimą „mokslo” draugijos*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 153, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Aurelijus Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 145.

The Constituent Assembly of the society of Lithuanian science took place on 25 March 1907<sup>24</sup>. This society devoted considerable attention to historical investigations. Here the professional investigators of Lithuania's history were formed because in the activities of the society of the science of Lithuanians "there was an exclusive role for history"<sup>25</sup>. Already in 1907 J. Totoraitis became involved in the activities of the society of Lithuanian science<sup>26</sup>, he published several articles in "Lietuvių tauta" (Lithuanian Nation)<sup>27</sup>. We do not have data on whether J. Totoraitis participated in the congresses of the society, did he read papers? However, we do have some indications about the participation of J. Totoraitis in accumulating the library of the society. For example, in 1908 he donated a book to the society's library<sup>28</sup>.

Let us now return to the idea of J. Totoraitis to establish a history society. In fact, it is not totally clear whether historians organizing in independent Lithuania remembered this idea<sup>29</sup>. Five historians were the founders of the society of Lithuania's history: Augustinas Janulaitis, Ignas Jonynas, Petras Tarasanka, Vaclovas Biržiška and Konstantinas Jablonskis. The regulations of the society were registered on 6 May 1929<sup>30</sup>. Already in the first meeting of the founders of the society it was decided to inform ten more persons associated with history about the establishment of the society. Among them was also J. Totoraitis<sup>31</sup>. Responding to the society's invitation to be a member, J. Totoraitis agreed with the proposal. The temporary secretary of the society Konstantinas Jablonskis announced that J. Totoraitis is accepted as a real member of the society of Lithuania's History and is invited to attend the general meeting of members. J. Totoraitis was the only one of the historians of the Theology Philosophy faculty of Lithuania's University in the 1920s to become a member of the society. In the journal of the society "Praeitis" (The Past) J. Totoraitis did not publish any articles.

<sup>24</sup> J. Jurginis, *Lietuvių mokslo draugija*, „Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos“ 8(1975): *Mokslo, kultūros ir švietimo draugijos*, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> Aurelijus Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 129.

<sup>26</sup> A. Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 137. Cf.: A. Katilius, *Kaip Jonas Totoraitis rinko tautosaką Daukšų parapijoje*, „Suvalkija“ 1997, No. 8, p. 25. In the letter it is written: „I would ask You to enter me into the number of members of the „Society of the Science of Lithuanians“. Not knowing the address of the cashier I am sending the entry and membership fee to the editorial office of „Vilniaus Žinios“.

<sup>27</sup> J. Totoraitis, *Liškiaus piliakalnis ir Vokės raganos*, „Lietuvių tauta“ 1908, kn. 1, d. 2, p. 204-208; J. Totoraitis, *Senovės liekanos ir lietuvių mitologiški atminimai*, „Lietuvių tauta“ 1908, kn. 1, d. 2, p. 177-204.

<sup>28</sup> *Lietuvių mokslo draugijos kronika*, „Lietuvių tauta“ 1908, kn. 1, d. 2, p. 305.

<sup>29</sup> E. Bakonis, *Lietuvos istorijos draugija 1929-1940 metais*, „Mūsų praeitis“ 1990, t. 1, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> A. Gieda, *Manifestuojanti Klėja...*, p. 394.

## Union of Priests

To the social activities of J. Totoraitis one has to assign his attempt to organize the priests of Seinai (Augustowska) i.e. to establish a union of priests. This endeavor acquired an organizational expression, but was not developed more broadly.

The origins of the union began in the autumn of 1906. Rev. J. Totoraitis at a meeting in Marijampolė presented the plan to create an association of priests. The meeting elected a commission, which Rev. J. Totoraitis headed, to prepare the statutes<sup>32</sup>. Rev. J. Totoraitis prepared the statutes of the association and sent them to the administrator of the Seinai diocese prelate Juozapas Antanavičius<sup>33</sup>. The prelate looked over the statutes and sent a booklet of the from 1862 active in Paris priest organization “Unio Apostolica”. Rev. J. Totoraitis as much as possible corrected the statutes according to the booklet sent by the administrator and especially the chapter about asceticism. The administrator of the diocese prelate J. Antanavičius confirmed the statutes on 3 May 1907. These statutes were published as a separate booklet<sup>34</sup>. One failed to find data on whether J. Totoraitis tried to register the association of priests with the authorities. Arvydas Gaidys attributed this association to the illegal Catholic organizations<sup>35</sup>. In the published statutes it is indicated that St. Ignatius was chosen as the guardian of the union. According to the statutes the purpose of this organization of priests is to defend the Catholic faith from everything that is opposed to the truth of this faith, to care for its deeper ascetic and theological education. To engage in literary and scientific work, to contribute with work to various societies or in other words to Christian social life and in this way spread among the people Christian understanding and education<sup>36</sup>. In the letter written to the administrator of the diocese the purpose of the union was explained in more detail: “The association should stand as a guard and observe where is the danger, where are our weakest places, by what are the bad guys holding firmly, and then stand up against it, and look after what is needed, to look after what is going on in the scriptures and what in all kinds of associations not once in secret and known to few, and, in the case of those who make a big deal. Priests separately from the union can not do this well because either several would work the same job or disregard it, or dump all of it as it is now, on the shoulders of doctors. Moreover, there are matters which without the

