

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

— XXV —

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Reconstructing the Outline Structure of Eric Voegelin's
History of Political Ideas



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ARPAD SZAKOLCZAI

**STAGES OF A QUEST:
RECONSTRUCTING THE OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF
ERIC VOEGELIN'S
*HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS***

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the understanding of the process of intellectual quest, or 'zetesis' (Voegelin 1974: 178, 190), underlying Voegelin's work on the 'History of Political Ideas'. More concretely, the paper will reconstruct the various stages in the planned outline structure, using the results of this exegetic work to improve upon the Table of Contents as presented by the editors of the *History of Political Ideas*, and draw conclusions concerning the reading and interpretation of the work as a whole.

Such an undertaking can be justified at three different levels. At the most direct level it aims to help Voegelin scholars, and indirectly all those interested in his work, towards a better understanding of the reasons why Voegelin embarked on this project, including the various directions the project took during the long decade in which he was working on it, and the eventual reasons for discontinuing it, thus leaving a work of such proportions and significance unpublished.

It almost goes without saying that any major posthumous work presents most complex interpretational and decisional problems for its editors. To list only a few examples, the

publication of the posthumous works of Nietzsche, Marx, Weber, Husserl, Wittgenstein or Foucault is a source of unending and insoluble conflicts ever since such works first appeared in print. Open discussion of editorial matters therefore forms an integral part of the way a work that previously has been all but inaccessible enters the public arena. Much of the critical comments of this paper will therefore be intended to complement, rather than question, the practices followed by the editors. The most important point, without any doubt, is that the *History of Political Ideas* can now be widely read and used, and this is the unquestionable merit of the editors.

There are, however, two rather significant points in which the editorial work turned out to be profoundly problematic. One is conceptual, the other formal. Concerning the first, especially but not restricted to the 'General Introduction to the Series', the main editors repeatedly create the impression that the passage between the *History of Political Ideas* and *Order and History* was smooth and gradual (HPI, vol. 25, p.11, 16, 17, 26), that the *History of Political Ideas* was all but completed, missing only the 'finishing touches' (HPI, vol. 25, p. 35), even explicitly rejecting Voegelin's own later remarks about the short-comings of the project (HPI, vol. 25, p.2).¹ Already in my earlier chapter reviewing the entire dynamics of Voegelin's intellectual career, I took up a strong position against such a perspective (see Szakolczai 2000a: 41, 61), and a detailed study of the changes Voegelin made to the outline of the project only reconfirmed my reservations. The results presented in this paper therefore indicate the need for a strong correction of the basic editorial principle of smooth continuity (between *History of Political Ideas* and *Order and History*).

The second point concerns the published volume structure. Even a quick perusal of the content of the book indicates that the chronological order of Volumes 5, 6 and 7 is strange. Volume 5 deals with the sixteenth century, Volume 6 jumps to the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment, while the first part of Volume 7 goes back to take up the line of narrative at the seventeenth century. Such a non-chronological sequence in a work supposedly be about the *History of Political Ideas* is puzzling, and the editors failed to give any reasons for this way of proceeding in the 'General Introduction'.² Studying the various outlines it became evident that Voegelin had no intention to invert the chronological order, and the published volume structure simply became confused due to the fact that in the course of a series of successive outline revisions Voegelin forgot to change consistently the volume numbers on his previous outline drafts. Consequently, what is now published as 'Part Six: Revolution' in Volume 6: *Revolution and the New Science* should really come after what is now published as 'Part Seven: The New Order' in Volume 7: *The New Order and Last Orientation*.

Though these findings in themselves should justify the undertaking, the paper at the same time pursues two further lines that should be appealing for a potentially broader audience. One concerns a matter of substance for social theory, while the other is related to the presentation of a methodological perspective for the proper study and understanding of major authors.

As far as the first point is concerned, one of the main problems of the Voegelin reception is the lack of familiarity with Voegelin's works within the broad area of social and political theory. To a large extent this is due to the fact that the parallels

between Voegelin's ideas and a range of historically oriented social and political theorists remained so far largely unexplored. The unfortunate and mistaken impression that the Preface to the first volume of *Order and History* generated about Voegelin as an isolated scholar working completely on his own has still not been rectified. As a good indication of the state of affairs, the editors felt compelled to insert a passage in their 'Introduction' about this, arguing that 'the author of the "History" was not a loner' (HPI, vol.19, p.14). Even the close links between Alfred Schutz and Voegelin is far from being a common knowledge among social theorists.³

The publication of the *History of Political Ideas* could go a long way in this direction, as it makes the inspiration Voegelin drew from the works of Max Weber particularly apparent. This presents three new assets for social theory. First of all, recent work on the Weber reception made it evident that the legacy of Weber's thought suffered considerably due to the distortions of its transmission.⁴ The fact that Weber hardly at all taught during his life and thus had no disciples, that his work remained fragmentary and largely unpublished, that his heritage was cured - quite problematically - first by Marianne and Alfred Weber, his widow and younger brother, and then influenced by the interpretations of Talcott Parsons, created a confusion about the proper understanding and use of Weber's life-work.⁵ This highlighted the importance of scholars who started to work on the footsteps of Weber, just after World War I,⁶ thus could pursue further Weber's project without the legacy of 'Weberian sociology' (Scaff 1984). Voegelin and Schutz, just as another pair of friends, Norbert Elias and Franz Borkenau, belonged exactly to this generation.⁷

