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POLISH ENTHUSIASTS AND CRITICS OF HENRY T. BUCKLE

The fact of the common fascination with the historiosophical conceptions of the English autodidact Henry Thomas Buckle (1822–1862) has long since been known to the historians of the social sciences; there have also been frequent attempts to explain the controversies about Buckle that broke out about the 1850's in nearly all countries of Europe as well as in America.¹ However, the vast literature of subject has not yet satisfactorily elucidated the offensive of "Bucklism" in Poland, where it was marked not only by features common to, but also different from, those that were observable in the other countries. The present essay does not claim to be an exhaustive presentation of this phenomenon in the Polish literature—to do this would require the space of a monographic study—its purpose is confined to merely pointing out the main aspects of the problem as they appear to me in result of my broad though still unfinished studies.

Buckle's unfinished *History of Civilisation in England* (I—London 1857; II—London 1861) did not evoke immediate and wide response. The first volume which was printed in 1500 copies could not sell out better than 675 copies during the year of its publication, but already in the next year a second impression of 2000 copies came out. By 1878, Buckle's work had in England no less than 12 editions, either of the whole or of its particular volumes; in the Unites States it had 5 editions between 1860 and 1897; in Germany (in Arnold Ruge's translation) in 1860 to 1881 even 6 editions in German and 1 (1865) in the original English version; in France 2 editions (A. Baillot's translation) in 1865 and 1881. In Russia, Buckle's *History* was translated in journals from 1861

¹ J. M. Robertson, *Buckle and his Critics. A Study in Sociology*, London, 1895; G. A. Wells, "The Critics of Buckle", *Past and Present*, 1956, No. 9 pp. 75–89; Giles St. Aubyn, *A Victorian Eminence. The Life and Works of Henry Thomas Buckle*, London, 1958.

onwards, and later it had a number of editions in self-dependent wholes in two competitive renderings. The Englishman Donald Mackenzie Wallace remarked in his book on Russia (1877), which he knew well from his own sojourns, that it was very rare that he should not come across Buckle's name in the perusal of Russian newspapers.² An incomplete Spanish edition appeared in 1861, the first five chapters of vol. I were published in Italian in 1864, a collective Hungarian translation started to appear in 1873, and two editions of a translation into Swedish were published in 1871–1872 and in 1882. In Poland, the *History* was translated by Władysław Zawadzki (1824–1891) and appeared first at Lwów in 1862–1868, and next in its second edition at Warsaw in 1873. Besides, this country also saw a translation of Buckle's essay on the role of women in the progress of knowledge (1867), and towards the end of the 19th century wide popularity was enjoyed by the translation of a booklet by the Russian journalist Ossip Konstantinovich Notovich (born 1849) popularizing the principal ideas of the *History* written easily for the less sophisticated reader.³

The opinions of many students of the history of Polish culture and literature working on what used to be called the "Warsaw positivism" have been affected by the authoritative view expressed by a participant, and soon also chronicler, of the ideological disputes waged in the Warsaw milieu of the 1860's, Walery Przyborowski, who wrote on those times in 1897: "I may safely say here that the revolution in our literature made by the 'positivists' a few years later had its roots in the book by the English author [that is, Buckle]. By the precision of his reasoning, the paradoxical nature of his conclusions, by his unusual erudition and courageous views he impressed profoundly the young minds and hearts."⁴ This statement is distinctly coloured by its author's personal bias, for he was an active participant in the literary and scientific disputes in Warsaw in the 1860's as one of those young enthusiasts of novelties who started a pen-war against everything that appeared to them conservative or reactionary. It is not only exaggerated as regards the sources of the "Warsaw positivism" but also overlooks that the Warsaw "young" were not the first to get to know the work of the English historiosopher in Poland. As it often happens, the first trace of interest in H. T. Buckle

² D. Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia*, vol. I, London, 1877, pp. 167f; G. St. Aubyn, *op. cit.*, p. 31; E. Soloviev, *Genri Tomas Bokl. Kharakteristika*, in: H. T. Buckle (Bokl), *Istoria Tsvivilizatsii v Anglii*, translated by A. Buinitski, vol. I. St. Petersburg, 1896, pp. ix–x.

³ H. T. Buckle, *Historia cywilizacji w Anglii*, translated from the 2nd English edition by Władysław Zawadzki, 3 vols., Lwów, 1862, 1865, 1868; 2dn ed., 2 vols., Warsaw, 1873; H. T. Buckle, *Wpływ kobiet na postęp wiedzy*, translated into Polish by Stanisław Czarnowski, student of the Warsaw Main School, Warsaw, 1867; H. T. Buckle, *Historia cywilizacji w Anglii*, a popularizing exposition by O. K. Notovich, translated from Russian by Adam Dobrowolski, Warsaw–Cracow, 1897.

⁴ (W. Przyborowski), *Stara i młoda prasa. Przyczynek do historii literatury ojczyznej (1866–1872)*, St. Petersburg, 1897, p. 9f.

