

AUGUST VON CIESZKOWSKI: FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS

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One of the least known of the Young Hegelians, in respect to both his teaching and influence, is August von Cieszkowski. One of the few scholars to have noticed him is David McLellan, who in his recent study *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* does direct a few pages to Cieszkowski's teaching, as well as a paragraph concerning his influence.¹ Nevertheless, McLellan's final sentence indicates the need for a more extensive study of this inventive thinker, for "it was Cieszkowski who gave the first impetus to the process of swift secularization that set in among the Young Hegelians in the next few years."

The following pages are intended to contribute to this study by first indicating what is known of his relationships to the other Young Hegelians, and then presenting, in essence, the content of his most influential work, the *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*.²

Count Cieszkowski was born in 1814 at his family estate near Warsaw. His future inclination to aesthetic evaluations was foreshadowed by his father, whose interest in the fine arts manifested itself in an extensive collection, as well as long established friendships with such artists as the sculptor Canova and the painter Monti.

In 1831, young Cieszkowski left a dangerously revolutionary Warsaw for the more philosophic Berlin, intending to study under Hegel. But he, as well as the young David Strauss, arrived in Berlin to the sad news of Hegel's sudden death. Unlike Strauss, who left Berlin in disappointment the following year, Cieszkowski stayed at the University of Berlin for the next three years, apparently finding the inheritors of Hegel's philosophy to his liking. In any case, all of his instructors had been the students of Hegel: Karl Michelet,

1. Even McLellan's brief survey is not without errors, e.g., "Hegel had divided world history into three periods," (p. 9), whereas Cieszkowski's argument is based on Hegel's division of history into four periods. William Brazil's otherwise excellent study, *The Young Hegelians* (New Haven, 1970), does not mention Cieszkowski. Others share this silence, including Gustav Mayer and Franz Mehring. However, an unusually fine study of Cieszkowski can be found in Nicholas Lobkowitz, *Theory and Practice* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1967).

2. (Berlin, 1838). A second edition of this work appeared in Posen, 1908. These are the only two editions. All translations are mine and made from the first Berlin edition.

Karl Werder, Heinrich Hotho, Eduard Gans, Leopold Henning, and Johann Erdmann.

Complementing his education with travel, usual at the time, he visited France and England, where he observed, earlier than Engels, the problems of early capitalism. In 1838 he received his doctorate from Heidelberg, not from Berlin as one would expect. However, as Marx's later experience at Jena indicates, receiving a doctorate from a university that one had never attended was not impossible at the time. In that same year, his *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*, written earlier in Paris, was published in Berlin. The following year his *Du crédit et de la circulation* instituted a series of economic studies, *De la pairie et de l'aristocratie moderne* (Paris, 1844), *Zur Verbesserung der Lage der Arbeiter auf dem Ländern* (Berlin, 1845), and *Du crédit agricole mobilier et immobilier* (Paris, 1847). All of these economic studies reflect the influence of Saint-Simon and Fourier, and as early as the *Prolegomena* Cieszkowski lauds Fourier for taking "a significant step" in the direction of infusing "organic truth in reality."³ Cieszkowski's interests went beyond both economics and philosophy to create his most popular work, the *Ojciec-Nasz* (Paris, 1848), the *Our Father*, whose philosophical piety gathered many readers and appeared in several editions and translations. This work, as well as his critique of Michelet's lectures, *Gott und Palingenesie* (Berlin, 1842), resist easy classification, perhaps by reason of what Löwith would term their "Slavonic" character, a syncretic spirit which could join the Hegelian Geist to the Christian Logos by means of a "philosophy of action."⁴

Before his death in Posen, in 1894, Cieszkowski's energies were still unexhausted by a prolific writing career, and had extended into the fields of publishing and politics. In effect, his life mirrored his doctrines, enthusiastically directed to the remodeling of human nature. At eighty, he travelled to Paris in order to attend an electrotechnical congress, a final sign of both his vitality and extensive concerns. In his last years, he was honored by all of Poland's political and literary communities. All in all, it had been a good life, but in retrospect, it appears that his most certain claim to that continued scholarly attention which passes for immortality rests upon the merits of his earliest work, the *Prolegomena*.