Furthermore, Voegelin was not simply 'influenced' by Weber's work, but took up his project arguably at its most critical point. As it is well-known, in the *Protestant Ethic* Weber started to unravel the sources of modern capitalism, or modernity, by tracing it, along Nietzschean lines, back to the 'ascetic ideal',⁸ in the sense of 'inner-worldly asceticism' (a key technical term of both the *Protestant Ethic* and *Economy and Society*). At first Weber planned to further trace the sources of 'inner-worldly asceticism' back to medieval monasticism, and his essays of the 'Economic Ethic of World Religions' and the chapter on 'Religious Groups' in *Economy and Society* contain a number of theoretical-typological and historical-comparative ideas in this direction. However, in the last decade of his life his interests shifted from asceticism and monasticism to the question of prophecy. This is best visible in the famous statement inserted in 1920 into the text of the 'Protestant Ethic', according to which the entire process of disenchantment can be traced back to the great Hebrew prophets (Weber 1976: 104-5). This was a quite significant displacement of the centre of the 'rationalisation process' from the methodical conduct of life characteristic of asceticism to prophecy, especially in ancient Judaism (see Weber 1988) - all the more so as ancient Hebrew prophecy was not connected to ascetic practices. However, Weber would never have the time to clarify what he exactly had meant.

It is here that Voegelin picked up Weber's suggestions and put, in successive draft versions, the rise of 'intramundane' (or 'inner-worldly') eschatology at the centre of his work, at least for a time (from about 1940 to 1945).⁹ From this perspective, therefore, the publication of the work should be considered as a major event for comparative historical sociology.

Finally, the modality or the 'note' on which Voegelin read Weber is also of particular interest, especially concerning the current stage of Weber research. While for many decades the possible connection between Nietzsche and Weber was almost an anathema in sociology, in the last decade, following even here the pioneering work of Wilhelm Hennis (1988, Chapter 4), the connection has been increasingly accepted. In this regard as well, as it will become apparent later, Voegelin's work could be considered as path-breaker.¹⁰

The third major point of this paper belongs to questions of method. It can be argued that the proper way to approach the life-work, or the oeuvre, of major thinkers is one of the most under-conceptualised areas in social and political thought. There have been few attempts to establish a middle ground between the opposite poles of a systematic study of the ideas of a thinker, in which the development of the thought is, if at all present, reduced to the status of a background sketch; or an exercise in intellectual history, where the narrative is presented on its own right, and event of life overshadow the dynamics of thought. This might be part of the reason why in contemporary theorising there is a definite shift away from thinkers to ideas and concepts, culminating in the famous claims of Barthes and Foucault about the 'death of the author' in the 1960s (Foucault 1984b). In this context it is widely believed that emphasis on the work of single thinkers is exaggerated, a survival pre-scientific or dogmatic forms of thought. Such beliefs are reinforced by certain cults developed around particularly influential and controversial thinkers, of which the 'sects' of Marxists and Freudians are probably the most poignant examples.

Such denigration of the significance of authors, however, is based on a lack of distinction made between the tasks of understanding and explanation. Though it would be unwise to oppose the two terms to each other, they still imply a very different perspective on and strategy for the gaining of knowledge. Explanation aims at the objectification of phenomena and maximises the distance between the observer and the phenomena observed. Understanding, however, starts by the recognition of a fundamental commonality between the observer and the phenomena observed, of the fact that they both *participate* in common practices, in the same reality, and tries to maximise the amount of insight that can be gained on the basis of this recognition. This does not mean an elusive search for unique, quasi-mystic experiences, and can be conceived of as the pursuit of the same project of the accumulation of knowledge as the conventional, 'objectifying' sciences. However, in the case of understanding the single most important outcome of this accumulation of knowledge-insights is the personality of the thinker itself. The search for understanding is transformed into a quest, a 'zetesis', which implies that the need to understand the ideas of complex and epoch-making thinkers is bound to be transformed into a quest itself.

Social and political thought, in so far as it aims at an understanding of the character and dynamics of contemporary reality, cannot pass over the status of the life-works produced by the most significant thinkers of the past century, and thus cannot overlook the task that the understanding of their work implies. Such a task, therefore, needs to be conceptualised in its own terms.

The following paper outlining the dynamics of the changing outline structure of the *History of Political Ideas* will be an exercise in introducing a perspective for the reconstruction of the trajectory of major authors. In the next section of the paper, the main principles of this approach will be introduced.

How To Study Authors?