comes from the conservatist milieu. We come across it in the Cracow paper *Czas* (Time) as soon as in 1860, when a critic rebutted the attempts to "associate the principles of economy with the never-predictable fates of nations. The English mercantilism is conspicuously reflected in all his [Buckle's] ideas, according to which all that exists is allegedly measurable by the ell, the balance, and the piece of chalk."⁵ The news about the commencement of a translation of Buckle's *History* into Polish given in the press evoked contradictory opinions: on the one hand, it aroused protests, as in the *Warsaw Gazeta Polska* (Polish Gazette) in 1861;⁶ on the other, applause. That atmosphere is interestingly reflected in Józef Bańkowski's letter to the well-known Polish economist Józef Supiński dated 28 August 1861: "The news on the translation of Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England* into Polish frightened the idealists and delighted the realists. The former's protest appeared in No 203 of *Gazeta Polska*, and the realists' answer to it was written by the professor of the [St. Petersburg] university, Spasowicz and sent to Warsaw. It seems that in Warsaw a fierce battle will be fought on the issue of Buckle between the idealists and the realists. The former argue that man is guided by idea, by thought; the realists maintain that although he exaggerates in some places and assigns a too insignificant role to free will, he is right in saying that the forces and laws of nature, e.g. climate, have their impact on man."⁷ Spasowicz's retort mentioned above did not, as far as we know, appear in print; that outstanding lawyer, historian and historian of literature, who worked in Russia, is known not to have been an uncritical enthusiast of Buckle's thought, although in his opinions on history he was a moderate follower of determinism.

The *History* was translated into Polish by W. Zawadzki, a rather mediocre Galician man of letters, from 1857 resident in Lwów, a friend of the historian Karol Szajnocha, and active contributor to the *Dziennik Literacki* (Literary Journal)—a journal whose role in the popularization of positivism in Poland is still insufficiently known. Zawadzki presented the work as belonging "undisputably to the most significant products in the domain of science"; he wrote about its epoch-making significance, did not conceal his enthusiastic attitude towards the ideas it contained but was well aware of their controversial nature, especially on Polish soil, since he wrote that "although one cannot agree unreservedly with all the convictions expressed by the author as a protestant, the high merits in many other respects of the book in-

⁵ J. K. Rogala (J. K. Turski), „Historia cywilizacji”, *Czas*, 1860, vol. XIX, p. 464. This review has been noted by E. Warzenica, *Pozytywistyczny „obóz młodych” wobec tradycji wielkiej polskiej poezji romantycznej (lata 1866-1881)*, Warsaw, 1968, p. 28.

⁶ *Gazeta Polska*, 1861, No. 203, p. 2, column 3.

⁷ B. Skarga, *Narodziny pozytywizmu polskiego (1831-1864)*, Warsaw, 1964, p. 397, note 100—from a ms. in the Public Library at Bydgoszcz No. 642/1.

duce us to hope that by this translation we render a good service to our literature.”⁸ Zawadzki rightly guessed which aspects of Buckle’s reasoning may arouse the deepest controversies among the Polish readers: the naturalistic determinism of the English author furnished a powerful argument in the struggle against the providential vision of history, against the traditional widely spread and established clerical conceptions. It was this problem that was taken up by the reviewer of the *History* from *Dziennik Literacki*: he gave an enthusiastic evaluation of Buckle’s naturalistic determinism, his programmatic apriorism, and he emphasized that Buckle succeeded in demonstrating that within the historical process there is room for neither accident nor Providence, that it constitutes a logical and necessary result of a number of factors affecting the course of historical events, that history is governed by constant unchanging laws. The reviewer, then, apprehended Buckle’s theory as a mechanistic naturalistic determinism in its extreme form, his only objection being directed against Buckle’s conception of progress as the progress of mind, which mistakenly disregarded the impact of moral factors.⁹

It was noted long ago that, as far as the new scientific trends in Poland are concerned, the Warsaw positivism had its Galician predecessors in the milieu of *Dziennik Literacki*.¹⁰ In fact, the latter’s interest in Buckle was not limited to publishing the review mentioned here. The fascination with the *History* reached its climax in this journal in 1865-1866 and it is connected with the name of the later well-known historian-essayist Kazimierz Chłędowski; he penned an article advocating the new trends still in 1864 which was not accepted by *Biblioteka Warszawska* (Warsaw Library) and printed only after some corrections by *Dziennik Literacki* in the next year under the provocative title, “Speculation, Experience, and Realistic Tendencies”. Much broader response was evoked by the ensuing articles in the Lwów journal, especially his articles of 1866 on the “Present State of the Materialistic School” and “Power in History”. Fascinated by Darwin, Chłędowski was enthralled by Buckle’s theory to the extent that as the only deficiency of Darwin’s theory he recognized the fact that Darwin paid too little attention to the impact of climate on the evolution of man.¹¹ In his admiration for the new scientific trends, which, incidentally, he knew rather superficially, he even went as far as recommending the naturalists who “always base themselves on facts, on reality” as the only model of scientific procedure to be followed. He put Buckle much above Macaulay, whom, incidentally, he respected for “anti-speculationist endeavours after modern skills”. He wrote: “It was with more conspicuousness and with deeper exper-

⁸ H. T. Buckle, *Historia...*, vol. I, pages at the beginning of the volume without numbering. Italics mine.

⁹ *Dziennik Literacki*, 1863, Nos. 51-53; B. Skarga, *op. cit.*, pp. 86f.

¹⁰ T. Jeske-Choiński, *W pogoni za prawdą*, Series V, Poznań 1910, p. 13.

¹¹ *Dziennik Literacki*, 1866, p. 137.

tness that he employed the results of naturalist investigations to historical knowledge in his famous *History of Civilisation in England*. His book is the first attempt to illustrate the way in which nature affects the development of society, and in what way society affects nature." While fully accepting the conception of historical laws governing the development of mankind, he did not say a single word about the "four main propositions" formulated by Buckle in volume II (one may doubt whether he knew them at all). Following the English thinker he proclaimed: "all history must be a result of external influences on us and, *vice versa*, of our influences on nature;" he was fascinated by Buckle's conception of natural factors in the historical development—climate, geographical situation etc., and regretted that "a work of immense diligence and unusual genius remains unfinished."¹² In his article on "Power in History", in which he endeavoured to transplant Darwinism to history, he followed Buckle in opposing the considerations, still extant in Polish literature, on the "destiny of the peoples."¹³ However, neither in this nor in other articles did Chłędowski touch on the problem which, if we are to believe his memoirs, interested him in Buckle most: namely, the reflections on the impact of religion, especially of Roman Catholicism, encumbering the progress of mankind.¹⁴ There would be too much in that for the conservative Galician society; this type of ideas were unsuitable for publication. Chłędowski's Bucklism is of the youthful superficial and eclectic type, it is a fascination with the ideological aspects of Buckle's theory rather than with his methodological ideas.