While still a student in Berlin, Cieszkowski's intelligence brought him to the attention of both Michelet and his friend, Werder. Michelet — described by Bruno Bauer as "the youngest of the old Hegelians" — became Cieszkowski's lifelong friend, and as early as 1836 both were exchanging letters over the forthcoming *Prolegomena*.⁵ By 1843, their friendship and shared professional

3. *Ibid.*, 146.

4. Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (New York, 1964), 144.

5. Walter Kühne, "Neue Einblicke in Leben und Werke Cieszkowskis," *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven* 6 (1930), 55.

outlook occasioned their founding of the Berlin Philosophic Society, and both edited its journal, *Der Gedanke*. However, it would seem that it was the Dozent Werder who played a central role in communicating Cieszkowski's novel ideas to the Berlin circle of Young Hegelians.

Karl Werder and Bruno Bauer had both been appointed privatdozenten in Theology at the University in 1834. Friendly, and sharing the ever-growing dangers of being a Hegelian during those years, they found some pleasure in like-minded company that gathered at Stehey's conditori.⁶ It was called the "Doktorsklub," and, in 1837, its informal circle accepted a new member, Karl Marx, sponsored by the publicist Adolf Rutenberg.

Marx and Werder shared common interests in both logic and literature. Marx, who was to take Gabler's logic in the summer of 1838, and hoped to write a text on that subject,⁷ would certainly find Werder informative — although knowing what we do of Marx's temperament, he must have felt discomfited by the early appearance of Werder's text in *Logic*. Marx was also interested in poetry, and would later see his poetry appear for the first time in the Berlin Young Hegelian journal *Athenaeum*. Werder's successful playwriting must have attracted Marx, as it later did Engels. In time, Werder's attention was directed almost exclusively to the study of drama, but at the time he would have known Marx his concerns would have been in large measure those shared by all the members of the club — the reasonable disposition of that unstable mixture of theology, philosophy, and politics which comprised the Hegelian estate.

Although Michelet had exchanged letters with Cieszkowski regarding the *Prolegomena*, it was Werder who received the galley proofs for correction. He was impressed enough by what he read to lecture upon Cieszkowski's ideas for a full semester in 1838.⁸ It seems likely that Marx must have been acquainted with these ideas, at least from the introduction of an enthusiastic Werder, if not from a reading of the slim, 157-page work itself. In a letter to Engels, dated January 12, 1882, Marx recalled that he had once met Cieszkowski in Paris, in 1844. He ironically noted that although the Polish count had "bewitched" him he had no desire to read his "sins." However, Marx nowhere refers in his writings to the *Prolegomena*, and although a case has been presented which would prove an indirect influence,⁹ conclusive evidence that would absolutely prove Marx's indebtedness to Cieszkowski is still lacking.

6. One source listing Werder among the members of the club is the unpublished dissertation of Rudolf Hirsch, "Karl Marx und Max Stirner," Munich, 1956.

7. Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1929), I-II, 234. (Letter of Bruno Bauer to Marx, Dec. 11, 1839).

8. Reinhard Lauth, "Einflüsse slawischer Denker auf die Genesis der Marxschen Weltanschauung," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 21 (1955), 414.

9. *Ibid.*, 399-450.

As might be expected, Cieskowski's work came to the attention of Berlin's active Russian colony, which would soon number among its members the novelist Turgenev and his friend Bakunin. Determined to understand Hegelianism, Bakunin arrived in Berlin in the summer of 1840, and enrolled in Werder's course. Impressed by Bakunin's "recklessness," which he found refreshing in comparison to the general stolidity characteristic of his regular students, Werder became friendly with both Bakunin and his Russian circle. The Russian salon of Mme. Varvara was honored by Werder's recitation of the first act of his play, *Columbus*¹⁰ — the same play which led Engels to remark that Werder had "discovered the deep of negation."¹¹ This being so, Werder must have approved of both the recklessness and the negativity expressed by his student Bakunin, who closed an article in Arnold Ruge's journal with the famous comment: "The desire to destroy is a creative desire."¹²

The Russian revolutionary, Alexander Herzen, had met the young Bakunin for the first time in Moscow during the winter of 1839. A few months earlier, Herzen had written an enthusiastic letter to a friend concerning the *Prolegomena*: "I ordered the work, and imagine my joy: on every essential point I was, to an amazing degree, in accord with the author."¹³ Certainly, it seems likely that Herzen discussed Cieszkowski with Bakunin, and so prepared him for his amiable meetings with both Werder and Ruge.