---

<sup>32</sup> A. Katilius, *Kunigo Jono Totoraičio MIC laiškai kunigui Pranciškui Būčiui MIC*, „Terra jatwezenorum” 6(2014), p. 236

<sup>33</sup> J. Totoraitis tried to collect a broader opinion about the statutes. He sent the statutes to the in U.S.A. living Rev. Antanas Staniukynas and asked him to express his opinion. See: A. Kučas, *Kunigas Antanas Staniukynas. 100 metų sukakčiai nuo jo gimimo paminėti*, Roma 1965, p. 122.

<sup>34</sup> *Įstatai Kunigų susivienijimui*, Seinai 1907.

<sup>35</sup> A. Gaidys, *Lietuvių katalikų draugijų bruožai 1905-1907*, „Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos” 7(1994): *Atgimimas ir Katalikų Bažnyčia*, p. 312-313.

<sup>36</sup> *Įstatai Kunigų susivienijimui*, p. 3.

union one could not in any way do. Let us take this example. Many booklets are published.

They are needed in the bookstores, but here no one knows what they are worth. One can not read them individually, while the association would divide the work and could declare what is necessary in the press. There would be benefits from that not only for the very association and others. Already the errors of our past show that such an association is necessary. Our diocesan priests knew that many booklets from abroad brought many mistakes to Lithuania, argued about it, forbade reading them and did nothing more. And the mistakes sprouted and grew. The priests being scattered and having the best wishes could do little or almost nothing. The association should be such that it could work and would have money for its needs. For this reason the dues are also large<sup>37</sup>. Every priest, agreeing to comply with the statutes and paying each month at least 2 rubles to the association's treasury could be a member of the organization. One remains a member while he complies with the statutes and pays the membership fees. Members are accepted by the general meeting, after recommendations by at least two members. The members by a majority vote elect each year a board of directors, which consists of five members: a chairman, two assistants, a secretary and treasurer. The Audit Commission consists of three persons. Members living near each other form a chapter and every month or two meet. The chairman every year calls general meetings two times. The general meeting is legitimate, regardless of how many members attend. Persons who have greatly benefited the association are registered as members of honor.

The association of priests was established at a meeting of priests held in Marijampolė on 3 March 1907. 16 priests joined the association<sup>38</sup>. In the autumn of 1907 the number of members increased to 20. The program of the meeting that was to occur on 6 October 1907 has survived<sup>39</sup>. All together the program was designed to discuss 16 questions. That was two articles "Need to unite" and "The battle of the French for schools in the 19th century", translated from German. In addition to the articles such questions were discussed: good works for performances that need to be translated and printed; Christian Democrats; books printed about the faith, their reviews and a catalogue for libraries; the George scholarship society for schoolchildren; social courses, similar to those in Warsaw where the report read by Jurgis Matulaitis was the best; more useful recollections would be led by a specialist; representatives to meetings of the society; provision for old age; what does the association think about soberness; the live rosary; priests have to care for their disciples

<sup>37</sup> A. Katilius, *Kunigų susivienijimas: du kun. Jono Totoraičio laiškai*, „Tėvynės sargas“ 1998, no. 1(96), p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> A. Gaidys, *Lietuvių katalikų draugijų bruožai 1905-1907*, p. 312.