It is a simplification to think that *Dziennik Literacki* shared only those conceptions which were contained in the articles submitted by Kazimierz Chłędowski. Its columns also saw polemics with Buckle, to mention but the anonymous article on "Morality in Nature" or the essay by an unidentified author entitled "A Few Remarks on the Teaching of Man's Destiny"¹⁵ which accepted Buckle's conception of historical laws but disputed his theory of intellectual progress. Separate mention is also due to the article on the "The Transformations of Man" written by a *do-cent* at the Warsaw Main School, Stefan Pawlicki, which, besides popularizing the scientific achievements in the studies of the primitive man and combating the providentialist historiosophy, contained a polemic with some extreme points of Buckle's naturalistic determinism. Its author called for a recognition of the importance of "certain spiritual merits" in progress, of the role of "eminent men", refused to treat religion as "a child of the blind forces of nature", and demanded to recognize man as a "one indivisible personality", both material and

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

¹⁴ K. Chłędowski, *Pamiętniki*, vol. I, ed. by A. Knot, Cracow 1957, p. 255.

¹⁵ *Dziennik Literacki*, 1866, p. 490.

spiritual. He argued that "religions transformed societies; when they decline, society dies; when they grow in power, society also becomes stronger. As long as religion remains intact, a nation may not fear to lose its national character."¹⁶

It seems that the apogee of the interest in Buckle in Galicia came about the middle of the 1860's; after that, fascination is giving way to cooler reflection. It does not mean that Buckle was not read or respected, or even discussed, but the previously typical fascination recedes into the past. At Lwów, the translation of the *History* continued to appear; its third volume (1868) was preceded with an interesting essay on Buckle by the translator, Władysław Zawadzki, who, in, addition to a biography of the English thinker, gave a survey of the polemics on this work in the western countries. It is significant that he defended Buckle against the charge of materialism, which had been frequently made against almost all followers of new trends by Polish critics; he regarded Buckle as a scientist keen on the noble search for the truth, who had "crashed down the idols of superstition and despotism."¹⁷ Buckle was still eagerly read—not as the almost sole authority, though—by the Galician followers of the positivist movement. These progressive views were propounded in *Kraj* (The Country) in the 1870's, when Ludwik Masłowski published his well-known "Law of Progress" (1872) being an enthusiastic presentation of the positivist novelties.¹⁸ A translator of Darwin, Wundt and Haeckel, Masłowski came to know Buckle's conceptions during his recent sojourn in France where, according to Józef Tokarzewicz's testimony, he represented in the editorial staff of the journal *The Future* (1865) a youthful faith in positivism, "in Comte, Hobbes and Buckle", and in a naturalistic-determinist interpretation of history.¹⁹ The *Tydzień* (The Week) published at Lwów under the editorial supervision of J. Rogosz "professed to progressive ideas with a naturalistic tint, it admired Buckle, Darwin, and used to bark at the clericalists", as Piotr Chmielowski put it.²⁰

Though the leading role of the Galician milieu in promoting the positivist novelties on Polish soil is an undisputable fact, it is certainly more complex than K. Chłędowski thought as he wrote that "Among the young people at Cracow who were infatuated with materialism and who were backed by the fairly older Mieczysław Pawlikowski there were several bright people from Warsaw: these latter made propaganda for

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 619.

¹⁷ H. T. Buckle, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. iii-xv.

¹⁸ L. Masłowski, *Prawo postępu. Studium przyrodniczo-społeczne*, Cracow, 1872, offprint from *Kraj*.

¹⁹ J. T. (okarzewicz), „Nowości literackie”, *Kraj* (published at St. Petersburg), 1884, No. 34, p. 21.

²⁰ P. Chmielowski, *Zarys najnowszej literatury polskiej*, Cracow-St. Petersburg, 1898, p. 111.

this issue in letters to their friends. Some of them were able to go back home and thus personally persuaded their colleagues from the [Warsaw] Main School to adopt the new ideas."²¹

Just as Chłędowski attributed the discovery of a new role of scientific values in the western "materialists"—representatives of new trends in science to the milieu from which he came himself, the same was done by Walery Przyborowski, who attributed it to his own milieu of university students in Warsaw.²² This must also be regarded as at least a simplification. For, firstly, it only the above-mentioned polemics about Buckle of 1861 permit to state that Buckle had been known in the Russian partition (the "Polish Kingdom") still before the January Rising (1863). Secondly, from 1862 onwards the Warsaw press brought regular announcements and brief reviews of the successive parts of the *History* being translated at Lwów which were accessible in Warsaw bookshops.²³ And, thirdly, the young Warsaw "Bucklists"—as they used to call themselves—had in Warsaw an immediate predecessor in the person of Eliza Orzeszkowa, later a well-known novelist, who had published a spacious article "On the *History of English Civilisation* by Henry Thomas Buckle" in *Gazeta Polska* still in 1866. This article contained an enthusiastic profession of creed of the young authoress, who remained under the spell of the determinist-naturalistic conceptions of the English writer long after.²⁴ This is not the place to any detailed account of the "positivistic debut" of the outstanding novelist which is well known to the historians of Polish literature, suffice it to point out that her article started a controversy about whether Buckle's views were materialistic or not;²⁵ which provoked her to speak out once more on that matter in the same journal.²⁶ At the time when Orzeszkowa wrote on Buckle none of the future young Warsaw "Bucklists" came out in print with his enthusiasm for the English thinker, and *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (Weekly Review), as one can surmise from the perusal of its first annual volume (1866) which soon after became a tribune for the "young", had very little to say on Buckle. This is not to say that none of the later "Bucklists"—though not very much later—knew the *History*. But they certainly did not publish anything about it by then.

