

Review Article

August von Cieszkowski, Prolegomena zur Historiosophie. Mit einer Einleitung von Rüdiger Bubner und einem Anhang von Jan Garewicz. Philosophische Bibliothek Band 327. Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1981, pp. xxi, 204.

August Cieszkowski's Prolegomena to Historiosophy (1838), reprinted here in a facsimile form with two essays by a Polish and a West German scholar, marks a milestone in the development of thought from Hegel to Marx. It is the first work to call for the reorientation of Hegelianism from the contemplation of the historical past to the construction of the historical future, from philosophy to politics, from theoria to praxis. Considering the importance and originality of the Prolegomena to Historiosophy one may well wonder why this work has remained relatively unknown for so long. The publication under review here gives us a timely opportunity to suggest an answer to this question by looking, first, at the work itself and, second, at the book's reception.

What is the argument of the Prolegomena to Historiosophy? Essentially, Cieszkowski is arguing that, thanks to Hegel, mankind has finally acquired the possibility of learning the laws of its own history. Unfortunately, however, Hegel himself has not applied to history the dialectical laws he so admirably expounded in his Logic. Instead of dividing history into three dialectically related periods Hegel offers an arbitrary tetrachotomous periodization (Oriental, Greek, Roman, Christian-Germanic). Above all, yielding to prejudice, Hegel deals only with the historical past and refuses to treat the historical future. The task which Cieszkowski undertakes in the Prolegomena is therefore that of applying Hegel against himself. The result is the Prolegomena's triarchic historical periodization consisting of Antiquity, Christianity, and the future third era. Antiquity was characterized by a preponderance of feeling and its greatest accomplishments lay in the sphere of art and beauty. Christianity is dominated by thought and its concern

is with philosophy and wisdom. The future is to be an era of activity which attains its highest achievements in the sphere of social institutions. In other words, spirit expresses itself successively in three different fields (art, philosophy, praxis), through three different faculties (emotion, reason, will) and with three different objects (beauty, knowledge, society).

How does Cieszkowski substantiate this schema? First, he appeals to the formal laws of dialectics. The future is the synthesis of the past (thesis) and present (antithesis). Antiquity was characterized by unreflective immediacy (self-being in itself, sense certainty); Christianity is marked by reflectiveness (self-thinking for itself, consciousness); the future is to be post-reflective (self-acting out of itself, free activity as such). After Antiquity's concentration on that which is and Christianity's emphasis on that which ought to be, man is now prepared to transform the world so that it is as it ought to be. Second, Cieszkowski appeals to the notion of organicism. In an analogy which strongly impressed his contemporaries, Cieszkowski compares himself to the paleontologist Cuvier who was able to reconstruct an entire fossil on the basis of a single tooth. Since history too is a single organic unit progressing according to the laws of organic development as Hegel and reason suggest, therefore the past provides ample clues to the nature of the future. Indeed, if history is to have any rational meaning at all it must heed the laws of organic development so that the experience and knowledge already acquired by mankind may come to fruition in the future.

What, however, is the concrete content of the future era? Here Cieszkowski gives only the broadest indications. He speaks of a Church of humanity as the absolute social institution. He hints at a new religion of mankind, an all-encompassing successor to past aesthetics and present philosophy with international law, morality and ethics as its dogmas. He suggests that the means for creating this Church and this religion lie in his concept of praxis or the deed: conscious activity, aiming at a transformation of social relations and social institutions on

the basis of Hegelian insights and a vision of the totality of history. Most specifically, though without any details, he points to Fourier's system as an imperfect but promising example of the general direction in which mankind is heading.

In the final analysis, however, the Prolegomena to Histori-osophy is only a prolegomenon. It is an outline whose contours must be filled in by an examination of Cieszkowski's entire oeuvre and its context.¹ The two essays in the present volume offer a valuable, though necessarily brief, attempt at such an examination. Bubner's introduction deals primarily with the Prolegomena itself, concentrating on its sources and its relation to German philosophy. Garewicz's piece provides an intellectual and biographical sketch of Cieszkowski with particular attention to the Polish context of his thought as well as a very stimulating interpretation of Cieszkowski's main work, the monumental Our Father. Instead of adding to what these two scholars have written I propose to limit myself in the rest of this review to a consideration of the reception accorded to the Prolegomena by Cieszkowski's contemporaries as well as by recent commentators in order to highlight the contribution of the present volume and I shall try to suggest an agenda for future scholarship on Cieszkowski as it emerges from a reading of this volume.