<sup>39</sup> A. Katilius, *Kunigų susivienijimas: du kun. Jono Totoraičio laiškai*, p. 66-67.



so that they would be educated as Catholics; prayerbooks; ideas<sup>40</sup>. About 30 priests arrived at the meeting. Responding to the priests' meeting J. Totoraitis wrote: "I had included even 15 or 16 points in the program. The most important ones were – the reasons for the defeat of the French Catholics, the school, the press, the negligence of spirituality. With that I wanted to direct eyes at Lithuania's position and that totally succeeded. We even elected several commissions. I was concerned with agitation: to shake, incite and call to work. How much could that succeed, I do not know. We separated, apparently, satisfied with the meeting. One had even made the suggestion that we should have meetings more frequently, even in the winter before Shrovetide"<sup>41</sup>.

The so nicely begun activities of the association of priests, probably, ended because I could not find any more data about meetings of the association. Why did the activities of the association of priests not expand more? Here, apparently Arvydas Gaidys is correct saying that the "Žiburys" (Hearth) society began to implement the tasks raised by the association<sup>42</sup>. On the other hand perhaps there was a too narrow social basis – the association united only the clergy.

### **The organizing of youth**

J. Totoraitis did not write about all youth, but "only about the youth of villages and cities whose calling will have to be the farm, crafts, merchants and the work of a simple worker"<sup>43</sup>. So, there is no talk about the youth studying in secondary schools. The work under the title "Catholic youth associations" was first published in 1908 and 1909 in the journal "Vadovas" (Leader) (no. 1-16) and later published as a separate book after correcting the name to "Custody of Youth and Its Associations". Writing the work he relied mostly on German literature. Discussing the ideas presented by J. Totoraitis we will use the book version of the work, which differs somewhat from the journal version. The book talks about youth of the male sex although young girls can also be educated in a similar way.

The work "Custody of Youth and Its Associations" has nineteen chapters. The first chapter pointed out that few people were involved with the education of village youths. The parents would teach prayers, the priest would teach a little of the catechism, the parents or the *daraktorius* would teach one how to read so that one could pray from books in the church. Such education when one did not leave his village was perhaps sufficient. However, when many youths began to emigrate to America, England, Germany and to the cities of Russia, such education was not sufficient because they encountered a totally different life. Here arise moral and preservation of faith aspects. The poorly

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> A. Katilius, *Kunigo Jono Totoraičio MIC laiškai kunigui Pranciškui Būčiui*, p. 237.

<sup>42</sup> A. Gaidys, *Lietuvių katalikų draugijų bruožai 1905-1907*, p. 313.

<sup>43</sup> J. Totoraitis, *Jaunimo globa ir jo susivienijimai*, Seinai 1910, p. 1.

educated youngsters are not able to resist temptation and become free thinkers. The strengthening of education and integrity contributes to the promotion of culture and prosperity. J. Totoraitis writes: “Our nation will not be able to rise in agriculture or industry without enlightenment. Without enlightenment our small and poorly educated nation will not be able to resist the competition of other nations, which with their higher culture can block and lock up us. Our countrymen, going to foreign lands, due to their lack of education receive the worst and hardest jobs. Due to the lack of enlightenment our nation has little national awareness, which is absolutely necessary for its existence”<sup>44</sup>. It is important that not a single Lithuanian die for his faith nor his nation. Youth left to themselves often go on a mistaken path. Steps must be taken to accustom young people to regular church attendance, to the frequent reception of the sacraments, to saving, diligence, obedience and order.

The second chapter deals with the chairman of the youth association. Here are discussed the duties of the chairman, his responsibilities. The chairman of the youth association would usually be a priest. The characteristics needed by the chairman are listed. The third chapter deals with the members. Youths of 14-18 years could be members of the association. That is an important stage in a man’s life, because the maturation of the personality is taking place and can yield to various influences. J. Totoraitis noted that youth is drawn to work for the benefit of the nation. The purpose is good, but not a suitable manner because youths are diverted from the faith. Initially one must not look at the abundance of members, but at their goodness because one will look carefully at the work done by the association. The members of the association have to pay a small membership fee, one cannot require a large one. The fourth chapter deals with the purpose of the association and its kinds. About the purpose J. Totoraitis wrote: “In other words the purpose is to gather youths who have left schools or who have come to that age, but never attended them to accustom them to the faithful fulfillment of Christian Catholic responsibilities, to accustom them to diligent further education and learning, to accustom them to innocent entertainment and thus educate them to good people”<sup>45</sup>. To reach that goal will be the most important task of the chairman. If he reaches it, the youth will be saved “from moral and faithful fornication and compassion”.