Ruge, whose editorial career intersected with that of Marx in the course of publishing the short lived *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, had earlier published a favorable review of the *Prolegomena* in his *Hallische Jahrbücher*. He must have indicated to Bakunin, as well as Marx, how Cieszkowski's ideas represented an "essential progress"¹⁴ in man's understanding of history.

At least there can be no doubt of the relationship holding between Cieszkowski and Moses Hess. Hess openly admired the contribution made by Cieszkowski to the further development of Hegelianism into an action-oriented program, and declared that only two works existed which forced an awakening from the sleep of theory to the life of practice — his own *Heilige Geschichte der Menschheit* (Stuttgart, 1837) and the *Prolegomena*. Hess must have conveyed his respect for the "geistvolle Cieszkowski"¹⁵ to both Marx and Engels. It is interesting to note that in 1862, more than twenty years after his praise of the *Prolegomena*, Hess solicited and won a corresponding

10. E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* (New York, 1961), 102.

11. Marx-Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1967), Engels Ergänzungsband, 492.

12. *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (1842), 1002.

13. Cited by Alexandre Koyré, *Études sur l'histoire de la pensée philosophique en Russie* (Paris, 1950), 189.

14. *Hallische Jahrbücher* (1839), 475.

15. Hess, *Die europäische Triarchie* (Leipzig, 1841), 5.

membership in the Berlin Philosophic Society. His contributions were published in *Der Gedanke*, the same journal established and edited by Cieszkowski and Michelet.

The *Prolegomena* appeared in 1838, the mid-point in time between the 1815 Congress of Vienna and Bismarck's appointment to the Prussian premiership in 1862. This epoch began with the official institution of Hegel's "Restoration philosophy,"¹⁶ an apparently stable mixture of Prussian patriotism, Christian faith, and philosophic logic. However, the inability of Hegelianism, after the death of its creator, to keep peace between these fickle variables resulted in another "official" philosophy; the safe but vapid romanticism of the later Schelling. Finally, the pessimism of Schopenhauer established itself as the philosophic equivalent of *Realpolitik*. In the words of Löwith: "Schopenhauer's view of the world achieved enormous, though delayed, effect, traceable less to its positive content than to its attitude of alienation from politics and history."¹⁷ In brief, by the end of the century both Hegel and the Hegelians seemed without further issue in any institutionalized world, political, ecclesiastical, or philosophical.

In the year 1838, a decade before the abortive German revolution, the political and philosophic atmosphere was tense and wary, with political hopes resting upon the problematical liberality of the crown prince, and philosophy awaiting the final verdict upon the ultimate worth of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*. Upon becoming King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the former crown prince soon dispelled the fears of Prussian conservatives, and fixed the course of German politics in an authoritarian direction. As to philosophy, the delicate Hegelian truce between revealed religion and reflective philosophy, a compromise situation which had not been known since the time of Aquinas, suddenly collapsed before Strauss's criticism. In a short time, atheistic humanism replaced theistic supernaturalism as the accepted philosophic *Weltanschauung*.

The *Prolegomena* appeared in that moment of philosophic history which immediately preceded the final victory of Strauss's critique over conservative Hegelianism,¹⁸ and in the same year that the publicists Ruge and Echtermeyer established the *Hallische Jahrbücher* "to prepare the way for the Young Hegelian apocalypse."¹⁹

16. Johann E. Erdmann, *A History of Philosophy* (London, 1921), III, 3.

17. Löwith, 119.

18. An example of a conservative Hegelian *fidei defensor* vanquished by Strauss was Bruno Bauer, who, in 1838, was still maintaining the divinity of Christ, having earlier criticized Strauss by proving the philosophical necessity of Jesus. By 1841 he accepted Strauss's judgment that the gospel narratives were purely human documents and became an outspoken atheist.