The method suggested here for the study of the long-term projects of major authors has been elaborated in my earlier book, where I attempted to reconstruct the dynamics of the life-works of Max Weber and Michel Foucault (Szakolczai 1998: 20-37, 83-6). Its three key sources were the concept of liminality as developed by Victor Turner (1967, 1969, 1982, 1985, 1992), the concern with philosophical or spiritual exercises, as shown in the writings of Pierre Hadot (1993, 1995a, 1995b),¹¹ and the ideas of Eric Voegelin (1978) about anamnestic experiments and the experiential bases of thought.

The central idea is that the reconstruction of the internal dynamics of a long-term in-depth intellectual project must focus on the particular *rhythm* which this project follows. The key element of this rhythm is the way research and writing is *punctuated*, with long periods of steady and extensive work separated by short and intense periods or break-points of reflection. Such break-points, or ‘liminal moments’, can be due to completely exogenous factors like events in politics or personal life, including stages of academic career or one’s own life-cycle; could be due to interactions with publishers, or other considerations related to the writing and reception of the work; or it could be due to intellectual encounters, either

personally or through certain 'reading experiences'.¹² Whatever the reason, such moments give the opportunity for the author to take a step back from the work completed so far, to reassess the questions and problems to be addressed and the direction in which the work had progressed. Such a stock-taking, a meditating exercise or an instance of reflexivity may result in a new plan for the entire structure of the work and/or an intermediate summary of the central ideas and concerns of the work, or some of its parts. Examples for such exercises are the 'late Prefaces' Nietzsche wrote to the second editions of most of his published books in 1886, culminating in the Preface to the *Genealogy of Morals*; Weber's three famous summary pieces, used by now even in the English literature in their German names as the *Einleitung*, the *Zwischenbetrachtung* and the *Vorbemerkung* (all three published in Weber 1988, vol.1); or the three versions of Foucault's Preface to the *History of Sexuality* series. Similarly, the various outlines Nietzsche produced for his planned magnum opus repeatedly were used by scholars to address the problem of the editorial decisions made by Elisabeth Nietzsche in publishing the posthumous *Will to Power*,¹³ while the various outlines Weber circulated to the planned contributors of the *Handbook* project were similarly used by Weber scholars in their attempts to interpret and reconstruct Weber's changing intentions.

In fact, the parallels between Weber's *Economy and Society* and Voegelin's *History of Political Ideas* are particularly striking, extending to the conflicting exigencies of both works. Just as Voegelin's original project was to write a short textbook on the history of political ideas, Weber was originally merely the editor, asked by the publishers, of the third edition of Schonberg's much used textbook of political

economy. And just as Voegelin's project remained in several ways 'path-dependent' on this starting configuration, the incomplete and unfinished character of *Economy and Society*, together with endless debates on the editorial principles, was due to the tensions Weber experienced when trying to produce his key theoretical work in sociology in the starting configuration of a collective textbook of political economy.

In an earlier piece I have already made an attempt to reconstruct the dynamics of Voegelin's intellectual trajectory in its entirety, following the guidelines as summarised above (Szakolczai 2000a: 33-73). This paper can be considered as an alternative way, or a testing, of the earlier paper, focusing on a crucial period of Voegelin's life-work, the gradual shaping of the work on the 'History of political ideas' and its eventual turning into the *Order and History* project. Following Weberian methodological guidelines, it will single out one particular aspect of this complex process, the various outlines Voegelin produced over a ten-year period, and will try to reconstruct the underlying dynamics of the project through the prism of these outlines.

The Outlines

Outline 1

The starting outline is the eight-chapter outline, by now well-known in the Voegelin literature (see **Outline 1** in the Appendix). The logic underlying its structure is explained in Voegelin's original 'Introduction', published as an Appendix to volume 19 and as a German/English version in the

Occasional Papers of the *Eric-Voegelin-Archiv*. Voegelin gave two major reasons for the suggested outline: first, that it is not enough to start with the Greeks but it is necessary to go back to more distant oriental sources (vol. 19: 235-6); and second, that – in opposition to existing textbook discussions – it is necessary to work into the text the more recent monographic findings (letter of 4 August 1941 to Fritz Morstein Marx, see in Opitz 1994b: 134).

This first outline requires three basic comments. First of all, throughout the entire history of the book, in spite of all the fundamental changes, Voegelin remained extremely faithful to this original outline. He would never alter suddenly and radically this organisation of the material. Though the original chapters would soon develop into parts, Voegelin would only do three different things with these chapter-parts: rename them; divide them into two (or in one single case three) parts; or combine two chapters into one. He would never drop a chapter, nor create a completely new one. The recognition of this principle helps a lot in identifying the changing structure over the time. At the same time it shows the lasting impact of the starting configuration - broken only with the six-volume outline of *Order and History*.