Let us diverge from the presentation of the material for a while. From what has been said by now it follows that, on the one hand, the

²¹ K. Chłędowski, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 194.

²² Cf. (W. Przyborowski), *op. cit.*, pp. 7–10, 90ff, 126.

²³ *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1863, vol. II, p. 548; 1866, vol. II, p. 470; 1869, vol. II, p. 154f; vol. III, p. 137f.

²⁴ Li...ka (E. Orzeszkowa), „O historii cywilizacji angielskiej przez Henryka Tomasza Buckle'a”, *Gazeta Polska*, 1866, No. 157, pp. 1–3; No. 158, p. 1f; cf. M. Żmigrodzka, *Orzeszkowa. Młodość pozytywizmu*, Warsaw, 1965, p. 118ff.

²⁵ M. Łonicki, (Letter to the editor) in *Gazeta Polska*, 1866, No. 178, p. 2.

²⁶ E. Orzeszko(wa), „Do czyniącego zarzuty sprawozdaniu o dziele Buckle'a”, *Gazeta Polska*, 1866, No. 192, p. 2.

reception of the *History* on Polish soil started in the period immediately preceding the January Rising and embraced both some circles in Galicia and in the Russian partition. On the other hand, the facts presented here concerning Galicia and, partly, also Warsaw allow us to say already at this point that it was in the years immediately following the fall of the rising that the interest in Buckle in Poland was most intense. This refers to both the Galician milieu and to the Russian partition. This fact requires a more detailed historical interpretation necessary to understand the Polish fascination with Buckle's ideas on the 1860's.

The defeat of the January Rising seemed to be equivalent to the defeat of all the previous *Weltanschauung*, of all romantic ideology, that "ideology of poets", as Bronisław Chlebowski defined it; and defeat induced to seek new realistic ways.²⁷ The refutation of the "ideology of poets" did not lead everyone to accept the slogan that "knowledge is power" and the attitude of "organic work". The slogan of realism was common to different milieux, each of which understood it differently in accordance with their various ideological or political attitudes. Whereas some called for accepting the hard reality as a punishment for the sins committed by themselves or their ancestors, others went still farther in associating ultramontanism with extreme loyalism. Some would accept for their own the capitalist slogan of "work at the foundations" tending more and more decidedly towards a realistic positivistic attitude, still others would make an examination of the nobiliary past of Poland to take up subsequently the idea of transforming her social structure with the help of the new emerging social forces. "In our souls, in all our generation that had grown up amidst the roar of thunders there was unutterable sadness, a result of never-fulfilled keen expectations and painful disappointments. When that which they had been taught to revere in their youth fell, they rushed to the other direction in search for rescue. Because dreams were deceptive, they were condemned; it was called for taking into account the existing reality, for a rigid self-evaluation. To these inclinations, Buckle was in a sense the full expression of those desires and aspirations that sprouted in the better souls and minds of the young people," wrote years after K. Przyborowski.²⁸ In another part of Poland—in Cracow, K. Chłędowski experienced similar conflicts. His disappointment with the old ideals and with Messianism pushed him to the perusal of L. Büchner and Buckle and brought to him the conviction that "the nation can revive only by intellectual sobriety, work, economy, by the abandonment of all inimitable ideals."²⁹

Thus, with his naturalistic determinism and his idea of progress as intellectual progress, Buckle met that state of minds and hearts of many

²⁷ B. Chlebowski, *Literatura polska 1795-1905 jako główny wyraz życia narodu po utracie niepodległości*, Lwów, 1923, p. 458.

²⁸ (W. Przyborowski), *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²⁹ K. Chłędowski, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 194.

Poles. His work was a desirable book helping them to find the proper attitude in the very difficult surroundings, it helped to survive and retain the hope that not all had been lost yet, for knowledge and work are powers that can overcome the most unfavourable circumstances. It is in this situation that, in my opinion, we must look for the key to understanding the extent and the form of the wide fascination with the ideas of the English historiosopher in those circles that were attracted by scientific novelties in the Poland of the 1860's. This explains the vivid interest in Buckle both in Galicia, which has been discussed, and in the Polish Kingdom, which has only been touched upon so far.