19. Ruge, *Aus früherer Zeit* (Berlin, 1862-67), IV, 445.

Indeed, it was an auspicious time for the appearance of a work which claims, with uncommon assurance, to have solved the mystery of mankind's future.

In that decade which began with the portentous July revolution, and within its first five years had recorded the deaths of Hegel, Goethe, and Schleiermacher — all departing with small hope for man's future — Cieszkowski's confidence as to the successful outcome of the human enterprise stood in striking contrast to the doubts and complaints of his contemporaries. Immerman's novel of 1835, *Die Epigonen*, gave voice to those contemporary irresolutions:

A desolate tottering and vacillation, an aimlessness and ridiculous pretension of seriousness, a sense of striving — to what goal we do not know — a fear of terrors so ghastly that they have no form— It is as if mankind, buffeted about in its little ship by an overpowering sea, suffers from a moral seasickness whose end is scarcely in sight. . . . We are, to express our affliction in one word, epigones; and we bear the burden which is the heritage of those born too late.²⁰

The first forceful paragraph of the *Prolegomena*, with its secure vision and optimism, could undoubtedly cure that "moral seasickness," or at least its symptoms — which might be all that matters.

Mankind has finally reached a stage of consciousness that can now perceive the laws of its own proper progress and development as the essentially real determinations of God's absolute thought, as the manifestation of objective reason in world history, and not as the monstrous self-delusions of eager spiritualists.²¹

Expressing this confidence in the power of reason to objectify itself in history, Cieszkowski merely reveals his debt to Hegel; but at the same moment that confidence betrays the dark consequences that every "pure" Hegelian must be prepared to accept.

Philosophy, in its highest form, i.e., Hegelianism, prides itself upon being nothing less than the ultimate requiem of culture, of conscious time, of history. The Owl of Minerva, having flown upon the death of Hegel, marked the late twilight of the day in which culture flourished, and that day "cannot be rejuvenated but only understood."²²

In the *Prolegomena* a central theme is introduced which dominates the Young Hegelian movement; Cieszkowski declares "that we have still not reached the end of history,"²³ and he, for one, rejects a Hegelian role which would limit him to merely musing over past events. In his later work, *Gott und Palingenesie*, Hegel's metaphor is developed to Cieszkowski's advantage, with a further Nietzschean suggestion that weakness rather than wisdom accounted

20. Karl Immerman, *Werke*, ed. R. Boxberger (Berlin, n.d.), V, 123. Cited by Brazill, *The Young Hegelians*, 10.

21. *Prolegomena*, 1.

22. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, transl. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1967), 13.

23. *Prolegomena*, 4.

for the pessimism of Hegel: "The Owl of Minerva likes to hide in her dark corner, — but our coming Athena will go forth as an eagle with powerful wings and eyes that can endure sunlight . . . away with the Owl!"²⁴

However, all of the Young Hegelians, in order to be Hegelians and yet not be forced to accept its bitter consequences, sought, if not an outright flaw, then some "incompleteness" which permitted their ideas to act therapeutically upon the fundamentally healthy corpus of Hegelianism. In retrospect, only Stirner and Kierkegaard seemed willing to let the system, in Cieszkowski's words, "either commit suicide or child-murder."²⁵

In Cieszkowski's judgment, Hegel's error was rudimentary. He had failed to apply his dialectic to world history, and instead of the familiar and compelling employment of the triad to the subject, Hegel looked to a quadruple schema for a principle of order. "Hegel divided the whole course of world history until our time into four great epochs, which he designated as the Oriental, Greek, Roman, and Christian-German world."²⁶ Unhappily, this tetrachotomous division is appropriate only to the realm of nature, "where the second moment breaks again into itself and by that act the totality appears as a quadruple reality," and since "world history is not a development of nature," Hegel's historical system is necessarily inadequate. As "the highest process of the Spirit can in no way participate in the fated activity of the external world,"²⁷ the confusion of both makes a science of world history impossible. Only one course is possible, if a science of world history is to be established: to understand history as the manifestation of the triadic dialectic of the Spirit. Because such a science takes full cognizance of the movement of the Spirit, which is not constrained to "the fated activity of the external world," it can take human freedom into account, and freedom opens the door to the future.