Second, the chapter organisation was clearly unsuitable for a textbook on the history of political ideas, and for two related reasons. Textbooks are (and especially in 1939 were) the most conventional of books. They were supposed to have roughly equal chapter lengths. Furthermore, an American textbook on the history of political ideas was supposed to be mostly on relatively recent history, from Machiavelli onwards, focusing on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though it was supposed to give some background information on the

ancients, but not much more than a hint. According to Voegelin's original plan, however, out of the eight chapters, chapter six would only take the story up to the Middle Ages. This was bound to mean that the book would either have only a few pages on Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, etc. each, thus would be useless for most courses; or would much exceed its original size and contain chapters of very unequal size. In other words, even though originally Voegelin was quite keen in producing the work according to contract, for rather obvious existential reasons, there was something incompatible with such a purpose even in the original outline.

Finally, and somewhat surprisingly, the chapter titles reveal a strong impact of Spenglerian ideas.¹⁴ The book was to be organised around an East-West contrast and contest, following a cyclical logic, with a central role played by migrations. It contained even straightforward Spenglerian terms like 'Magian Nations'.¹⁵ Finally, any reference to 'Christianity' was conspicuously absent. Even in the medieval chapter the emphasis seemed to have been put on the 'secular forces'.

In the first phase of the work, lasting from late 1938 to about summer 1940, Voegelin strictly followed his original outline and the explicit aim of writing a history of political ideas. It is difficult to be precise about the exact content of this early manuscript as practically all of it has been either re-written several times or gone missing. However, on the basis of the available indications it seems reasonable to assume that Voegelin started work on the textbook as contracted, and followed chronological order. Given his existential pressures, he had a vital interest in a prompt completion of the manuscript by the September 1940 deadline.

Work, however, progressed much slower than expected. In a 2 April 1940 letter to Fritz Morstein Marx, Voegelin – though alluding to some delays due to teaching duties - still expressed his confidence that the manuscript will be delivered in time (Opitz 1994b: 133). However, by the summer of 1940, he was still only trying to finish the chapters on Plato and Aristotle, part of the background chapters on Antiquity (Opitz 2001a and Opitz 2001b). This was indication of a major delay, and - given the tight conditions under which he was living - this requires an explanation.

There are clear indications that, quite soon after work started, there were two perspectives that entered the work that were quite different from the task of writing a standard text on political ideas. One was in the direction of deepening the analysis. Voegelin had a strong interest in political theory, already in 1930 started a work on political thought, which at that time decided to abandon. It is quite clear that the concerns ‘bracketed’ then returned now. The original chapter on Plato, now rendered available (see Voegelin 2001), already goes in scope way beyond a simple presentation of Plato’s ideas in a textbook. Furthermore, he started to learn Hebrew in order to better follow the text of the Old Testament (Voegelin 1989: 63). This was clearly not something *any* textbook on the history of political ideas could possibly require.

One could argue that there is nothing surprising in the fact that a political theorist follows his inclinations and probes deeper into the subject matter as he originally thought. Such a proposition, however, neglects two major issues. First, there are different genres of books, written for different purposes. It is a matter of professionalism to comply with the simple requirement that a textbook should be different from a

research monograph. Second, the external conditions, the vital need to develop a publication record and establish a reputation in his new country made the need to comply with the original purposes all the more stringent. This makes the suggestion that Voegelin was simply carried away with his theoretical interests untenable.

This takes us to the second point. Such deep existential matters could only have been 'ignored' if they were countered by even more vital, and similarly personal-existential interests. In Voegelin's case, this was the perspective of a (sociological) diagnosis of modernity, relying on the seminal works of Nietzsche and Weber. While such a perspective originally could not have been part of his writing, by the passage of time it has increasingly crept into the work, together with (and, indeed explaining) the theoretical deepening. The reasons for such a change can be readily given, as in the meanwhile, on 1 September 1939, the Second World War had broken out. In the existential-experiential context of a truly apocalyptic situation, the need for an account of the reasons and sources proved to be overwhelming to the 'simple' existential concerns of publishing a textbook in order to make a living. The unavoidable result was the first delay in the completion and publication of the book.

It was in this context that the vicissitudes of the 'History' entered the correspondence with Schutz. In a letter of 31 December 1940, with the end of the year providing a special opportunity for reflecting on the work of the past year,¹⁶ Voegelin complained to Schutz that 'each day new problems' were encountered with the 'History' (Weiss 2000: 308).

Apart from this delay, the substance of the book also became significantly altered. At this phase, the most important novelty was the writing of the first version of the 'People of God' chapter that became the core of the entire manuscript. In the following a tentative interpretation will be offered concerning how it might have come about.