Let us now return to the presentation of the reception of T. H. Buckle in Warsaw.³⁰ In the latter half of the 1860's the university student milieu of Warsaw got under a strong spell of Buckle's ideas. This found its expression in *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, a progressive journal edited by Adam Wiślicki to which contributed the students of the Warsaw Main School fascinated by the new trends in science. The popularity of Buckle's work will be later compared to that of such renowned works of fiction as Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis?* or Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Przyborowski, who had been a student of the Warsaw school himself, in describing the intellectual climate of his milieu gives an interesting example of the popularity of Buckle's conception. One of his friends borrowed from his uncle the strongly demanded book to give it to his friends. He wrote: "We swallowed up the contents. Soon we were divided into Bucklists and anti-Bucklists. As it usually happens with young unsophisticated minds, we grasped only the more glaring points of the author's reasonings and drew from them rather eccentric conclusions which Buckle had never even dreamt of. Because the English historian denies, to some extent, man's free will and supports this contention with the fact that even the number of letters of inappropriate form dropped into pillar-boxes is recurrent at certain periods, we tried to apply this principle to all human actions. One of our friends, who later came to an outstanding position in our literature, used to spend whole days in the window of his lodging (in Gołębia Street) to convince the sceptics that the number of people passing by must be identical at some periods. Another brought his admiration for Buckle as far as to copy his work word after word because he could not buy himself it for want of money."³¹

A closer examination of the "Bucklism" of the young Warsaw "youth" confirms principally Przyborowski's opinion. In 1867 to 1869, *Przegląd Tygodniowy* published many articles on Buckle authored by H. Elzenberg, E. Sulimczyk-Świeżawski, W. Przyborowski, S. J. Czarnowski,

³⁰ Cf. my article: "Warszawscy entuzjaści Buckle'a", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 1969, No. 4, pp. 853-864.

³¹ (W. Przyborowski), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

A. Kraushar. Not always were they distinguished by a profound knowledge of the views of the admired writer, but always were evidence of the admiration. To the young people, Buckle appeared as the ideal of a scientist systematically proceeding from facts to generalizations, he was the model of the student employing a strict method of research, a non-conformist, briefly—"one of the greatest geniuses of the epoch". The young accepted the naturalistic determinism of Buckle's conception but, in fact, drew various conclusions from it. For instance, W. Przyborski flaunted himself with his extreme materialistic declarations. In their admiration for Buckle, even his rather eccentric reflections on the role of women in the progress of knowledge have not been skipped. Buckle's booklet on this issue was translated and published by one of the "young", S. J. Czarnowski, and had a very warm reception from the "young" press.

The "Bucklism" of the young Warsaw enthusiasts was very superficial, it was limited in fact to the acceptance of naturalistic determinism and demonstrative anti-Providentialism in their view of history, to an enthusiasm for a conception of historical laws which were not discussed any deeper—it was primarily of ideological character. The conception of progress as progress in knowledge met, just as many other thoughts of the English author, the intellectual and social ideals of that generation of the Warsaw Main School students.³²

Both the positivistic literary critic and historian of literature Piotr Chmielowski and the productive antipositivistic columnist and third-rate man-of-letters Teodor Jeske-Choiński are in agreement in that they hold that the Warsaw students allegedly heard of the scientific novelties from their professors at the Main School. A closer look at this issue, though, enables us to dispute this view.³³ We know that at least some of the students, such as, for instance, Aleksander Kraushar, had already read Buckle before.³⁴ On the other hand, if we make a closer examination of the Warsaw professors' lectures we shall easily see that they fought rather than promoted the scientific novelties, while a considerable part of their audiences were fascinated by them. To those professors certainly belonged the eminent historian Józef Kazimierz Plebański, who in his lectures often criticized Buckle and the other representatives of the "new scientific school" from the point of view of eclectic idealistic-realistic philosophy,³⁵ and, a little later, Adolf Pawiński who delivered

³² Cf. note 30.

³³ P. Chmielowski, *Pisma krytyczno-literackie*, vol. I, Warsaw, 1961, p. 239; T. Jeske-Choiński, „Pozytywizm warszawski i jego główni przedstawiciele”, *Niwa*, 1885 p. 87.

³⁴ A. Kraushar, *Kartki z pamiętnika Alkara*, vol. II, Cracow, 1913, pp. 48f, 118f, 145.

³⁵ Cf. note 30; also: Z. Libiszowska, „Józef Kazimierz Plebański (1831-1896)”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne*, seria I, No. 4, 1956, pp. 73-106.

a lecture on Buckle, and later printed it in *Biblioteka Warszawska* (1868), in which he severely criticized the ideas of the English philosopher referring to a wide range of European literature and taking the position of a moderate adherent to the positivistic conception of history.³⁶ Aleksander Rembowski, who later became an outstanding historian and lawyer, was one of the listeners to Pawiński's lecture; in later years he recollected: "When in an informal circle of friends we started to appraise both Pawiński's views on the laws of historical development and on Buckle's theory, we came to the unanimous conviction that could be expressed briefly: the whole lecture was simply an impudence." For Buckle was to the young people "a taboo. To us he was for some time *sacrosanctus*."³⁷ W. Przyborowski wrote later: "The strong impression [of Buckle] had already been deeply rooted in the young people, and before Mr. Pawiński came out with his observations the cult of the English historian had had ample time to grow to considerable dimensions. In the period we are discussing Buckle's work was read ardently and the most preposterous conclusions were drawn from it."³⁸ However, not only the historians lecturing at the Warsaw School had a critical attitude towards Buckle's theory. It was also shared by the other historians working at Warsaw who were associated with what in historical studies has been called the Warsaw positivistic school. This also refers to A. Rembowski, who very early agreed with Pawiński's criticism that he had so severely refuted as a student, and especially to Tadeusz Korzon and Władysław Smoleński. Korzon published in *Biblioteka Warszawska* in 1870 a spacious essay on "The Positivistic Historians" which analysed the historical conceptions of Buckle, Draper and Kolb; he spoke on Buckle many times later on, too.³⁹ He criticized the English thinker for the numerous extremities of his views from the standpoint of the moderate positivistic trend in historiography. He accepted, at least at the beginning, determinism, but he refuted unequivocally its naturalistic form; he accepted nomothetism but refuted the historical "laws" suggested by Buckle; he agreed that there are recurrent phenomena but condemned Buckle's famous statistical argumentation that evoked such enthusiasm among the students; he was a follower of the theory of progress but could not accept Buckle's theory of intellectual progress etc. As, with the lapse of time, Korzon more and more estranged himself from the positivistic hopes and illusions in historiography, his criticism of Buckle included still more acute points. The no less outstand-

³⁶ A. Pawiński, "H. T. Buckle", *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1868, vol. IV, pp. 349-395.

³⁷ A. Rembowski, "Adolf Pawiński", *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1890, vol. I, p. 81.

³⁸ (W. Przyborowski), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

³⁹ T. Korzon, *Listy otwarte, mowy, rozprawy, rozbiory*, vol. I, Warsaw, 1915, pp. 123-159; cf. also his later publications there, vol. II, Warsaw, 1916, pp. 76, 79, 99, 137-143, 321.

ing historian, W. Smoleński, had analogous views in many respects, and he went through a similar evolution.⁴⁰

The problem of the Warsaw historians' attitude towards Buckle's conceptions requires a more detailed study. But it may be said already at this point that all those professional historians, in analogy to the historians associated with the positivistic trend in historiography in the other countries, shared a rather critical attitude towards Buckle and that he exerted a relatively small influence on them, incomparably smaller than on the milieu of the young enthusiasts or positivistically-minded columnists or men-of-letters. In many respects the attitude of the historians was similar to that of other members of the literary-intellectual circles in Warsaw in those times.

Whereas in the so-called "new press"—that is, those journals which professed allegiance to the positivistic trend in its different form—Buckle's name will be occasionally reappearing till the end of the 19th century and he will be remembered as a pre-eminent thinker who had a remarkable contribution to science (to mention the article on Buckle published by *Prawda*—The Truth—in 1881⁴¹ or the rich journalistic output of the leading champion of the "progressive party", A. Świętochowski, which occasionally resounds with the echo of Buckle's views), the so-called "old press", which was more conservative and more sceptical, if not inimical, towards the scientific fashions, in no way shared the enthusiasm of the young people. But in the columns of this press we come frequently across critical remarks on Buckle and his conception penned both by Neo-Kantians such as H. Goldberg, or by the followers of the German idealistic philosophy as A. Tyszyński or K. Kaszewski, etc. Towards the end of the century Buckle was gradually dislodged by the interest in Thomas Carlyle's heroic conceptions. But it is interesting to observe how the echo of the reading of Buckle concurred with the influences of Marxian socio-historical considerations in the journalistic output of Ludwik Krzywicki of the 1890's.⁴² On the other hand, though, historians of Polish literature have shown that the reading of Buckle exerted a remarkable influence on the formation of the *Weltanschauung* of some outstanding representatives of Polish literature of that period, such as the above-mentioned Eliza Orzeszkowa or Aleksander Głowacki (the novelist known under his literary pseudonym Bolesław Prus). A student of Prus' literary-critical activity emphasizes that "1. a positivistic psychologism derived from Taine, 2. a naturalism borrowed from Buckle, 3. Spencer's evolutionism, 4. a positivistic ahistorism searching after 'similar' elements in historically remote epochs—these are the phil-

⁴⁰ M. H. Serejski, preface in: W. Smoleński, *Szkoły historyczne w Polsce*, Wrocław, 1952, p. LXII ff.

⁴¹ R. Z., "Henryk Tomasz Buckle", *Prawda*, 1881, vol. I, pp. 62–64, 78f, 89f.

⁴² L. Krzywicki, *Dziela*, vol. II, Warsaw, 1958, p. 126; vol. III, Warsaw, 1959, p. 135f; vol. IV, Warsaw, 1960, p. 87f; 186–191, 197 etc.

osophical foundations of Prus' views on history and on the mechanism of action of literary tradition." ⁴³ Just as in the other cases presented here, Buckle's influence was primarily of ideological rather than scientific-methodological nature.

In a similar manner, Buckle was received in Galicia. For, his *History* was in fact an ideological argument for the followers of the scientific novelties and, on the other hand, an ideological weapon against the defenders of traditionalism and conservatives associated with the political group known as the *Stańczycy*. Already Stanisław Tarnowski in his polemics against the nomothetic conception of history propounded by Józef Supiński in one of the letters from the famous *Teka Stańczyka* (*Stańczyk's Portfolio*) derided the ideal type of the positivistic historian—a type constructed from some traits of Supiński's Buckle's and others' conceptions—who maintains that the world is governed by natural laws. ⁴⁴ Buckle made no impression on the eminent historian Walerian Kalinka, a historian of note rather shunning from methodological reflections, who admitted a Providentialist interpretation of history both in theory and in his writer's practice. A different path was taken by another leading figure of Polish historiography, Józef Szujski, who—as it has been indicated elsewhere—"in his approach to the problems of the theory and philosophy of history he was in strong opposition to what was being brought into historical studies by the positivistic trend;" ⁴⁵ he took Buckle for a particular subject of his criticism, which referred to the old Augustinian and Bossuetian historiosophical conceptions defending voluntarism in its ecclesiastical, Roman Catholic version, etc. ⁴⁶ These representatives of the first generation of the "Cracow historical school" had a younger successor, Michał Bobrzyński, who, although he referred to the positivistic conception of history as a discipline aiming at studying the laws of social development and followed a rather extreme form of sociological nomothetism, never agreed to associate his name with the "school of Buckle" upon whom he made a number of strictures. To be true, he pointed out the merits of the English thinker with respect to what the latter took from the social and political sciences, that is, the conception of historical laws itself, and indicated that Buckle's merit was to draw attention to these sciences and to the existence of regularities in history; but he refuted the optimistic conviction that the historical laws are known already, emphasized that Buckle's "eccentric hypotheses" in this respect cannot constitute a foundation for further his-

⁴³ S. Melkowski, *Poglądy estetyczne i działalność krytyczno-literacka Bolesława Prusa*, Warsaw, 1963, p. 189.