The fifth chapter deals with the founding of the association. The founding of the association has to be associated with a proper church holiday: “In the morning the future members of the association will make a confession and all together will receive the Holy Sacrament: after lunch or after vespers, a suitable solemn prayer will be held with a hot cordial sermon. Afterwards, if necessary, there will be a walk and a happy meeting. In that way the foundation will be

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

laid with the blessing of God. Young boys with all their heart will be attached to the association”<sup>46</sup>.

The sixth chapter lists the methods to reach the goal of the association. The methods must be well adapted. These are the most important methods: 1. The faith: often and regularly the sacraments have to be received; the church visited diligently; common Mass on Sunday after vespers; participation in processions. 2. Teaching: speeches; further training; library. 3. Amusements or entertainment: games; walks and departures; theater and declamations; songs. 4. Social welfare: houses of the association; economy; work placement. The seventh chapter deals with practical observations. Here are the sections: the association and parents; for the Church and other associations; book of prayers and hymns (this section, as the author points out, does not fit into this book and appeared due to an editorial error of the journal “Vadovas”). The association has to help the parents educate and train their sons. The association does not take away the responsibility for their children and cannot remove it. The association and its chairman have to maintain ties with the parents of the members, to take into consideration the matters of the families, to strengthen the authority of the parents, to educate the youth as a good member of the family and society. The youth association cannot be its own purpose.

The eighth chapter deals with organization. Statutes are needed for the organization of the association. The book presents an example how to prepare statutes and there is talk about the leadership for the association and the board. The ninth chapter is called the teaching of faith. Here it is written: “The leader of the association, regardless of the hardships or obstacles, has first of all and as much as possible worry that the life of faith would release roots deep into the heart of the youth. In order to overcome this task, he must devote himself with full devotion and dedication, not looking that he would not see the consequences of his work soon”<sup>47</sup>. The truths of faith can only be implanted by teaching. That teaching must be adapted to the age and the development of the mind of the youths. One is taught by speaking words, giving speeches and sermons. In order for that teaching to be successful it has to be conducted systematically, with a plan created every year. The teaching is dogmatically apologetic. The tenth chapter consists of four parts: *cura animarum*; three enemies of youth; what can we demand from the members of the association; how to behave with those who are going into the army, America and elsewhere. In discussing three enemies of youth J. Totoraitis distinguished – debauchery, drunkenness and smoking. He named debauchery as the greatest enemy of the three.

The eleventh chapter speaks about education. In the association of youth in addition to religious education there has to be education in science. If associations want to achieve their set objectives they must prepare youths for life.

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

Even though faith is the most important factor of education it is not the only one: “It is necessary in life that man would be introduced, or even be brought as close as possible to the current state of culture. One can achieve this by circular education. For that one has to be educated in science because the current life and culture demand it”<sup>48</sup>. The most important tool for education that is speeches at meetings. Those speeches have to be relevant for the local youth and interesting. So that the discussed matters would be better understood in the cities one can be taken to look over a museum, factory or exhibition, while in rural areas one can be taken to an estate where there is exemplary farming or by a farmer who farms well. For general training books can be used, but here one has to behave carefully, because in them at times there are things contrary to the faith, the purpose of which is to cast doubts on the truths of the faith. However, having good books one must accustom the youth to read them. One should not forget also the reading of Catholic newspapers. In addition to circular education one needs not to forget professional education. For the rural youth professional education is related to the teaching of farming with all its branches. In addition to the mentioned areas of education it is necessary for young people to have upbringing for civic, social and economic life. The twelfth chapter is devoted to the exercise of economy and hygiene.

The thirteenth chapter talks about the spiritual education with honorable amusement. In this chapter it is written: “Therefore the association first of all as much as possible will try to protect the youth from all those dangers, from bad acquaintances, from various wears, etc. then take care of the various entertainment in such a way that youth would really cheer them, so the whimsical, brutal and horrible craving for them would disappear, or a least become smaller, feelings would rise and soften. The association has to provide higher relations (milieu) to the young boys, not as it is in their ordinary daily life”<sup>49</sup>. The fourteenth chapter shows the statistics of Germany’s youth associations. At the end of the section the situation in Lithuania is discussed: “The idea that one has to establish Catholic youth associations has already appeared and occurred in places in the Seinai diocese. The kind or form of the association was the living Rosary, but not everywhere”<sup>50</sup>. The fifteenth chapter talks about matters not fully related to the topic of the teaching of catechism in schools. The sixteenth chapter discusses the psychology of youth or how one should understand youth. Here it is written: “The youngster – that is a transition from a child to a man. The man is the goal. One has to understand the man as a Christian-Catholic in whom there is an immovable, deeply discussed Catholic view of the world: such a man has a strong will to good and honor. He sometimes has very strong lust; but his will has claimed them and uses them as a tool. Prayer, reception of the Holy Sacrament, attachment to the Church and are gotten used

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

to and loved matters; he has understood that in the poverty of this life and the endeavor of the volatile man not in firmness can not do without them”<sup>51</sup>.