Once completing the background chapters on Antiquity, it seems that the two main chapters of the original plan, the chapter on the Middle Ages and the National State were written together – a writing technique Voegelin would use during the entire period.¹⁷ This on the one hand might have eased the tediousness of a straightforward chronological narrative while on the other hand facilitated the establishment of connections back and forth. What remained to be done was to write the last chapter on the dissolution of the national state, or on the sources of the crisis of the present, and also to put together the last two chapters that were written separately (on the Middle Ages and the national state), to smoothen the transition between them. For these purposes, at this stage, Voegelin took a step back from the existing drafts, reflected on them, in the sense of Weber's *Einleitung* or *Zwischenbetrachtung* (Weber 1948a, 1948b).¹⁸ The 'People of God' chapter was the result of this first reflection phase. In this chapter the two main concerns Voegelin had at this moment became connected, and this short-circuit gave a spark that radically and most significantly altered the fate of the entire manuscript. Voegelin suddenly realised that the link between the medieval and the modern age and the crisis of the present age, or the 'revolution-problem' (see letter to Fritz Morstein Marx, 6 May 1941, in Opitz 1994a: 127) are one and the same, both being rooted in the problem of 'intramundane'

or ‘inner-worldly’ eschatology, a terminology that would become central to the entire manuscript.¹⁹

This concept, of course, was strongly Weberian. But Weberian terms and models, in several senses of the term, came to play a major role in the entire project at that stage.²⁰ Voegelin intended to start Chapter 7 with Machiavelli, and in his draft used a terminology that was both distinctly Weberian and strongly reminiscent of the terminology he used to describe Weber in his 1930 essay.²¹

However, if originally (in 1939) Voegelin envisioned that Machiavelli was the singular link between the medieval and the modern, a threshold figure comparable to Weber at the end of the nineteenth century, then at this moment, when writing the ‘People of God’ sections, he had to change his mind. There were at least two fundamental links between the medieval and the modern period, as there were two different modernities: the medieval modernity of Machiavelli (and also Bodin), and the Northern ‘modernity’ of the Reformation.

It was at this moment that the term ‘intramundane eschatology’ became the central organising term for the entire book. This required a number of further tasks. The actual chapters on the Middle Ages had to be rewritten, in light of this discovery. Instead of just telling the story of the ideas of the past, it became necessary to tell the story how the eschatological impulse could have become inner-worldly. And this required a much more thorough familiarisation with Christianity, going back to the sources, especially the *Old Testament* books of the ancient Hebrew prophets. It was in order to launch this new return to Christianity that Voegelin

wrote another crucial summary piece, entitled 'The Spiritual Disintegration'.

Outline 2

The consequences, in terms of a new outline, were only drawn in the late summer and autumn of 1941, when it has become apparent that the publisher is most upset about the delay and has serious question marks concerning the feasibility of the project as a textbook. It was drawn up just after the 'last' contact with Morstein Marx on 4 August 1941 (Opitz 1994a: 127; HPI, vol.19, p.4). After this Voegelin would not contact the publishers again until the spring of 1944, by which time the manuscript, originally planned for 250 pages, grew into over 1400 pages. In the new outline, to be called **Outline 2**, Voegelin split the original Chapter 7 into two chapters, that now came to be entitled Chapter 7 'Transition' and Chapter 8 'The National State'; and his work on the rise of Christianity led him to join the original Chapters 4 and 5 in a new chapter entitled 'Christianity and Rome'. The total number of chapters thus remained the same.

A new moment of reflection came in the summer of 1943. This turned out to be the occasion of the discussion with Schutz and the first 'anamnetic experiments'. As this episode is quite well-known, and as I have also discussed this extensively in my biographical book chapter (Szokolczai 2000a: 44-7), there is no need here to go into details. I would only emphasise two points. First, the opportunity for this moment of reflexive distance came by Voegelin's appointment, on 20 August 1943, for three years as a

Associate Professor in LSU, thus providing existential safety cushion. Second, apart from the anamnestic experiments that would be published in 1966 and that were not directly related to the *History of Political Ideas* (rather to Husserl's book *Crisis*), Voegelin was also engaged in another meditative exercise that was very closely related to the ongoing book project, a meditation on Nietzsche. The essays 'Nietzsche, the Crisis and the War' (Voegelin 1944) and 'Nietzsche and Pascal' (in HPI, vol. 25) were both parts of this exercise. Though the broader aim was to collect material for the eventual Nietzsche chapter of the book, Voegelin was also aware of the explicit meditative character of this work.

The correspondence between Voegelin and Engel-Janosi is particularly illuminating in this respect. Thus, after Voegelin sent the Nietzsche-Pascal manuscript, in his letter of 1 June 1944 Engel-Janosi claimed he was not sure about word 'meditation' with respect to Nietzsche: 'Wegen des Terms "Meditation" fuer Nietzsche war ich anfangs nicht sicher, aber jetzt stimme ich Ihnen auch da zu. Ob Sie in einem Satz dem Leser den Innerweltlichen Mysticism umschreiben sollten?' (Voegelin Archive, box 11:7). In his response of 14 June Voegelin stood by his views that Nietzsche's work can be considered as meditation, putting the emphasis especially on the *Untimely Meditations*. This is also the time in which Voegelin started his correspondence with Löwith, that - especially in the first period - much centred around Nietzsche.²²