⁴⁴ *Przegląd Polski*, vol. XIII, 1869, pp. 450–458; K. Wyka, "Teka Stańczyka" *na tle historii Galicji w latach 1849–1869*, Wrocław, 1951, pp. 159, 162.

⁴⁵ A. F. Grabski, "Z zagadnień metodologicznych tzw. krakowskiej szkoły historycznej", *Studia Metodologiczne*, vol. VI, 1969, p. 70.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–71.

torical studies, and argued that the *History* is marked by "an artificial cramming of historical facts into hurriedly devised formulae". "Buckle, perhaps a genial dilettante but not historian or lawyer-politician, comprehends and explicates everything, and in this he sins and errs." He protested against the refutation of man's free will and stressed that the assertion of the operation of historical laws does not exclude—as Buckle and some of his Polish followers think—the existence of the free will of man.⁴⁷ Much more scepticism with respect to Buckle's ideas was shown by another representative of the younger generation of the Cracow historical school, Stanisław Smolka, whose views on the theoretical and methodological problems of history were a minimalistic reaction to the extreme points of Bobrzyński's positivistic sociologism.⁴⁸ Thus, the professional historians of Cracow principally did not accept the conceptions of T. H. Buckle; this refers to both those who were decidedly opposed to the positivistic trend in historiography and to his more or less moderate followers. The same can be said of the historians of the "Lwów historical school", who generally avoided theoretical and methodological considerations; with the exception of Tadeusz Wojciechowski whose theoretical and methodological opinions are marked by eclecticism. We shall not linger here on the opinions of other Galician authors; let us only mention the amusing views of the only consistent Polish solipsist in Poland, Count W. Dzieduszycki, who oddly linked subjective idealism with orthodox Roman Catholicism. Nor shall we dwell upon the criticism of Buckle made by T. Żuliński from the standpoint of adherence to messianistic-catholic idealism.⁴⁹ Just as in the Russian partition, the discussions, controversies and polemics about Buckle in Galicia were primarily ideological disputes and had little to do with methodological-scientific discussions.

This does not mean that Buckle was not read any longer. He was still read with flushed cheeks by those for whom he could become the first more serious work on their way to the formation of self, to constructing their own view of the world. He was read primarily by the young people—by students of different schools throughout Poland, and by young Poles staying abroad. Here are a few examples. During his deportation at Arkhangelsk Bolesław Limanowski read Quetelet and John Stuart Mill, and gets the translation of the first volume of Buckle's *History* sent to him; when, in 1869, he came back to Warsaw he was astonished that Pawiński was much less enthusiastic about the English philosopher than he himself was.⁵⁰ In the 3rd *gimnazjum* in Warsaw, Wa-

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 75f.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-83.

⁴⁹ T. Żuliński, *O antropologii w stosunku do dziejów*, Warsaw, 1873; by the same author, *Wiara i wiedza*, Cracow, 1876.

⁵⁰ B. Limanowski, *Pamiętniki 1835-1870*, Warsaw, 1937, pp. 351f, 437f.

claw Sieroszewski in the mid-sixties of the 19th century read the Romantics, but also Mill, Draper, Smiles, Darwin; when, fascinated by the idea of "organic work", he started working at a locksmith's one could find among his books Flammarrion, Haeckel, Buckle and Lassalle.⁵¹ Ignacy Radliński writes in his memoirs of the popularity of Buckle in the student milieu of Kiev towards the end of the 1850's⁵² Stanisław Stempowski gives evidence that the *History* was eagerly read by the students of the *gimnazjum* at Krzemieniec,⁵³ the remarkable interest of young people in the work of Buckle is reported ten years later by Ferdynand Hoesick in his memoirs.⁵⁴ Let us also mention the fascination with Buckle by the Polish novelist Stefan Żeromski during his stay at the *gimnazjum* at Kielce in the mid-eighties, which later found its expression in his *Szyfowe prace* (Sisyphusian toil).⁵⁵ Buckle's naturalistic determinism remarkably affected the geographical interests of the later renowned geographer Waclaw Nałkowski.⁵⁶ No further examples seem to be necessary. It is evident from those already given that, especially in the fourth quarter of the 19th century, Buckle provided the favourite subject of reading of the *gimnazjum*-schoolboys and students, of young people in search after their own place in the world and on their way to work out their own *Weltanschauung*. Buckle's works belonged, in a sense, to the obligatory reading matter of the thinking young people, irrespective of the paths they were to take afterwards. But does it refer to young people only?

Numerous memoirs of Polish revolutionaries and socialists of the latter half of the 19th century, and of the first years of the 20th century, indicate that Buckle's *History* was the work read by those who were in the process of coming to a socialist *Weltanschauung*. The high appreciation of the *History* in the workers' movement is attested by Wilhelm Liebknecht's statement that "Marx's *Kapital* was in the field of economy what Buckle was in history and Darwin in the natural sciences."⁵⁷ The juxtaposition of these three names needs no further comments. The lists

⁵¹ W. Sieroszewski, *Dzieła*, vol. XVI, Cracow, 1959, pp. 93f, 529-531.

⁵² I. Radliński, *Mój żywot*, Łuck, 1938, p. 43f.

⁵³ S. Stempowski, *Pamiętniki (1870-1914)*, Wrocław, 1953, pp. 81, 90.

⁵⁴ F. Hoesick, *Powieść mojego życia*, vol. I, Wrocław-Cracow, 1959, pp. 334, 362.

⁵⁵ S. Żeromski, *Dzienniki*, vol. I, Warsaw, 1953, p. 344; by the same author, *Szyfowe prace*, in: *Dzieła*, ed. by S. Pigoń, vol. I, Warsaw, 1956, pp. 188-192, 202f.

⁵⁶ J. Babicz, "Młodzieńcza rozprawa Waclawa Nałkowskiego", *Studia i Materiaty z Dziejów Nauki Polskiej*, series C, No. 6, 1963, pp. 99-112.

⁵⁷ A. Molska, preface, in: *Pierwsze pokolenie marksistów polskich*, vol. I, Warsaw, 1962, p. xci; by the same author, *Model ustroju socjalistycznego w polskiej myśli marksistowskiej lat 1878-1886*, Warsaw, 1965, p. 71. T. G. Snytko, *Russkoye narodnichestvo i polskoye obshchestvennoye dvizheniye 1865-1881*, Moscow, 1969, p. 136, pointed out an interesting fact. Namely, when towards the end of the 1870's the police seized from the Moscow University student, the Pole B. Butkiewicz, a certain album, they also found a questionnaire of a number of questions, among them: "Name your favourite author". To which one of the students—L. Obuchowski—answered: "Karl Marx (*Das Kapital*), Chernyshevski (*Criticism of Mill, Shto delat?*), Skarbek", and student Ptak answered: "Marx, Buckle, Nekrasov".

of workers' reading matter frequently contain Buckle next to Marx's *Kapital*, as it is stated in the memoirs of Waclaw Koral or of Stanisław Pestkowski, Wincenty Jastrzębski or Marian Płochocki.⁵⁸ The *History* was also read during penitentiary instruction in the 20th century...

We kept off the main track of our considerations the incidentally interesting polemics with Buckle's conceptions written by Polish representatives of the Roman Catholic church. They appeared relatively early, for as soon as in 1869 we come across the first more important study deriving from the clerical circles, and later there were several more publications on this issue.⁵⁹ It can be generally said that whereas at first Buckle's deterministic and anti-voluntaristic conceptions were criticized in these circles from the standpoint of the Augustinian-Bossuetian conceptions, with the lapse of time they gradually took on a different form basing upon Aristotelianism in its Neo-Thomistic version. Of course, this led to the refutation of the old view (incidentally, shared by Buckle himself) that the assertion of the existence of regularities in history and of historical laws demolishes the dogma of free will; it also led to the acceptance of a new formulation of the Providence's rule over the world through the natural and historical laws. This problem requires a closer examination.

The general survey of the story of the reception of T. H. Buckle's work in Poland that has been made here does not claim to fully exhaust the source materials. But it seems to us that by virtue of the facts presented here that reception can be divided into three phases: 1. the period before the January Rising, when there is some interest in Buckle but without any features of common fascination, 2. the period immediately after the rising extending over the 1860's, when we have to do with a literal fascination with Buckle's conceptions in the milieu of university students both in the Polish Kingdom and in Galicia, 3. the phase of critical reflection and moderate reception which comes in later times, when Buckle was no longer the sole intellectual authority of the young student and critical voices against him from different standpoints and milieux were heard with increasing frequency. It was then that the reading of Buckle belonged to the indispensable programme of autodidactic education and, next, even of workers' autodidactic instruction. The reception of Buckle in Poland was principally not of methodological but

⁵⁸ W. Koral, *Przez partie, związki, więzienia i Sybir*, Warsaw, 1933, p. 49; S. Pestkowski, *Wspomnienia rewolucjonisty*, Łódź, 1961, p. 5f; W. Jastrzębski, *Wspomnienia 1885-1918*, Warsaw 1966, p. 259f; M. Płochocki, *Wspomnienia działacza SDKPiL*, Warsaw 1956, pp. 42f, 52f.

⁵⁹ M. N. (owodowski), "Historia cywilizacji w Anglii Henryka Tomasza Buckla", *Przegląd Katolicki*, vol. VII, 1869, pp. 1-6, 17-21, 33-39; J. Nowodworski, *Pozytywizm*, in: *Encyklopedia Kościelna*, vol. XXI, Warsaw, 1896, pp. 96-105; M. Morawski, "Wolna wola i Opatrzność w historii a teoria Buckla", *Przegląd Powszechny*, vol. I, 1884, pp. 161-177; S. Pawlicki, *Materializm wobec nauki*, Cracow, 1870, off-print from *Przegląd Polski*, pp. 98-124.

only ideological nature, and that in a double sense. On the one hand, Buckle answered the needs of the "organic-work"-generation in that he proclaimed the cult of knowledge and intellectual progress; though the extreme points of his conceptions were criticized, this aspect of his consideration was appreciated. On the other hand, Buckle's determinism had an anti-Providentialist direction, which fascinated the young enthusiasts of the actual or, more frequently still, alleged "materialism";⁶⁰ it stimulated to opposition others. Buckle undoubtedly exercised a remarkable effect on Polish intellectual life in the latter half of the 19th century, but it must be emphasized that it had its relatively smallest influence, just as in the western countries, on the development of Polish historiography, since professional historians saw the weak points of his argumentation earliest and retained a more or less reserved attitude towards his ideas. This was the case even with those historians who, though accepting the nomothetic conception of history, were representatives of different shades of positivistic historiography in Poland.

⁶⁰ On the concept of "materialism" in Polish literature at that time cf. J. Skarbek, *Koncepcja nauki w pozytywizmie polskim*, Warsaw, 1968, p. 51ff.