The paragraph which follows this criticism of Hegel expresses the fundamental innovation of Cieszkowski: the formation of an intelligible bridge between necessity and freedom — and ultimately from theory to "praxis."²⁸

The totality of world history is fully and absolutely grasped under the speculative trichotomy. However, in order not to damage the freedom of its development, no part of history, such as the past, but rather the totality must be speculatively and organically comprehended. Now the totality of history must include both the past

24. *Gott und Palingenesie*, 21.

25. *Prolegomena*, 6.

26. *Ibid.*, 3.

27. *Ibid.*, 4.

28. The term "praxis" was first employed in the post-Hegelian period by Otto F. Gruppe, a later critic of Bauer, who spoke of "the indeterminate relationship of praxis opposed to theory." This appeared in his 1831 work which criticized Hegel, *Antäus: Ein Briefwechsel über spekulative Philosophie. Überweg Philosophie* dismisses Gruppe too lightly as being merely an exponent of Bacon's empiricism.

and the future, the traversed and yet to be traversed ways, and so arises the first demand upon speculation: to vindicate the essence of the future.²⁹

Hegel, by reason of the “retrospective” cast of his speculations, was silent over the future. Unable to comprehend the organic character of world history, he had naturally “spoken not a syllable over the future in all of his works.”

Now — and Cieszkowski could maintain this after the victory of Strauss’s critique — “if it lies within the power of reason to seize upon the essence of God, of freedom, and of immortality, then why should the essence of the future remain outside of this power?”³⁰ There was, of course, no absolute reason. This knowledge of the essence, but not of the particulars of the future — for it is a speculative knowledge — would be a proper foreknowledge (*praescientia*), and not merely a series of “particular predictions, an auguring of the future (*praesagium*).”³¹

Indeed, the formation of this science of the future is “the real experience of philosophy,” for upon it rests the understanding of *what* mankind can obtain for itself as well as an insight into *how* the “steady [gesetzte] realization” of these human virtualities is to take place.

Having now determined the method as well as “the possibility of knowing the future, we can pass over into reality, i.e., we must indicate how consciousness really comes to appropriate this knowledge for itself.” At this point, the noetic perspective which dominates the work is revealed: “The future can, in the main, be determined by three means: through feeling, through thought, and through the will.”³² These three factors of feeling, thought, and will form the ideological grid upon which is erected a new vision of world history, the new division which replaces the old Hegelian fourfold schema. The replacement, with its rigid reliance upon a trichotomous division, develops a system decidedly more “Hegelian” in appearance than the original. It all brings to mind Bauer’s remark that “the younger these old Hegelians are, the older they seem to be.”³³

As the *Prolegomena* develops its theme, the three factors are seen to be serially revealed and perfected as the three great epochs of that developing organism called world history — the ancient, the Christian-Germanic [or Christian-modern], and the future.

The first epoch of history, the ancient world, had its *modus cognoscendi* in feeling [Gefühl], and was forced to seek its meaning and its future in the equivocal pronouncements of the seer and prophet. This world passed into the

29. *Prolegomena*, 7-8.

30. *Ibid.*, 10.

31. *Ibid.*, 11.

32. *Ibid.*, 15.

33. Bauer, *Hegels Lehre von der Religion und Kunst* (Aalen, 1967), 5.

Christian-Germanic epoch of Cieszkowski, as the prophetic ancient world ended with its fulfillment in the coming of Christ, who realized all prophecies.

As the antithesis of the ancient period, the modern world has embraced abstract thought as its noetic medium. This “second determination” [of *Geist*] is reflective, thoughtful, conscious, necessary; for the most part grasping the generalities of thought, of laws, of essentials, it produces the philosopher of history.”³⁴ Now, to employ a comparison suggested by Cieszkowski, as the Prophet Daniel appeared to signal the doom of the ancient world, so Cieszkowski stands at the close of the second great era, preparing his readers for the advent of the future epoch, a time to fall under the domination of human will.