These reflective or meditative exercises led to a renewed effort to complete the work. Both of them can be closely correlated with two further crucial intermediate summaries that re-launched his work on the completion of the eighteenth

century. It was in the summer of 1943, just around the reading of Husserl's 'Crisis' and the ensuing discussion with Schutz, that Voegelin completed the first version of the 'Model Polity'.²³ And it was just upon finishing the 'Nietzsche and Pascal' paper that the Voegelin wrote another important piece, 'Apostasy', a 'programmatic Introduction to the modern part of History' (Weiss 2000: 144).²⁴

There is no sign at this point of a change in the outline structure, and it is easy to see why this was the case. Voegelin still had a contract. It was vital for him to publish the book, and by the summer of 1944 he planned to finish the book. However, this moment turned out to be stressful and liminal in more ways than one (see Szakolczai 2000a: 47-8; concerning the background of his existential difficulties at the time, see also Cooper 1999: 19-32). This pushed Voegelin to another stage of reflection and eventually – through a change of publisher – provided him an opportunity to alter the book structure. In some ways the moment resembled the summer of 1940. Voegelin was again confronting the task of writing the chapter on the 'modern crisis' in order to finish the manuscript. He has now completed the parts on the Middle Ages and a new version on the modern part. He needed a new stocktaking, and the result of this reflexive-meditative exercise is the crucial new section entitled 'Intermission' (HPI, vol. 7, pp. 153-7). This is one of the most important summary of Voegelin's position at the time, and given its placing in the volume, it is bound to be overlooked.²⁵

Outline 3

The new contract offered by Macmillan in September 1944 gave Voegelin finally the possibility to alter the outline, incorporating properly the changes that happened during the process of research and writing. However, as the idea was to publish quickly a manuscript that is all but completed, radical changes could not have been envisaged. The outcome is the second outline contained in the 'outline dossier' (Archives, 56:8), to be called **Outline 3**. The first five parts are missing from the Archive version, but - given that at that stage he thought these were finished - this has no significance. Parts VI and VII were also considered then as finalised.

The reason why the previous parts of the outline have gone missing is that later they would be lifted and appended to a new version of the outline. Parts VI through IX stayed because these would be changed in the next step, so the full chapter outline of the version that has become obsolete was preserved.

Part VI, entitled 'Transition', now consisted of four chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 on Machiavelli and 'The People of God' are followed by a chapter entitled 'The Great Confusion', discussing the Reformation, and a chapter on Bodin.

The plan at that stage was that Voegelin would not even touch the first seven parts, consisting of the first two volumes and the first part of the third volume, and would only work on the completion of the third volume, on the modern age. The plan went according to schedule up to the summer of 1945, the time of the writing of the Schelling chapter. This episode is again well documented (apart from the *Autobiographical Reflections*, see especially Gebhardt 1982: 67-9, and Weiss

2000: 143-56). It certainly gave Voegelin a new orientation. In methodological terms, it eventually led to the discovery of the language of experiences and their symbolisation. In substantive terms, it led him back to the origin of myths. But in another sense this section, together with the Bruno section that was originally its part, and the Bodin and Vico sections with their presentation of attempts at a search for a true religion and of the putting of the intellect at the middle of the universe, gives a decisively 'gnostic' colour to Voegelin's writings of these years. This would only be changed with the 'visionary' discovery of the gnostic character of modernity, in 1949-1950, that would lead him back again to the *Old Testament* and would give a more strongly Christian character to his work in the early 1950s, which would be slightly altered again around the time of the completion of the German version of *Anamnesis*.

Outline 4

The meditative Schelling and Vico pieces were promptly followed by new attempts at reorganisation in the winter and summer of 1946,²⁶ leading to a new outline, **Outline 4**. Though the effect of the joint Schelling and Vico 'reading experience' on the direction and content of Voegelin's work was enormous, the difference in the new Outline as compared to the previous is relatively minor. It involves some re-shaping of Part VI, Transition, like the bringing the section 'Man in History and Nature' to the end of the part, after the Bodin chapter, and the inserting the Bruno section at the end of this chapter. More importantly, Part VIII, planned to be about Vico, Rousseau and Hegel, is now split into two parts. The

new Part VIII, entitled 'Revolution', then consisted of three sections, still lacking the 'English Quest'. Part IX, now entitled 'Last Orientation', incorporated the changes that were due to the work done after the signing of the contract.