As Garewicz has argued convincingly elsewhere, the Prolegomena to Historiosophy did not obtain widespread recognition within the Hegelian School in part because of the marginal position of its author.² Cieszkowski was neither German, nor Protestant, nor an academic. As a Polish Catholic aristocrat who had already left Berlin by the time the Prolegomena was published Cieszkowski did not fit easily into any of the factions emerging among the Hegelians in the late 1830s. It should be stressed, however, that it was precisely Cieszkowski's position as an 'outsider' that explains the originality of the Prolegomena. At a time when debates among the Hegelians were taking place entirely within the framework defined by Hegel, Cieszkowski was drawing on French thinkers such as Buchez, Saint Simon and Fourier.³ Indeed, one might well consider the Prolegomena a

first expression of the 'alliance intellectuelle', that synthesis of French social thought and German philosophy which was to be the theme of certain Young Hegelians, most notably Marx, in the 1840s. It was also Cieszkowski's ability to step outside the closed circle of the Hegelian system that explains the influence of the Prolegomena on individuals who were not under Hegel's spell, such as Hess, Quinet, Stankevitch and Herzen.⁴ One must conclude therefore that the principal reason for the Prolegomena's failure to evoke a wider echo in Berlin in 1838 was its untimeliness: at a time when the Young Hegelians were still concerned exclusively with theological questions Cieszkowski was seeking to direct their attention to social and political issues through a reconsideration of Hegel's philosophy of history.⁵ Ironically, Cieszkowski was to make a contribution to the theological debate only in 1842, at a time when the Left Hegelians had abandoned theology in order to pursue the very themes raised in the Prolegomena.⁶

In this century, the Prolegomena to Historiosophy has been 'rediscovered' thanks to interest in the Young Marx. Georg Lukács was the first to reappraise the Prolegomena in this light but his rather cautious conclusions were soon superseded by Auguste Cornu's (and recently Jean Ellenstein's) enthusiastic insistence on the importance of the Prolegomena.⁷

Subsequent discussions of the early Marx by authors such as Avineri, McLellan, Kolakowski, have endorsed Cornu's view though with growing reservations.⁸ These reservations arise from the fact that Marx never mentions the Prolegomena (although Engels does mention it once) and that Marx's only reference to Cieszkowski is a disparaging personal remark.⁹ Nevertheless, interest in the Prolegomena seems to have acquired a certain independent impetus and a number of recent studies by Gebhardt, Stuke, Lobkowitz, Walicki and Stepelevich have examined the Prolegomena in the broader context of nineteenth century thought or the history of philosophy as a whole.¹⁰

What work now remains to be done on Cieszkowski and his Prolegomena to Historiosophy?

First, and most obviously, there is still no critical scholarly, edition of this work. We now have a complete French translation, a partial English version, a lightly annotated Polish translation, and two recent facsimile editions of the German original, including the volume under review.¹¹ This volume has the advantage of being inexpensive and hence accessible to a wider readership but scholars would have been even better served if the publisher had taken this opportunity to put out the definitive edition of the Prolegomena.

Second, it is to be hoped that future scholarship will continue the process, apparent in Bubner's and Garewicz's essays here, of disengaging consideration of the Prolegomena from the question of the Young Marx. Certainly, the Cieszkowski-Marx relation is a key issue but singleminded concentration on this issue has detracted from an appreciation of Cieszkowski, just as concentration on Marx has ultimately done harm to an understanding of Hegelianism by evaluating the importance of various Hegelians only in terms of their proximity to Marx. Bubner's introduction suggests other avenues for research. For instance, a close textual analysis of the Prolegomena might lead scholars to reflect on the connection between Cieszkowski's contention that the future is knowable and his argument that men must create their future through conscious activity or praxis. Obviously, this position has far-reaching implications for an activist theory of knowledge as well as for the problem of free will and historical determinism. On another level, by emphasizing that Cieszkowski's philosophy of the deed was not a strategy for revolution but rather for avoiding revolution, Bubner calls attention to the need for studying the multiplicity of a concept's implications as well as to the importance of considering the alternative, and contradictory, paths of development present in Hegel's heritage.

Third, a reading of this volume and in particular Garewicz's essay brings to the forefront the importance of familiarizing oneself with Cieszkowski's other works, especially his Our Father, both for their own sake and in order to understand fully the Prolegomena. As Garewicz points out, Cieszkowski's

belief, already adumbrated before the publication of the Prolegomena, is that Christianity must be grasped as a historical process whereby man ultimately becomes God. The final statement of this belief, the Our Father, represents a fusion of the most disparate elements - mystic, messianist, rationalist, socialist and Hegelian - in a rich, bold and highly original synthesis which certainly deserves attention. At present, serious study of the Our Father is hindered by the unavailability of the work in translation or even in the Polish original.¹² Perhaps the ultimate merit of the volume under review will be to prod scholars into calling for this lacuna to be filled.

André Liebich
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Notes

1. For materials related particularly to the Prolegomena to Historiosophy and Cieszkowski's other German language works see Walter Kühne, Graf August Cieszkowski, ein Schüler Hegels und des deutschen Geistes: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geisteseinflusses auf die Polen, Veröffentlichungen des Slavischen Instituts an der Friedrich Wilhelm Universität, Berlin, vol. XX (Leipzig, O. Harrassowitz, 1938). For a monographic account of Cieszkowski's life and writings see André Liebich, Between Ideology and Utopia: The Politics and Philosophy of August Cieszkowski, Sovietica XXXIX, (Dordrecht-Boston-London, Reidel, 1979).
2. See Jan Garewicz, 'August Cieszkowski w oczach Niemców w latach trzydziestych i czterdziestych XIX-go wieku', Polskie Spory o Hegla, edited by the Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Warsaw, 1966), pp.205-243.
3. See Andrzej Walicki's seminal article 'Francuskie inspiracje myśli filozoficzno-religijnej August Cieszkowskiego', Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej, XVI (1970), pp.127-171.
4. See: Edmund Silberner, Moses Hess: Geschichte seines Lebens (Leiden, Brill, 1966), pp.68-72; Z. Zaleski, 'Edgar Quinet et Auguste Cieszkowski', Mélanges d'histoire littéraire et générale offerts à Fernand Baldensperger, vol. II (Paris, Champion, 1930), pp.361-374; Dmitry Chyzhevsky 'Hegel in Russland', Hegel bei den Slaven, 2nd ed. (Bad Homburg, Gentner, 1961), pp.210-212; Andrzej Walicki, 'Cieszkowski a Heczen', Polskie Spory o Hegla, pp.153-205.
5. For a fuller statement of this argument see André Liebich, 'Prolégomènes à une théorie de la praxis', Economies et

Sociétés, cahiers de l'I.S.E.A., VIII, 10 (1974), (séries S, no. 17), pp.1487-1506.

6. August Cieszkowski, Gott und Palingenesie: Erster Kritischer Teil. Erstes Kritisches Sendschreiben an den Herrn Professor Michelet auf Veranlassung seiner Vorlesungen über die Persönlichkeit Gottes und die Unsterblichkeit der Seele (Berlin, E.H. Schröder, 1842).
7. Gyorgy Lukács, 'Moses Hess und die Probleme der idealistischen Dialektik', Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung, XII (1926), pp.103-155; Auguste Cornu, Moses Hess et la gauche hégélienne (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1934), pp.45ff. and Karl Marx et Friedrich Engels, vol. I: Les années d'enfance et de jeunesse. La gauche hégélienne, 1818/1820-1844 (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1955), pp.139-142; Jean Ellenstein, Marx: sa vie, son oeuvre (Paris, Fayard, 1981), pp.40-41.
8. Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp.124-131; David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (London, Macmillan, 1969), pp.4-7; Leszek Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, vol. I (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), pp.85-88.
9. See Marx's letter to Engels, 12 January 1882, and Engels' reply to Marx, where he calls the Prolegomena a 'naturphilosophisch-botanisches Buch' (!), Marx-Engels Werke, vol. XXXV (Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1973), pp. 35 and 37.
10. Jurgen Gebhardt, 'Der Übergang von der akademischen Schule zur politischen Bewegung', Politik und Eschatologie: Studien zur Geschichte der Hegelschen Schule in den Jahren 1830-1840, Münchener Studien zur Politik I (Munich, Beck, 1963), pp.130-152; Horst Stuke, 'August Cieszkowski und die Begründung der Philosophie der Tat im absoluten Spiritualismus', Philosophie der Tat: Studien zur 'Verwirklichung der Philosophie' bei den Junghegelianern und den Wahren Sozialisten, Industrielle Welt III (Stuttgart, E. Klett, 1963), pp.83-122; Nicholas Lobkowitz, 'Absolute knowledge and praxis: Cieszkowski', Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx (Notre Dame and London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), pp.193-204; Andrzej Walicki, 'August Cieszkowski's philosophical works of 1838-1842 within the intellectual context of their times', Dialectics and Humanism, III (1975), pp.197-209; Lawrence S. Stepelevich, 'August von Cieszkowski: from Theory to Practice', Theory and Theory, XIII, 1 (1974), pp.39-53. The first work to consider Cieszkowski in this way had already been Karl Löwith's Von Hegel zu Nietzsche: der revolutionäre Bruch im Denken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Zürich, Europa Verlag, 1941).
11. The first facsimile edition: Prolegomena zur Historiosophie (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, Kraus, 1976). The French translation:

Prolégomènes à l'historiosophie (Paris, Editions Champ Libre, 1973). Selected Writings of August Cieszkowski, edited and translated with an introductory essay by André Liebich (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979) contains the first English translation of slightly more than half the work. The more recent Polish translation with notes: Prolegomena do Historiozofii, Bóg i Palingeneza, oraz mniejsze pisma filozoficzne z lat 1838-1842, edited by Jan Garewicz and Andrzej Walicki, (Warsaw, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1972).

12. The last and most complete edition of the Our Father was the second Polish edition: Ojciec Nasz, vols. I-III (Poznan, Fiszer i Majewski, 1922-1923). The rare French translation: Notre Père, vol. I translated by W. Gasztowtt and A. Cieszkowski Jr. (Paris, Société française d'Imprimerie et Librairie, 1906), vol. II-IV translated by Paul Cazin and A. Cieszkowski Jr., (1927-1929). The abridged English translation: The Desire of All Nations, translated by William J. Rose (London, Student Christian Movement, 1919).

Book Reviews

Wilhelm Beyer (ed.), Die Logik des Wissens und das Problem der Erziehung: Nürnberger Hegel-Tage 1981, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1982, pp. 274.

This collection of twenty-four essays comprises the 1981 Nürnberger Hegel-Tage. As the editor, Wilhelm Beyer, points out, the development of Hegel's thought can be classified in terms of the cities in which he lived. The relatively long period he spent in Nürnberg is certainly significant in these terms. When Niethammer was in charge of the educational system in the new government of Bavaria he offered his protégé the post of Professor of Philosophy and Rector of the Gymnasium in Nürnberg in 1808. He was to remain until 1816 in that post. This was a very productive period for Hegel, notably since he wrote and published the Science of Logic. One of the interesting aspects of this period which is less well-known in this country is Hegel's practical position as a school teacher and the development of his thought as an educator. There has always been a lot of interest in how a thinker of Hegel's style was able to adapt to the frequently prosaic details of the pedagogical and political roles in which he thus inevitably found himself. The essays in this collection are divided between those which largely deal with the Science of Logic and those on his educational writings. I have chosen to concentrate upon the latter since they may well be of more interest and novelty than the former to a British audience.

Wilhelm Beyer, in his masterly introduction to Hegel's work in the Nürnberg period, very sensibly points out that the