Heralding the time in which human will assumes ascendancy over that immediate grasp of being given in sensation, and that reflected and mediated reality given to the thinking subject, Cieszkowski’s views apparently echo those of Fichte. But whatever his relationship to Fichte, there is no question that Hegel’s doctrine regarding the will is rejected by Cieszkowski. In this regard he notes that “according to Hegel the will is only a special mode of thought [;] this is a false apprehension.”³⁵ Going beyond a mere rejection of Hegel, Cieszkowski elevates the will to a status transcending even autonomy, and grants it the role of primal mediator of all being, positing the will as the synthetic moment of all noetic acts, as the term of all historical activity. Past history, up to and including the speculative system of Hegel, has manifested two aspects of the dialectical trichotomy, a perceptive thesis — the ancient world — and a reflective antithesis — the Christian-modern world. The present moment is prepared for the synthetic movement of history, the time of willing and doing. In sum, “what perception portended, and wisdom has understood, remains still for the absolute will to realize; and this is in a word the new direction of the future.”³⁶ “Absolute will” is more than the simple practicality of the past, the activity of the ancients in the world, and is to be understood as “post-theoretical Praxis, . . . the true synthesis of the theoretical and the immediately practical, in which *doing* [*Thun*] is above all the true substantial synthesis of being and thinking.”³⁷

Certainly, the distinction between Praxis and the “immediately practical [unmittelbar Praktischen]” “is to be found in Marx’s early writings, particularly in the *Theses on Feuerbach*. Further, Cieszkowski’s notion of a future in which man will become “the conscious director [Werkmeister] of his own freedom”³⁸ seems equally proto-Marxian. In this context it is worth citing

34. *Prolegomena*, 16.

35. *Ibid.*, 120.

36. *Ibid.*, 29.

37. *Ibid.*, 18.

38. *Ibid.*, 20.

Cieszkowski both as to the nature of this promising future as well as the “necessitated passage” of its birth:

To realize the ideas of beauty and truth in practical life . . . to bind together, organically, all of the manifestly one sided and limited elements of the life of humanity and bring it into vital cooperation, finally to realize the idea of absolute good and absolute teleology in our world; this is the great task of the future. But in order to accomplish this task, in order to open the new period . . . another people’s movement [Völkerwanderung] is necessary. . . . The new *Völkerwanderung* must be a reaction against the earlier, and so go forth from civilized people in order to inundate the remaining barbarian races. The first *Völkerwanderung* had carried the raw power of nature victoriously over the still developing strength of the Spirit; but even so this victory served only to regenerate Spirit itself. Now, however, the power of Spirit will move against the power of nature, and the victory of Spirit will serve to regenerate nature. . . . This revenge of the world-spirit, i.e., the second *Völkerwanderung* will be the necessitated passage [unentbehrlicher Übergang] to the third period.³⁹

Messianic Marxism, Polish Millenarianism,⁴⁰ German Cultural Chauvinism⁴¹ — these and perhaps other forms of political spiritualism could find one of their ideological ancestors in Cieszkowski’s development of the *Dritte Periode*.

For the next dozen pages which conclude the first chapter of the *Prolegomena* the “third period” theme is deepened and repeated, with its inevitable realization placed in the hands of a special people in cooperation with “great men,” these latter patterned after Hegel’s “world-historical” individuals.

Alexander Herzen, despite his praise of Cieszkowski’s work, was mistaken as to its title, referring to it as the *Prolegomena zur Historiographie*.⁴² It is a mistake of some importance in that the term “Historiosophie” is a calculated neologism, and Cieszkowski considered its meaning important enough to direct the concluding page of the first chapter to its signification. In brief, as Hegel had elevated what had been mere Philosophy into a Wisdom, *Sophie*, so Cieszkowski will raise Philosophy of History into the Wisdom of History, *Historiosophie*. This new historical wisdom will understand the “speculative development of World History in its organic ideality, just as Hegel has understood the History of Philosophy.

The second chapter, “Categories of World History,” reflects upon the three principal categories of human knowledge, logic, physics, and the pneumatic — this last moment relating to psychology and anthropology — in the light of their concrete interdependence in history. As Hegel had locked the particular

39. *Ibid.*, 29-30.

40. See Lauth, 419, and Jürgen Gebhardt, *Politik und Eschatologie* (Münich, 1963), 130, for references to Cieszkowski’s influence upon Slavic thought.