With the new plan, and after finishing the Vico chapter, Voegelin was again ready to turn to the last, still missing part, entitled 'The Crisis'. This is what he indeed started with a chapter on Helvétius.²⁷ However, as it is well known, instead of completing this last part, he quite suddenly took a deep plunge back in history, returning to Plato, thus going back, for the first time since the contract with Macmillan, before the sixteenth century; furthermore, even more importantly, for the first time since the very early 1940s back to Antiquity. This plunge is usually attributed to the reading of Schelling and Vico, and the new interest in the origin of myths. However, while this was certainly a main stimulus, perhaps it was matched by an important episode in the Helvétius chapter. In the completing stages of this manuscript Voegelin stumbled on Bentham's *Panopticon*. The book made a very strong impression on him, leading to the claim that 'The *Panopticon* is one of the most fascinating documents for the pneumapathology of the eighteenth century', and that 'The reader of the *Panopticon* is haunted by the suspicion that Bentham is a figure that escaped from a novel of Kafka' (HPI, vol. 26, p.71, fn.64). The sentence to which this footnote is appended, and which - as the same footnote informs us - was written before Voegelin encountered Bentham's *Panopticon*, contains a powerful image concerning the role of the legislator:

As the spider in the web of appearances sits the managing legislator - the intramundane counterforce to God - guiding the spectacle of the struggle which has so much success with

the audience because everybody recognizes in it his own struggle. (ibid: 71).

Now, one of the most famous passages of Plato's *Laws* indeed contains a similar, highly evocative image:

Let us suppose that each of us living creatures is an ingenious puppet of the gods, whether contrived by way of a toy of theirs or for some serious purpose - for as to that we know nothing; but this we know, that these inward affections of ours, like sinews or cords, drag us along and, being opposed to each other, pull one against the other to opposite actions; and herein lies the dividing line between goodness and badness. (Plato 1934: 69.)²⁸

Furthermore, together with the *Gorgias*, it is exactly the section on *Nomoi* that Voegelin would later offer to Waldemar Gurian for publication (see letter of 3 April 1949). Thus, it seems plausible to conjecture that the reading of Bentham's *Panopticon* could have had a decisive impact on the radical reorientation of Voegelin's work towards Antiquity.²⁹

The return to Plato, arguably, is the decisive break of which the 'History of Political Ideas' project would never recover, even though it would take a lot of time for Voegelin to resign the manuscript to its fate. In the last two years when Voegelin would still struggle to complete the manuscript (1948-1949), the time horizon, instead of being limited to the nineteenth century, is increasingly expanding. Though the completion of the modern section remains Voegelin's prime concern, and he duly finishes additional pieces on Positivism, Comte and Marx, there comes a return to the seventeenth century (the concluding sections of the English Quest), to the sixteenth century (Machiavelli, the 'People of God', Luther, Calvin), and finally to Aristotle. This led to somewhat perplexing choices in the arrangement of the material, like the adding of

chapter 4, mostly on the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, to the end of the eighteenth century part on 'Revolution', and to an increasing loss of purpose and meaning (see letter of Vatikiotis to Geoffrey Price, 13 July 1994; also HPI, vol. 19, p.30). Finally, it led to a last major effort to put together an outline – that, however, not only resulted in the definite abandonment of the project but created a confusion in the manuscript and outlines that left a stamp even on the now published edition.

Outline 5

This outline exists in two variants. The first of them, to be called **Outline 5**, is the top outline in the dossier contained in the Archive (56:8). The basis of this outline is the previous, 1946 outline (**Outline 4**). It starts with Part III of this previous outline, only the typed Roman number 'III' is crossed over by ink and replaced by a hand-written Roman number 'V'. The same procedure is repeated with Part IV of the previous outline. In the following Part V, however, the number 'V' was not crossed out. The reason might well have been that - as these three parts were not even touched after 1944 - it simply became tedious to mechanically copy the number alterations. This trivial omission, however, would eventually leave a lasting mark.

Though the first four parts of the new outline are missing, it is not difficult to guess what they might have contained. When Voegelin returned to the Aristotle chapter, the old Part Two expanded out of all proportions, and had to be split into three parts. These eventually developed into the volumes of *Order and History* on 'The World of the Polis', on 'Plato' and on

'Aristotle'. Out of the previous drafts of the old Part Two, Voegelin would only keep the section 'Spiritual Disintegration', written - as a crucial summary piece - later than the original first two parts.

The part on 'Sacrum Imperium' is followed with the sixteenth century chapters, without a part title and in a considerable disorder that shows clear signs of a major and unfinished reorganisation. Due to the new work on Machiavelli, More, 'The People of God', and the Reformation sections, the entire Part is drastically reshaped. The More section is taken out of the 'Great Confusion' Chapter, combined with a - possibly new - section on Erasmus, and is arranged symmetrically with the Machiavelli section, under the new titles 'The Order of Power' and 'The Order of Reason'. Though some sections are missing, otherwise the part basically takes up a more or less final character, and would be thus published by the editors.

The next item is Part VIII, Revolution, containing the four chapters exactly as they would be published. However, it is quite evident that the Roman number 'VIII' should have been crossed out and replaced by a Roman number 'X'. It is further supported by the fact that the last item contained in the outline is Part XI, 'Last Orientation'. However, the chapter order of this part as indicated here in the Outline is somewhat perplexing, as it combines chapters from 'Last Orientation' (Phenomenalism, Schelling, Hölderlin), and 'The Crisis' (Bakunin and Marx).