The seventeenth chapter is entitled: let us rescue youth with unions. The eighteenth chapter is called: success in execution. In this chapter there is the resuming idea: “In all our eyes is going a great, broad, every time advancing deeper roots into the people national movement: we are all witnesses of him by our works and action we all are participating in it and enjoying it. We see that our nation is moving toward social, societal, public, economic and farm works. There are signs which call to contribute to the question of alcoholism and urge the spread of temperance. As a deep root and firm foundation for these movements and works let us awaken and raise one more great, broad and deep movement, which would awaken, urge and force all the layers of the nation to contribute to Christian education and the training of youth”<sup>52</sup>. Finally in the last nineteenth chapter one talks about the battle for the world outlook of youth.

The presented book of J. Totoraitis encouraged later the founding of the village youth organization “Pavasaris” (Spring)<sup>53</sup>. He did not only contribute theoretically to the source for the “Pavasarininkų” society aimed at village youth, but also undertook organizational activities. In 1907 in Šunskai he established the secret society of young priests (older ones were not accepted) of the Seinai diocese to organize the youth. There were a dozen such secret groups in 1908-1912 in the Seinai (Augustowska) diocese by the “Žibury” (Light) and “Žagrė” (Wooden Plough) societies<sup>54</sup>. We do not know much about the activity of the priest society founded by J. Totoraitis. The goal of the association was with joint forces to fight against the advancing socialism. A. Kučinskis writes: “Every member of the association had to distribute in his parish Lithuanian Catholic newspapers, books, to draw together young people, to prepare lectures for them and in all other ways raise Catholic and national consciousness”<sup>55</sup>. J. Totoraitis himself often invited the youth in Šunskai and read lectures to them. According to A. Kučinskis the society had developed quite broadly in the Seinai (Augustowska) diocese, would call meetings, most often in Prienai and Marijampolė. The society was active while J. Totoraitis himself was its chairman, but after he departed to St. Petersburg in 1910 the activities of the society declined. Arvydas Gaidys provides several examples about the activities of the priests: the effort of Rev. Ignotas Čižauskas in the gminas of Krokialaukis, Simnas, Balkūnai and Ūdrija and the group led by Rev. Antanas Grybinas in Liubavas<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>53</sup> A. Kučinskis, *Prof. kun. dr. Jonas Totoraitis (60 metų amžiaus sukaktuves minint)*, „Athenaeum” 4(1933), p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> J. Lmn., A. Mž, *Pavasarininkai*, „Lietuvių enciklopedija” 22(1960), p. 195.

<sup>55</sup> A. Kučinskis, *Prof. kun. dr. Jonas Totoraitis (60 metų amžiaus sukaktuves minint)*, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> A. Gaidys, *Lietuvių katalikų draugijų bruožai 1905-1907*, p. 312.

In conclusion we may state, that even though the ideas expressed in this book were not original in a wider European context, they were fresh and new in Lithuania because of the importance they ascribed to the systematic approach of organizing youth in the countryside. Such organizational activities were highly relevant not only on account of world-view issues, but also because of social and cultural life. The clergy of the time were well aware of the significance of these dimensions. Moreover, J. Totoraitis' book "The Guardianship of Youth and Its Associations" provided practical steps as to how organize youth groups in Lithuanian countryside that in time grew together to form association "Pavasaris" (Spring). This association would become very popular among the youth during the time of the independent state of Lithuania (1918-1940). Organizing youth in secondary schools would also remain a highly relevant issue. The youth of this group of age were organized in a different way by creating association "Ateitis" (Future). Its membership included schoolchildren and high school students.

### **Conclusions**

J. Totoraitis participated more actively in social life after returning from studies in Fribourg University and until his departure to the Marian novitiate in St. Petersburg. However, he did not distinguish himself with too great activity. Perhaps the most important of his published social ideas or plans – the founding of a separate society devoted to the investigators of history. The ideas of J. Totoraitis published in the press got a response among the intellectuals of Lithuania at that time and served as an incentive to create the Society of Science of Lithuanians. The organizational talents of J. Totoraitis were revealed in the creation of his conceived organization of priests. However, this organization of priests for objective reasons did not develop broader activities and remained more only in the stage of formation. The idea of J. Totoraitis to contribute to the creation of rural youth organizations was expressed more intellectually, i.e. he wrote a book which was important for fostering the organized activities of rural youth. The result of that activity was the formation of a broadly branched organization.

\* \* \*

### **Summary**

The topic of this article is devoted to the discussion of the ideas of cultural and social activities propounded by Professor of History, Rev. Jonas Totoraitis (1872-1941). It also deals with a question of what conditions were present for their implementation in the early twentieth century. The first idea to establish the Society to Investigate the History of Lithuania was largely predicated on his professional background as historian. Another idea was indebted to his

perception of the duty of the priest. It manifested itself in the aspiration to set up a special organization (association) of Roman Catholic clergy to tackle world-view issues of society at large. Another field of Rev. Totoraitis' activities was organizing youth in the countryside. His most significant contribution was theoretical: a study entitled "Catholic Youth Associations", published in the journal "Vadovas" (Leader), and some time later republished in a separate booklet "The Guardianship of Youth and Its Associations".

**Keywords:** Jonas Totoraitis, associations, social activities, Catholic clergy.

### Bibliography

- Bakonis E., *Lietuvos istorijos draugija 1929-1940 metais*, „Mūsų praeitis“ 1(1990), p. 4-18.
- Basanavičius J., *Dar kartą apie įsteigimą „mokslo“ draugijos*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 153.
- Bekampis J. [Jurgis Šaulys], *Mūsų mokslo reikalai*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 105.
- Bur J. [Jonas Burba], *Prie d-ro Noraus sumanymo*, Vilniaus žinios 1905, no. 85.
- Gaidys A., *Lietuvių katalikų draugijų bruožai 1905-1907*, „Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos“ 7(1994): *Atgimimas ir Katalikų Bažnyčia*, p. 254-316.
- Gieda A., *Manifestuojanti Klėja. Istorikai ir istorika Lietuvoje 1883-1940 metais*, Vilnius 2017.
- Guzewicz W., *Związek katolicki w diecezji sejneńskiej czyli augustowskiej*, „Studia Elckie“ 12(2012), p. 129-157.
- Ištatai kunigų susivienijimui*, Seinai 1907.
- Jurginis J., *Lietuvių mokslo draugija*, „Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos“ 8(1975): *Mokslo, kultūros ir švietimo draugijos*, p. 37-118.
- Katilius A., *Kaip Jonas Totoraitis rinko tautosaką Daukšų parapijoje*, „Suvalkija“ 1997, no. 8, p. 24-29.
- Katilius A., *Kunigų susivienijimas: du kun. Jono Totoraičio laišakai*, „Tėvynės sargas“ 1998, no. 1(96), p. 63-68.
- Katilius A., *Seinų vyskupijos dvasininkų pastoracinė, socialinė ir kultūrinė veikla XIX a.–XX a. pradžioje*, „Terra jatwezenorum“ 10(2018), d. 1, p. 170-196.
- Kučas A., *Kunigas Antanas Staniukynas. 100 metų sukakčiai nuo jo gimimo paminėti*, Roma 1965.
- Kučinskas A., *Prof. kun. dr. Jonas Totoraitis (60 metų amžiaus sukaktuves minint)*, „Athenaeum“ 4(1933), p. 1-16.
- Kun J. Tumas, *Istoriškai-etnografiškas laikraštis*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 79.
- Nagevyčia V., *Atsiliepimas ant d-ro Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 69.
- Norus J. [J. Totoraitis], *Rūpinkimės Lietuvos istorija*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 63.
- Šapalas K., „*Žiburio*“ *draugija ir jos mokyklos*, Marijampolė 2009.
- Senis Betgyvas [Gabrielius Landsbergis-Žemkalnis], *Prie D-ro Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 99.
- Šilgalys, *Prie etnografiškai-istoriškos draugijos kurimo*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 123.
- Šliogeris J., *Prie d-ro J. Noraus sumanymo*, „Vilniaus žinios“ 1905, no. 152.
- Totoraitis J., *Liškiavos piliakalnis ir Vokės raganos*, „Lietuvių tauta“ 1908, kn. 1, d. 2, p. 204-208.
- Totoraitis J., *Senovės liekanos ir lietuvių mitologiški atminimai*, „Lietuvių tauta“ 1908, kn. 1, d. 2, p. 177-204.