41. See Möller van der Bruck, *Das dritte Reich*, ed. H. Schwartz (Hamburg, 1931), 67f., on the special mission of Germany to pursue a “third way.”

42. Koyré, 189.

developments of philosophic history into an intelligible scheme, so Cieszkowski attempts the same with the particulars of world history, or at least suggests the lines upon which such an attempt must proceed.

It can be noted that the ordering of the three chapters which comprise the work is tenaciously Hegelian. In this, Cieszkowski is at one with the later members of the Young Hegelian school, such as Feuerbach and Stirner, whose respective works, *The Essence of Christianity* and *The Ego and His Own*, are faithful to the tripartite division even unto the ordering of their subject matter.

The first chapter of the *Prolegomena* developed “the formal side of history as an ideal totality subject to systemization,”⁴³ with this being followed by an antithetical second chapter which considers the “content of history.” On the grounds that world history was the stage in which the “doing” of the Spirit rendered all that was possible actual, the second chapter indicates the interdependency of historic events. In short, as the first chapter discovered the abstract and formal “how” of history, the second is left “to determine the specific ‘what’ of history.”⁴⁴ Not unexpectedly, the synthetic final chapter will concern itself with the “why.”

Of these chapters, it is the short second which is unquestionably the least convincing — if not the least interesting — of all. Here is reason enough to accept Walter Kühne’s judgment upon Cieszkowski’s thought: that it is more of a theosophy than a philosophy.

The lengthy third chapter is introduced by a few lines from Goethe’s *Faust*, concluding with the prescient words, “In the end will be the deed!” This wholly apposite declaration sets the tone for the final “synthetic” chapter, in which the general course of history, now established within a dialectical pattern, is confidently presaged.

Having, in the first chapter, described history in its tripartite expression as ancient, Christian-modern, and the future, and further proceeding to indicate, with full credit to Spinoza, that the particulars of that history are organically related — that “world history is the *sensorium commune* of the universe,”⁴⁵ Cieszkowski is prepared to “finally question regarding the why, i.e., the absolute teleology of world history in general.”⁴⁶

The future, dialectically evolved out of the past two moments of history, reveals a simple goal for mankind: the creation of the universal good. The ancients merely created particulars, the moderns understood the universal, the future will create the universal. The evolution began with man and nature confronting one another in apparent contradiction, and then passed into a

43. *Prolegomena*, 71.

44. *Ibid.*, 45.

45. *Ibid.*, 69.

46. *Ibid.*, 46.

period of their particular coaction which resulted in the creation of the beautiful, the work of art. In this ancient stage, “inwardness [the concept] corresponded to externality [objectivity], but only as the special, as the direct *thisness* [*Dieses*] of being, as particularity.” The second epoch of history witnessed the decline of the artist and the emergence of the philosopher, the ascendancy of truth over beauty, of universality over particularity. This was “the stage of truth, which reversed the correspondence of objectivity to the concept — where objectivity was no longer the receptacle of unification, but rather generality itself; no longer *Dieses*, the thing, etc., but generic reality, essence, the idea.”⁴⁷ In this modern period the mind of man simply reflects objectivity, a truth which finds necessity in itself because it reflects the necessity of nature itself. To employ scholastic terminology, one might say that in the passage from the ancient to the modern world man’s noetic emphasis has changed, granting epistemic priority to logical rather than ontological, created truth.

In sum, in the ancient stage of history the intellect of man informed the world, creating particular works of art. In the second stage, the world informed the intellect, producing general truths. The third, synthetic, stage, will see the creation of nature by man and man by nature, “the highest identification of conception with objectivity,” in which “internality and externality will appear as concrete individuality, in which that individuality is simple self-activity.”⁴⁸

This final salvatory message, predicting an end to the chasm which now separates objectivity from subjectivity, one soon to be bridged by aesthetic praxis, readily brings to mind Marx’s early writings, particularly the *Manuscripts of 1844*. However, discovering solutions to an incomplete Hegelianism which would render the future both intelligible and bearable was a commonplace pursuit of the Young Hegelians. Still, it was only Cieszkowski, followed shortly by Hess,⁴⁹ Marx, and Bakunin, who cast his answer in terms of objective human activity, of praxis, of world creation:

In the future, philosophy must permit itself to decay, to be transformed in principle, for as the poetry of art passed into the prose of thought, so must the philosopher step down from the heights of theory into the field of praxis. Practical philosophy, or more exactly stated, the *Philosophy of Praxis*, which would realistically influence life and social relationships, the development of truth in concrete activity — this is the overriding destiny of philosophy.⁵⁰

47. *Ibid.*, 135.