Apart from the inconsistency of numbering, there are a number of puzzles with this outline, perhaps the most important being the absence of many sections and an entire part. Starting with the latter, the outline contains no reference

to the seventeenth century section, originally entitled 'The National State' and then renamed 'The New Order'. At this point, I can only offer a hypothesis. The missing Part is contained in the separate dossier mentioned by Opitz (1995: 129-30), entitled Chapter [sic] IX, The National State, 1938-43, containing the draft *without* the Intermission. The combination of the old draft sections with the new title number could only mean that around this moment, or perhaps at a later stage, Voegelin himself started to 'archive' his own project, tracing pieces of the manuscript to a given time period. A similar attempt could have been at work with Part XI, containing the sections as of 1945-46, without the already finished chapters on Helvétius, positivism and Comte, but containing the 1948-49 numbering. However, Voegelin did not carry through either the plan to come up with a final outline, or the 'archiving' of the abandoned manuscript. This would result in confusing inconsistencies.

Outline 6

The outline dossier contains the record of a last attempt to finalise the structure of the work, to be called **Outline 6**. This outline is very close to the previous, and demonstrates a clear effort to sort out the problems and come up with a definite outline. Every single chapter outline is typed on a separate page, containing a clean copy of the final section and subsection ordering, with the intention to indicate the full page numbers. This order is followed through from Part V and VI (Parts I through IV are again missing). However, for Part VII, the page numbers are omitted; and after chapter 21, 'The Imperial Zone', confusion starts (see Appendix). This includes

evident misspelling, the placing of the 'Man in History and Nature' section wrongly at the end of 'Part VI: Transition', and the presence of two different outlines of the 'Bodin' section.

The interpretation seems to be very simple: just as writing every section on a single page has the advantage that they can be easily changed when necessary - it also has the disadvantage that it is easy to shuffle and confuse the single pages, like a pack of cards.

This is physically the last outline in the dossier, and it is quite evident that this was the most recent effort. Not only is there a definite effort to produce a clean typescript, but this is the only version where the numbers for Parts V and VI are typed, and where 'Sacrum Imperium' appears as Part VII. But this clean final version was never completed, furthermore, it was later rearranged and confused. Whatever is the case, this was the situation the curators of the manuscript and the eventual editors had to face from the middle of the 1980s onwards.

Outline 7

The first outline produced was the Table of Contents used for the bound typescript version widely known and used by Voegelin scholars, available in the Voegelin Archive (**Outline 7**). This outline was evidently put together using the outline dossier, especially the last two versions, in a very short time, as the puzzles related to confusing, contradictory or missing part titles are clearly indicated. Up to Part VI numbering is uncontroversial. This is followed by the part entitled Sacrum

Imperium, again without any problem – however, it is given the title number Part VII - I. It is followed by Part VII - II, without a title, containing the chapters on the sixteenth century, closing with Bodin, but lacking the chapter ‘Man in History and Nature’. Then come the four chapters of Part VIII, ‘Revolution’, followed by two Part Nines, distinguished in brackets by Roman numbers I and II, both followed by a question mark. The ‘first’ Part Nine is entitled ‘The National State’. It contains continuously the first five chapters of *Part Seven: The New Order*, as published in volume 25, though with the slight difference that in **Outline 7** the three sections of the published chapter 1 called ‘The National State’ are still numbered as three chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 of volume 25, however, are missing, and the Part is closed in the bound Archive typescript with Chapter 8, ‘Man in History and Nature’. This, however, is clearly a mistake, as already in March 1946 this section was placed at the end of the sixteenth century, and would be duly rectified in the published version.

The ‘second’ Part IX contains the Introduction and the first three chapters of the published *Part Eight: Last Orientation*. It then lists, after a clear indication of a break, the paper ‘Nietzsche and Pascal’, that would become Chapter 4 in the published volume.

As I have already mentioned, this outline was clearly produced in considerable haste, with the intent of rendering the manuscript available for scholars as quickly as possible. The problems posed by the ‘two’ Parts Seven and Parts Nine were clearly marked. The real problem, however, was that the sign that there was only *one* ‘Part VIII’ was handled as the evidence that this was the ‘real’ Part VIII of the final version. All the other parts of the modern period of the manuscript

were arranged and numbered around this ‘fixed’, Archimedean point. However, this was exactly the worst possible solution. There was only one Part VIII, and no Part X, as Voegelin became unsatisfied with the title of the old Part VI, Transition, but never came up with a new one, so there was nowhere to put ‘Part VIII’; and he never re-numbered Part VIII to Part X, as this part of the manuscript was not touched after late 1947, or the completion of the ‘English Quest’. As a result of all this, the eighteenth century part (‘Revolution’) was fitted before the seventeenth century part (‘The New Order’), and this - mistaken - arrangement was preserved even in the published volumes.³⁰

The choice of ‘Part VIII: Revolution’ for such a fixed point was all the more unfortunate as this is the most unusual, complex, and eclectic of all parts of the book, a sign and living document of the dismantling of the project. The part grew out of the original Part VIII of the Macmillan outline (**Outline 3**), planned to be focusing on Vico, