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POLISH ROMANTIC MESSIANISM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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The aim of this paper is to present and explain in a historical and comparative perspective an interesting and curious phenomenon of Polish thought: the Romantic Messianism of the three prophetic poets—Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), Juliusz Słowacki (1809–49) and Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–59). For the sake of brevity I shall not try to show the evolution of their thinking; instead, I shall limit myself to a discussion of the most mature, fullfledged forms of their Messianism, such as: Mickiewicz's Paris lectures on Slavonic Literature (especially the last two courses published under the titles *L'Église officielle et le messianisme* and *L'Église et le Messie*, 1845), the mystic works of Słowacki, Krasiński's poem *The Dawn* and his *Treatise on Trinity* or *On the position of Poland for Divine and Human Reasons*. All these works originated in the first half of the 1840's.

First of all, I should define what I mean by "Messianism". In the Polish literature on the subject there existed a widespread tendency to use this term in a very broad sense, that is to apply it to everybody who believed in an important mission of the Poles in defending the West against the Russian barbarians and spreading the light of Latin civilization in the Slavonic East. In this sense each Polish emigré in France was in some degree a "Messianist". Moreover: in this particular sense there were by then many non-Polish sympathizers of Polish Messianism, especially among the European Left. Karl Marx, for instance, fully shared the opinion that Poles were, as he put it: "the 20 millions of heroes" fighting with the reactionary Holy Alliance and defending Europe from the Asiatic despotism of tsarist Russia¹.

It is evident, however, that a belief in a special, important mission of a given nation is not tantamount to Messianism. More justified is to apply the term "Messianism" only to such thinkers who claim that the mission of their nation is not only important in the international division of historical tasks, but more than that—that is a unique, incomparable, *messianic* mission, bringing about the *universal* salvation of mankind. In this sense Mickiewicz's friend and colleague in the Collège de France, Jules Michelet, who spoke with fervour about the "saint bayonets" of the French army, was certainly an ardent prophet of the French *national* Messianism.

The three Polish prophetic poets were *also* national Messianists (although it should be noticed that Mickiewicz's Messianism of the 1840's was not exclusively Polish, but rather Franco-Slavonic). However, their romantic Messianism was not *merely national*; they were also, and first of all, *religious* Messianists, i.e. Messianists in the narrow

1) Quoted from: K. Marx, F. Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe*. Ed. by P. W. Blackstock and B. F. Hoselitz, Glencoe, Illinois 1952, p. 108.

and *proper* sense of this term. Their Messianism was a soteriological and eschatological conception, historical and metahistorical at the same time, closely bound up with millenarianism—i.e. with the religious belief in an imminent, collective and terrestrial salvation, accomplished with the aid of supernatural divine agencies. By the way, this was precisely the reason why the Polish Messianists were in fact less nationalistic than Michelet. *National* aims were subordinated by them to the universal, *religious* aims. Towiański, the Lithuanian prophet, who at the beginning of the 1840's exerted a considerable influence on Mickiewicz and Słowacki, violently *condemned* any striving for national independence *as such*, for its own sake. He repeated: "Let the Emigration feel in their souls that thinking of a terrestrial fatherland incompatible with God's will is a crime, and that we are scoundrels if we desire that."²⁾ It was deeply felt that national existence is not an end in itself, that Poland had to prove that its restoration was necessary for mankind. Mickiewicz was able to say: "Poland must inchoate a new (better) world, otherwise it makes no sense to struggle for its restoration."³⁾

Hans Kohn in his book on Panslavism expresses the opinion that "the Polish messianists resembled most closely the Russian Slavophiles of the same period."⁴⁾ One may agree with Kohn that "both ideologies burned with a similar religious fervor put into service of nationalist exaltation." There was, however, a great difference, completely overlooked by Kohn: the Slavophiles were guardians of the purity of the Orthodox Christian faith, while Messianism was a religious heresy of a chiliastic type. Such notions as "religious progress", "the new revelation", "the religion of the Holy Ghost", were completely alien to the Slavophile thought. Messianism was a prophecy turned towards future—although this future could be interpreted as a vindication of some values of the past. The Slavophiles were the prophets of the past, harking back to the past which had been lost and trying to build upon the relics of this past which were still living in some traditions of Russian peasantry and in the Orthodox Church. They created a kind of a "conservative utopia", and not a "chiliastic utopia", as it was in the case of the Polish Messianist.⁵⁾

Much closer to the spirit of the Polish Messianism—especially the Messianism of Mickiewicz—were in fact the ideas of Mazzini (who was, by the way, an admirer of Mickiewicz's genius and even called him "the first poet of the age"). Mazzini's ardent belief in the unifying mission of the "third Rome" was bound up with the firm conviction that nations, although "sacred and divinely constituted," are never ends in themselves, that egoistic principle of non-intervention—the principle of "chacun chez soi, chacun pour soi", so much despised by Mickiewicz—should be rejected in the name of a Holy Alliance of Peoples. Like the Polish romantics, he condemned rationalism, utilitarianism and hedonism of the Enlightenment, replaced the individualistic ethos of

2) *Współudział Adama Mickiewicza w sprawie Andrzeja Towiańskiego*, Paris 1877. II, p. 30.

3) A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, XVI, Warsaw 1933, p. 341.

4) H. Kohn, *Panslavism. Its History and Ideology*. Notre Dame, Indiana 1953, p. 31.

5) See my article "The Paris Lectures of Mickiewicz and Russian Slavophilism", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, XLVI, Jan. 1968.

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the 18th century "declarations of rights" with the ethos of supreme duties, extolling the spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice. His Messianism was not merely national, but religious as well—he deeply felt that "every true revolution is essentially religious", that "only faith, Authoritative Truth, can regenerate the peoples"⁶⁾ and that historical Christianity—the "second Rome"—must give way to a new religion of earthly collective salvation—a religion of the "third Rome" which will transform the earthy life into a true image of the Kingdom of God and liquidate the painful dualism between the sacred and the profane. On the other hand, however, one has to admit that, in comparison with Mickiewicz, Mazzini's "religion" seems to be rather a *quasi*-religion—a *secularized* religion, devoid of a supranatural element, lacking the authentic irreducible experience of "the sacred". Thus we can say that—from the point of view of the ideal model of Messianism—Mazzini was a more genuine Messianist than Michelet, but a less genuine Messianist than the Polish poet.

Polish romantic Messianism was a product of the national catastrophe of 1831—of the defeat in the insurrection against Russia and of the political emigration that followed. We may define it in more general terms as a hope born out of despair; as an expression of an increased feeling of self-importance combined with a sense of enforced rootlessness and isolation in an alien world (emigration); as an ardent search for religious consolation combined with a bitter sense of having been let down by the traditional religious authority. (I mean the condemnation of the Polish insurrection by the Pope.) These usual explanations for millenarianism can, and indeed should, be applied to Polish Messianism too; it would even to some extent be correct to interpret the circle of Towiański, in which Mickiewicz had been active, as a genuinely millenarian religious group. Yet the Messianism of Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński was not a *direct* continuation of archaic religious millenarianism—it was part and parcel of the culture of nineteenth-century European romanticism, and represented a peculiar recrudescence of millenarian tendencies within a secularized cultural and political setting, in which modern nationalism was being formed. I think that the European significance of Polish Messianism lies in the fact that the millenarian or quasi-millenarian tendencies inherent in XIX-century social thought were in it most distinctly expressed, attaining the closest approximation to their religious prototype.

Among the factors to which Polish Messianism owed its existence, an important part was played by cultural contact with France. The Polish exiles reached France at a time when French social utopianism was at its peak and when a religious regeneration of mankind was believed to be round the corner. Such a climate of thought was very favourable to millennial dreams, and it is understandable that messianic and millenarian motifs are to be found in the writings of many French thinkers of that time. They were never as pronounced as in the case of Polish thinkers but, nevertheless, some of the principal ideas of Polish Messianism were in fact Polish reinterpretations of similar ideas in French thought. This applies, particularly, to the idea of

6) See J. Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*. London-Toronto-New York 1915. p. 146 and 314.

expiation—of the purifying, redemptive force of suffering, and to the idea of the “new revelation” which would bring about the Christianization of social life and the rule of moral principles in international relations.

The idea of expiation was used by French religious thinkers to explain and justify the French revolution. For the great reactionary, Joseph de Maistre, the revolution was a terrible national catastrophe—a catastrophe nevertheless, for which justification had to be found, if belief in the rule of Divine Providence in history was to be maintained; following Saint Martin he accordingly interpreted Revolution in terms of a mystical blood sacrifice, of purification and salvation through the shedding of blood. These ideas of Saint Martin and de Maistre were reinterpreted by Ballanche who tried to combine them with the idea of progress: he saw in history a series of ordeals (épreuves) and interpreted progress as perfection through suffering, as a process of collective expiation and rehabilitation of fallen man. This kind of theodicy was a great value for the Poles—it enabled them to explain the national catastrophe of Poland and made them believe that her sufferings were not in vain, since, like the sufferings of Christ, they served as a purifying force for the general redemption and regeneration of mankind.

The second idea—the idea of a “new revelation”, of a “new explosion of Christianity”—was also held by de Maistre⁷⁾. The victory of the revolution had meant for him the total destruction of all he held sacred and it was precisely this that led him to believe in the need for supranatural aid for fallen humanity, in a “nouvelle éffusion de l'Esprit”. The situation of the Polish exiles was in this respect very similar. With the defeat of their insurrection they had lost everything, and this led them to the intense and desperate belief that the existing state of affairs could not last long, that a radical and sudden change was imminent and that the period of the greatest disasters was only a prologue to the Kingdom of God.

The motif of a “new revelation”, of a “*Révélation de la Révélation*”, was to be found also in the writings of French utopian socialists, especially of the Saint-Simonians (who quoted and commented on the relevant passages from de Maistre⁸⁾), and of Fourier. The message of this “new Revelation” was conceived as the final solution of the “social question” and as the Christianization of political life. The revelation of Christ, it was argued, was confined to the sphere of *private* life, whereas the new revelation would bring about the Christianization of *social* and *political* relationships; this idea was formulated not only by Saint-Simon but also, strangely enough, by de Maistre, who had expressed the hope that the “société des individus” would be elevated to the “société des nations”. For Polish Messianism this conception was of paramount importance. It was probably the source of the parallel between the crucifixion of Christ and the sufferings of Poland: as the sacrifice of an individual man—Jesus of Nazareth—had been necessary for the redemption of individual souls, so the sacrifice of

7) Cf. *Nouveau Christianisme. Lettres d'Eugène Rodrigues sur la religion et la politique*. Paris 1832, p. 164, 170–175.

8) Z. Krasiński, *Pisma*. Kraków-Warszawa 1912, VII, s. 71.

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a whole nation—Poland—was believed to be a precondition for the *social* and *political* terrestrial salvation of mankind.

In interpreting all these ideas we must remember that for the Polish Messianists nations were not empirically existing ethnic communities but “associations of kindred individual spirits”, realising a common task in the universal progress. This idea, to be properly understood, has to be related to the conception of progressive reincarnation, to be found in the mystical doctrine of Towiański. It is worthwhile to add that the belief in progressive reincarnation was also very characteristic of such French thinkers as Fourier and Saint-Simonians (who took it over from Lessing), Pierre Leroux and Ballanche (who transformed it into a theory of “social palingénesis”). The importance of the romantic rediscovery of this ancient belief consisted in the fact that it enabled to reconcile the millenarian idea of a collective salvation with romantic individualism, claiming immortality for the individual. —The future Kingdom of God on earth was thus made open for each individual spirit, who through the long chain of his incarnations had achieved the highest level of perfection.

The idea of progressive reincarnation had also far reaching consequences to the romantic conception of the nation. It prevented an absolutization of nations by subordinating them in the hierarchy of values to the supreme cause of individual spiritual perfection and, equally strong, to the idea of mankind as—to quote Krasiński—“the common labour of all the human individual spirits”. For Mickiewicz nation was nothing else than “a set of aids given to man to help him to apply the truth which had been revealed to him by God.”⁹⁾ By force of this argument nation was given a religious sanction but, on the other hand, it came to be conceived as a means, and not as an end in itself.

Let us now examine—as briefly as possible—the main ideas of the three Polish Messianists. Philosophically speaking, their general vision of the world may be classified as a “spiritualistic universal perfectionism” combined with romantic irrationalism and hero-worship. It was based on a belief in a hierarchy of spirits formed as a result of their inner labour in their present and former incarnations. Let us begin with a brief presentation of Mickiewicz’s views.

“The most developed spirit—wrote Mickiewicz—has a natural duty to lead the less developed ones. This is the chief dogma of Messianism.”¹⁰⁾ The great heroes “whom the amazed masses immediately recognize as their legitimate rulers”¹¹⁾ were seen by Mickiewicz as “intuition incarnate,” as an embodiment of antirationalism; progress, which was accomplished through them, was conceived not as a progress of reason but as a sequence of sudden upward surges, of inspired lungings, which break the chains of all “established forms”—both rational and traditional forms. This irrationalist progressivism was elevated above the usual, conservative-romantic antithesis of “reason” and “tradition”; this antithesis was replaced by that of “spirit” and

9) A. Mickiewicz, *Les Slaves. Cours professé au Collège de France*, Paris 1914, p. 204.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 10.

11) *Ibid.*, p. 22.

"routine," in which the spirit—this "eternal revolutionary," as Słowacki put it—was opposed both to rational doctrines and to ossified traditionalism. Tradition, of course, was much closer to the poet's heart than reason—after all, traditions stem from divine revelations and are the instruments of the spirit. But "living" tradition, the tradition of the spirit, should be distinguished from traditional routine. Mickiewicz criticized the Catholic traditionalism of Chateaubriand from this point of view, saying that the "spirit" should not be identified with any of its historically established forms.

The man, whose spirit has been intensely working and who has raised himself to the highest level, throws open "the channel to heaven" through which the divine revelation streams forth from above and rains down on mankind. Such a *revelator* is, thus, not a passive and accidental instrument of God; he is the elect because of his own "spiritual labour" and "spiritual sacrifice"—because he has been the most active and because he has put aside "his own cause, his individuality, his ego."¹² The fundamental, Christian, universal human revelation—The Word—has exploded twice in the history of mankind: its first explosion was the "primitive revelation", the second—the revelation of Christ. The revelation of Christ, however, is not the final one: there are many signs that a new religious climax is imminent. In the coming epoch Christian morality will extend its rule over the sphere of politics; the nations will recognize in each other members of humanity and put an end to political crimes which have achieved their culmination in the martyrdom of Poland. But the victory of love must be preceded by a catastrophic period of revolutionary wars. The new Messiah, so ardently invoked by the Poles, will be "not a Christ before Pilate, but a Christ risen, Christ transfigured, armed with all the attributes of power, Christ the *Avenger* and *Redresser*, Christ of the Apocalypse and of Michelangelo."¹³ He will be the new and higher incarnation of the spirit of Napoleon—the greatest genius of war, who possessed the compelling, magic power of command.

Though Mickiewicz's Messianism was born of the national tragedy of the Poles, it also reflected the widespread feeling of a general European crisis. One of the main symptoms of this crisis was seen by the poet in rationalism—in knowledge divorced from morality, in the loss of the "gifts of the Holy Ghost", in the replacement of "living" and "total" truths by "dead" and "partial" truths, accessible to all and morally indifferent. The nations of Western Europe (apart from France), he felt, had exhausted their vitality. They had lost their enthusiasm and the feeling of veneration. After the great God-inspired law-givers had come legitimists and lawyers; "spiritual power" has been replaced by parliamentary discussion, bearing witness to a lack of inner strength; the bureaucratized Church had ceased to have contact with Heaven. After the apostles and miracle-workers had come the theologians and casuists; after the great warriors had come the people who proclaimed the doctrine of peace and non-intervention. "Such a generation is always a sign of the decline of the human spirit. In this manner the Greek world came to its end, and the Western world is now

12) A. Mickiewicz, *Dzięła*. Warszawa 1955. X, p. 409-410.

13) A. Mickiewicz, *Les Slaves*, p. 349.

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declining."¹⁴⁾

Mickiewicz's protest against the rationalization of social life was paralleled to some extent, by the ideas of the Russian Slavophiles and of the German conservative romantics—especially those of Franz von Baader, Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller whom he often quoted in his lectures. His ideals were often backward-looking—hence the possibility of significant similarities between some of his ideas and the conservative-romantic criticism of modern bourgeois civilization. But the scope of these similarities is a restricted one. Conservative romanticism was not compatible with the cult of revolutionary France, nor with the cult of Napoleon. It was characteristic of the German romantics to turn from Protestantism to the Catholic Church, in which they saw the oldest and the best institutionalized Christian tradition; in contrast with this, Mickiewicz proclaimed the coming of a "new revelation" and violently attacked the official Catholic Church. He agreed with the conservative romantics in his criticism of the French Convention, which he accused of dependence on secularized autonomous reason, but he parted with them when he recognized that there was in the Jacobins "a spark of the true Christian spirit," and when he adumbrated the following idea of man:

"This man will have the zeal of the apostles, the devotion of the martyrs, the simplicity of the monks, the audacity of the men of 1793, the firm unshakeable and overwhelming valour of the soldiers of the Grande Armée, and the genius of their leader."¹⁵⁾

The role of chosen instruments of universal regeneration was allotted by the poet to two peoples: to the Slavs and to the French. The first are a virgin people, uninfected by rationalism, unspoiled by industrialization, unburdened by a great historic past; the second—the French—are the people of action, a people which as a result of its unceasing "spiritual labour" has accumulated the greatest reserve of the "holy fire" while, at the same time, retaining its barbarian freshness. Leadership among the Slavs will fall to Poland—the most faithful ally of France, the nation which has suffered the most (like Christ) and at the same time, has embraced the militant spirit of Napoleon. This Franco-Slavonic orientation was a great step forward in comparison with Mickiewicz's Messianism of the thirties—it signified an awareness of the inseparability of the Polish cause from the cause of European revolution. "Polish Messianism," proclaimed Mickiewicz, "must not remain outside the European movement, must not be independent of France (...) the whole power of the future is in France and nowhere other than in France."¹⁶⁾ Thus, from a *political* point of view, Mickiewicz's Messianism was tantamount to the idea of an alliance between the two revolutionary nations of Europe—the French and the Poles, and of bringing into the revolutionary movement the oppressed Slavonic nations.

For Mickiewicz, heroworship—the idea of charismatic leadership—was also a peculiar solution of the problems arising from the experience of the insurrection of 1830

14) *Ibid.*, p. 234.

15) *Ibid.*, p. 337.

16) A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieta*, X, p. 422-423.

on one hand, and from the romantic interpretation of Polish history, on the other. On the one hand, Mickiewicz fully shared the prevailing feeling that the insurrection had been defeated because of the lack of strong and able personal leadership; on the other hand, he idealised the ancient Polish "republicanism" and disagreed with the thinkers of the Polish Enlightenment and their contemporary followers, who claimed that Poland had fallen because of the lack of hereditary monarchy of the western type. The idea of charismatic authority enabled him to recognize the need for the strongest leadership without making any concessions to rationalist, Enlightenment-inspired criticism of the Polish "anarchy". Strong leadership, Mickiewicz argues, does not consist in dynastic principle, enlightened absolutism or "majority rule" in the Diet. The ancient Poles, like other Slavonic nations, lacked great divinely inspired leaders: *this* was their misfortune, but they were *right* in rejecting the doctrines of the West. They were right in striving for a society based entirely and exclusively upon enthusiasm and exaltation.

Juliusz Słowacki, who called himself "a republican from the spirit", carried the Messianic idealisation of Poland's past still further. From his point of view the famous *liberum veto* was a precious device, by means of which the true spiritual hierarchy was able to defend itself against the false, artificial, material hierarchy. In a sharp contrast to the Western bourgeois republicanism, in the ancient Polish republic the inferior spirits, although they constituted, of course, a majority, could not hold sway over the superior ones, but, quite on the contrary, the superior spirits were secured the right of opposing the will of the majority with their *liberum veto*. It is evident that this kind of idealization of the veto, and, consequently, of the principle of unanimity as opposed to the principle of majority, had very little in common with the views of the Russian Slavophiles, who also held the "principle of unanimity" to be an inalienable part of the Slavonic ideal of society. The Slavophiles had set the Slavonic unanimity against individualism and social atomism of the West; they interpreted this principle as a recognition that the individual should accept his moral dependence on the community by giving up his separate views in the name of unity and concord. Słowacki's position was, of course, on the other extreme. For him, the principle of unanimity was, first of all, a recognition of the *liberum veto*, that is, as he saw it, of the special privilege of the superior spirits to disagree with the mechanical majority, to rise above existing traditions and laws and to destroy them for the sake of spiritual progress. In opposition to Lelewel and other Polish democrats, who saw the ancient Polish republic as a prototype of modern democracy, Słowacki glorified the ancient Poland from an entirely different point of view: as a society most favourable for the spiritual elite, least resistant to legitimate rights of spiritual superiority.

Słowacki's philosophy of history was, first of all, an apotheosis of the revolutionary deeds of great inspired heroes, the Kings-spirits, whom he saw as the cruel instruments of universal progress. The poet believed that the laws of progress *must* be cruel, because suffering and oppression are the most effective means of mastering the energy of spirit. He agreed with Saint-Martin that the way to Salvation leads through sacrifice, through the shedding of blood. It was only through the ordeals, through the formidable

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sufferings, which hardened and strengthened the Polish spirit, that the Polish nation, allegedly surpassed others in heroism and holiness and assumed the "papacy of spirit". Now the Poles are the New Izrael, the King-Spirits among the nations, fighting for the New Jerusalem. In order not to relent from fulfilling its mission, the revolutionary heroism of the Polish nation should never abate, even at the cost of suffering and defeats, which might ensue as the result of heroic actions.

I should add that Słowacki's Messianism was exclusively Polish; unlike Mickiewicz, he despised the French and indignantly refused any partnership with them (let alone their leadership).

The third prophetic poet, Zygmunt Krasiński, was an aristocratic conservative and did not share Mickiewicz's and Słowacki's enthusiasm for the revolution. He idealised Poland's past in a rather conventional manner. He glorified the religious piety of the ancient Polish nobility along with their tolerance and love of freedom, emphasized dignity and knightly generosity of the nation which, abhorring pillage, spread through voluntary unions. The most significant, however, was his development of the parallel between Poland and Christ. Christ was the incarnation, the archetype, of the idea of inviolability and immortality of individual person, while Poland was the archetype of the idea of inviolability of nation (i.e. a historically developed and understructible association of spirits). The martyrdom of Poland is of the same significance to nations as Christ's martyrdom to individuals. Christ's crucifixion was followed by his resurrection and ascension, tantamount to opening the door to Heaven to individual spirits; the political death of Poland will equally be followed by her resurrection, tantamount to the collective salvation of all the nations in the Kingdom of God on earth. However, this earthly Millennium was not seen by the poet as the final end of the progressive movement; having passed through this, i.e. having finished their earthy history, the created spirits will become angels and their further progress towards God will be undisturbed by death.

It seems interesting to see how Krasiński transformed the Messianic idea of the "hierarchy of spirits". The "superior spirits" came to be identified with aristocracy as a social class, while progressivism furnished, by a way of paradox, an argument for traditionalism. The argumentation was as follows: the most perfect is always that, which had a chance of the longest historical perfecting; the existing social inequality is the result of the inequality of merits attained in previous incarnations. In this way Mickiewicz's "superior spirits", endowed with the capacity of transferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the people, became identified with the social aristocracy. Thus the dividing line easily fits the classic typology of Max Weber: on the one hand a non-institutional individual charisma glorified by Mickiewicz and Słowacki, on the other hand a "routinized", inherited charisma professed by Krasiński—in this respect a typical conservative.

Like Słowacki, Krasiński was indebted in his philosophical conceptions to some French thinkers—especially to Pierre Leroux, whose religious philosophy of history was based upon the idea of progressive reincarnation and to the philosophical naturalist

Boucher de Perthes who developed the idea of an "extramundane progress". However, in contradistinction to Mickiewicz and Słowacki, Krasiński was also a disciple of the German speculative idealists. Of course, he *had* to oppose Hegelianism: not only because of its rationalism, but also, and first of all, because Hegel saw the historical development as already accomplished in the "absolute religion" (i.e. historical Christianity) and in his own "absolute philosophy", thus leaving no room for messianic speculations about the future. The most messianic among the German philosophers was Schelling in the last phase of his development, i.e. in his "philosophy of the revelation". No wonder that his philosophy of the Trinity together with his chiliastic vision of the coming Church of Saint John and the earthly Kingdom of the Holy Ghost exerted a deep influence on Krasiński's thought. (By the way, also Mickiewicz in his Paris lectures praised the old Schelling as the only German philosopher whose spirit was congenial with the Polish Messianism).

In connection with Krasiński, it is necessary to mention also August Cieszkowski, Krasiński's friend and spiritual master. His *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (1838) were an attempt to transform Hegelian philosophy of history by transferring the final fulfilment from the present to the future, thus making it possible to use Hegelianism as a philosophical justification of messianic prophecy. In his opus magnum, called *Our Father*—a philosophical interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, Cieszkowski made the next and decisive step in the direction of Messianism: he professed that the soteriological mission of Christ had not ended and will be accomplished only when the petitions contained in the Lord's Prayer will be fulfilled, when the mundane life, scorned by the official Church, will attain deification and Ascension. Nevertheless, his Messianism was quite specific: more philosophical and rational, and at the same time somewhat tame, devoid of fervour and dramatism, harmonized with the liberal conception of evolutionary progress. In fact, it provided no place for *national* Messianism—for Cieszkowski Christ was the only Messiah, though (in opposition to the official interpretation of the Church) he divided Christ's mission into two consecutive stages, of which the second and the final one, the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth, was to find fulfilment in historical future. He saw the Millennium as the Kingdom of free nations united into "organic Mankind" and predicted that the spiritual unification of Mankind would be preceded by its physical unification achieved through the development of the means of communication and conveyance. He also foresaw that the development of war-waging techniques "will bring war to its ultimate culmination, and will thereby eliminate it by making it too dangerous for all and too destructive". In order to secure the rule of ethics in political relations he postulated to call into being three supra-national institutions that would guard peace based on justice: Central Government of Mankind, Universal International Tribunal and Universal Council of Nations.

In the revolutionary years 1848–49 the Polish Messianists parted their ways. For Krasiński the Springtime of Peoples was the work of infernal forces, the apocalyptic catastrophe, the temporary triumph of evil, which had to precede the final triumph of Good; he was deeply hurt by the fact that Cieszkowski, elected in 1848 to the Prussian

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Diet, associated himself with the liberal Left. Słowacki, of course, welcomed the revolution and tried to take part in the national insurrection in Posnania, but he soon died of tuberculosis, until the end of his days enthusiastically believing in the imminent universal regeneration. The most active and the most tragic was Mickiewicz: the organizer and ideological leader of the Legion of Poles, who fought for the freedom of Italy, and the co-editor of the international journal *La Tribune des Peuples*. In the spring 1848 he demanded a papal blessing for his legion and proclaimed, in the presence of the Pope, that the Holy Ghost dwelt under the blouses of the revolutionary workers of Paris. In the next year he preached in *La Tribune des Peuples* his belief in the revolutionary mission of France and even espoused the cause of socialism, trying to combine it with the Napoleonic idea and with the Messianic prophecy of a "new Revelation". At the same time he supported, for the sake of the "Napoleonic idea", the President of the French Republic, Louis Napoleon. The irony of history, however, proved to be bitter indeed: Mickiewicz's Legion chose to defend Republican Rome against pro-papal French troops sent to Italy by Louis Napoleon, and soon after (under pressure from the Russian Embassy) the French government forced the poet to withdraw from political activities.

For Mickiewicz the Italian Legion and *La Tribune des Peuples* were a direct consequence of his Messianism. There, the romantic belief in the brotherhood of nations, in the essential identity of their struggle, in the power of spirit which would secure the victory of the justice, reached the point of culmination. Mickiewicz could not adopt the way of thinking whereby the Polish blood was considered to belong to the Poles only and thus ought to be shed solely for the Polish cause. He professed the struggle for freedom to be indivisible and declared that "the fatherland of the Poles lives and is active wherever pulsate the faithful hearts of her sons".¹⁷⁾

The events of 1848-9 strongly shook that belief. They uncovered the brutal fact that nations are driven not by ideals, but by mere interests, that they violently antagonize one another and that sheer force and not the right cause is victorious in the conflicts. This resulted in a terrible shock for the generation of Polish romantics. Even quite sober, clear-headed people were absolutely startled and morally crushed when the liberal Frankfurt Parliament hesitated to condemn the partitions of Poland, and refused to recognize the autonomous rights of Posnania. A German liberal, Wilhelm Jordan, frankly stated that the resolutions concerning the Polish question were adopted in Frankfurt "with healthy national egoism without which no people can grow into a nation".¹⁸⁾

Thus, the events of the Springtime of Nations, marked, on the one hand, the culmination of the romantic ideology of the brotherhood of nations, with Polish Messianism as one of its extreme expressions, and the breakdown of this ideology, on the other. This breakdown was the starting point of the development of *modern* nationalism—an ideology consciously cultivating national egoism, strictly separating politics and

17) *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 36.

18) Quoted from E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*. London 1960, p. 114.

ethics and professing the severe laws of the struggle for survival to reign supreme in the sphere of international relations.

Nationalistic ideology—in this sense—appeared in Poland much later than in Germany or Russia. Characteristically enough, Roman Dmowski, one of its authors, was of the opinion that the main obstacle on the way of the modern Polish nationalism was the romantic tradition, more persistent in Poland than anywhere else. He wrote: “In no other country was the political heritage of the first half of the 19th century so marked as in Poland. It involved a belief in justice ruling the relations between nations, in the success of impartial European opinion in claiming one’s due right, and a conviction that historical events can be defined as “crimes” or “wrong-doings”. Added to this was a trust in the final victory of the right cause, a refusal to reckon with the actual distribution of power and a failure to understand that the turn of each cause depends first of all on material forces.

This attitude of building political prospects on purely illusory grounds has been called <political romanticism>. Hence, it was natural that in specifying the tasks of his own party, Dmowski shifted to the foreground the necessity of “eradicating the vestiges of political romanticism” and replacing it with the idea that “pursuing its own interests is the primary duty of the nation”, that “the only principle of the international relations is that of strength and weakness, never that of being morally right or wrong.”¹⁹⁾

It goes without saying that the modern Polish nationalists were not the only opponents of the Romantic Messianism. The Messianism of the prophetic poets was strongly opposed, sometimes even ridiculed, by the prevailing majority of their contemporaries, who also believed in Poland’s mission and in the brotherhood of nations, but in a more sober way, without any admixture of religious Messianism and mysticism. Later, the defeat of the insurrection of 1863 gave rise to the predominance of the ideology of the so-called “organic labour”, based upon the positivist philosophy and violently rejecting the romantic traditions. From the point of view of the positivist scholars, whose influence is still strongly felt in Poland, Messianism was either a poetic licence, or—if taken seriously—a purely pathological phenomenon, something embarrassing, if not shameful.

Still later, at the beginning of the XX century, the phraseology of romantic heroism was adopted by the Revolutionary Faction of the Polish Socialist Party. After Poland had regained her independence, the tradition of the Faction was passed on to the camp of Piłsudski’s followers who shifted to the foreground those of the motifs of romantic heroism which could enhance the growing cult of their leader. At the same time the nationalists of Dmowski’s camp, although formerly so critical of “political romanticism”, started to draw their phraseology from the vocabulary of romantic activism, using it as an outward embellishment for discriminating national minorities and anti-semitism. Thus a situation arose in which the key-words of the romantic thought, including Messianism—such words as “mission”, “deed”, “spirit”, and even the word “nation”—began to evoke suspicion and antipathy among the leftist intelligentsia,

19) R. Dmowski, *Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska*, Lwów 1908, p. 212 and 235-236.

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an antipathy mechanically transferred to include the whole intellectual tradition from which they derived.

This situation, in which romantic thought was either criticized or exploited and distorted for ideological reasons, was not conducive to make Messianism a subject of serious, scholarly studies. This is, perhaps, an explanation of the curious fact that the most important document of the Polish Messianism—the Paris lectures of Mickiewicz—was until recently the most unknown part of the Polish romantic heritage.

I think that the ideas of the Polish Messianism are worthwhile to be studied both as a chapter in the Polish intellectual history and, also, in a broader context, in a comparative setting. There are, as I see it, at least three reasons why these ideas could be of some interest even for the non-Polish scholars.

First, from the view of the typology of romanticisms. Making use of the terminology introduced by Max Weber we may say that the romanticism of the German conservative romantics and of the Russian Slavophiles was a romanticism of *tradition*, while romanticism of Mickiewicz and Słowacki was a romanticism of *charisma*. This indicates not only an important difference, but also a common ground: both the romanticism of tradition and the romanticism of charisma were antithetic to rationalism and both remained equally “reactionary” from the standpoint of the conventional values of liberal-democratic progress. No wonder that Jules Michelet—himself a romantic and a great admirer of Mickiewicz—could not agree with the ideas of his Polish friend.

Max Weber used the words “traditional” and “charismatic” to denote the two ideal types of domination and of social cohesion, but he treated both of them as characteristic of the pre-rational model of society. Charisma, having undergone a process of routinisation, becomes tradition, and tradition, on the other hand, is valued, as a rule, for the sake of the divine inspiration, which still shines through it. Mickiewicz set a high value on tradition, seeing in it an instrument of spirit; the Slavophiles, as romantic thinkers, valued the “living spirit” much more than ordinary traditionalists did. The Slavophiles, however, appealed to the past while Mickiewicz appealed to the future and in extasy invoked “a new explosion of Christ’s Word”. That is why the two ideologies resulted in different actions; at the decisive moment, in 1848, Mickiewicz and the Slavophiles found themselves on the opposite sides of the barricades.

Secondly, Polish Messianism seems to me to be most interesting for a case study of the messianic-millenarian tendencies, underlying so many currents of political and social thought of the Romantic Epoch. Karl Mannheim said that Germany “achieved for the ideology of romantic conservatism what France did for the Enlightenment—she exploited it to the fullest extent of its logical conclusions.”²⁰⁾ It seems justified to say—paraphrasing these words—that it was the Polish Messianism which “exploited to the fullest extent of their logical conclusions” the messianic-millenarian tendencies of European romantic thought.

Finally—last not least—Polish Messianism and, indeed, Polish “political romanticism” as a whole, is an important, although undeservedly forgotten chapter in the

20) Cf. K. Mannheim, *Conservative Thought*. In: K. Mannheim, *Essays in Sociology and Social Psychology*, London 1953, p. 82.

comparative history of nationalism. It is well-known that the term "nationalism" is being used in a variety of meanings. In West European, especially Anglo-Saxon usage, the word "nationalism" comprises, as a rule, *every* concern with winning national independence or with awakening national consciousness. Considered in this way, Polish Messianism *is*, of course, an example of most ardent and highly developed nationalism. However, from another point of view, the Messianic conception of the "Christianization of politics", i.e. of *submitting* nations to universal ethical norms and securing their rights through supra-national institutions, could be considered as a symptom of "Cosmopolitanism", since it denied not only national egoism but also the principle of the absolute sovereignty of the National State. The classical work of Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, an apotheosis of the Real-Politik of Bismarck, was constructed exactly on these lines.²¹⁾ Polish Messianism, if seen from Meinecke's point of view, affords a classic example of the characteristic ambiguity of romantic nationalism, an excellent illustration of the important difference between this type of nationalism and the modern nationalism of a "Nationalstaat", let alone the so-called "Integral nationalism".

It seems worthwhile to add that the Polish usage of the word "nationalism" which narrows the concept of "nationalism" in such a way as to make difference between national egoism and the love of one's own nation—had its equivalent in the history of the term "nationalism" in the English language. In the English translations of Mazzini's works we often find the opposition between the "spirit of nationalism" and "the spirit of nationality". The first, according to Mazzini, was the real cause of the disappointing outcome of the Springtime of Peoples: "It was the narrow spirit of nationalism substituted for the spirit of nationality (...) the language of narrow nationalism held at Frankfurt destroyed the German revolution."²²⁾

I think that the contemporary English usage of the term "nationalism" has many obvious advantages. Nevertheless I feel sometimes that this term should be used with more discrimination, if we want to eliminate unjustified associations and to avoid reducing different ideas to an allegedly common denominator.

本稿は1977年6月13日北海道大学スラブ研究施設において発表されたものである。発表者アンジェイ・ヴァリツキ教授の許可をえて、ここに全文掲載する。

ヴァリツキ教授は1930年ワルシャワに生まれ、ワルシャワ大学スラヴ文学科を卒業後、1957年『19世紀ロシアの文学・思想におけるパーソナリティ』により博士号を取得し、1972年教授となった。1959年から現在に至るまで、ポーランド科学アカデミー哲学・社会学研究所に勤務している。

わが国ではロシア思想史の分野で名高いが、ポーランド思想史の分野の仕事についてはあまり知られていない。この分野におけるヴァリツキ教授の著書と論文としては、以下の如きものがある。

Filozofia a mesjanizm, PIW, Warszawa, 1970. *Polska Myśl filozoficzna i społeczna*, t. 1,

21) See F. Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*. Transl. by R. B. Kimber, Princeton 1970.

22) See J. Mazzini, *Essays: Selected from the Writings, Literary, Political and Religious*, London 1887, p. 5.

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“The Paris Lectures of Mickiewicz and the Russian Slavophilism”, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. XLVI, Jan. 1968.

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本論文は19世紀ポーランドの三人の思想家、アダム・ミッキエヴィチ、ユリウシ・スウォヴァツキ、ジグムント・クラシンスキのメシアニズムを、フランス、ドイツ、イタリア、ロシアとの比較において論じたものであって、短いながらも、ポーランド・メシアニズムの特徴がよくとらえられている。

ヴァリツキ教授は本年6月日本学術振興会の招へい研究者として来日し、札幌、広島、京都、東京など各地において講演を行なった。
(外川継男)