48. *Ibid.*, 135-136.

49. In Hess’s view, Cieszkowski was the only Young Hegelian with enough intelligence to understand how a “Philosophie der Tat” could be derived from Hegelianism. See Edmund Silberner, *Moses Hess* (Leiden, 1966), 73. It would seem possible, without reflection, to argue further for the inclusion of Ruge and Vatke among those inclined to seek a solution to history in praxis.

50. *Prolegomena*, 129.

This comprehension of world history as the organic yet serial progress of consciousness in relationship to objectivity, the ascent from particular feeling through abstract thought to creative will “is actually the long awaited discovery of the *Philosopher’s Stone*.” At this point Cieszkowski is prepared “to demonstrate the wonders which lie in the power of this stone.”⁵¹ However, before revealing these wonders, Cieszkowski touches upon the specific means which must be taken if they are to be realized in the future. The task is given to philosophy, whose “next fate is to popularize itself . . . it must render its profundities shallow.”⁵² This in order to bring the masses into that state of consciousness necessary for them to embark upon the new *Völkerwanderung*. The methodological character of this *vulgarization* of philosophy was lost upon the Old Hegelians,⁵³ as well as some of the Young Hegelians, such as Bauer and Stirner. Nevertheless, on this matter it would appear that Cieszkowski’s program has been victorious — if Marx’s program is granted: “Philosophy can only be realized by the abolition of the proletariat, and the proletariat can only be abolished by the realization of philosophy.”⁵⁴

Despite the yet unfinished popularization of philosophy, Cieszkowski was assured that the time for the birth of a new world was near at hand, for contemporary revolutionary movements, signs of “fermentation, even putrefaction,” were heady indices that mankind was even then “entering into an epoch of creativity.”⁵⁵

It would also be the epoch of wonders, such as “the true rehabilitation of matter,” in which “sensible appearance will lose its worthlessness” by reason of being infused with creative thought, praxis. This new relationship of man to nature does not mean “a reversion and decline to a life of nature, but a drawing forth and elevation of natural life to our own.” This new naturality will ultimately lift itself “to a yet richer artistic life [Kunstleben].”⁵⁶

Further, the new age will not only see man and nature reconciled, but men acting in concord with one another. Men will lose their egoistic isolation and win altruistic sociality:

Man will exchange his previous abstractness and will *kat’ exochên* to a social individual. The *naked I* will lose its generality and *fix* itself to an existentially complete [concreten verhältnissreichen] person.⁵⁷

Naturally, all present moral relationships, such as the family and civil society, will undergo radical transformations which will rid them of their

51. *Ibid.*, 131.

52. *Idem.*

53. Karl Löwith, *Die hegelische Linke* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1962), 11.

54. Marx, *Early Writings*, transl. and ed. T. B. Bottomore (New York, 1964), 59.

55. *Prolegomena*, 122.

56. *Ibid.*, 144.

57. *Ibid.*, 153.

present “onesidedness and limitations.” And as the past has only known two abstract moral institutions, the Roman legal structure and the Christian Church, the future will bring forth a new “concrete sphere” of morality which will both purge and perfect these earlier forms of ethical life.

Two visions, one concerning the future of the state and the other concerning the future of mankind, conclude Cieszkowski’s speculations and the *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*:

The state will lose its abstract and separate character and will become the bond between mankind and the concrete family of people. The natural state of people will pass into a social state, and the law of the people [Völkerrecht] will perfect itself ever more fully into a moral code of the people [Völkermoral] and a morality of the people [Völkersittlichkeit].

Finally, mankind itself, which even now might not yet consider itself a community, will then gather together into a real and living organism of humanity, which might well be called, in its highest sense, a church.⁵⁸

No one among the Young Hegelians could have expressed the millennial expectations of that early post-Hegelian world better than Cieszkowski.

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58. *Idem.*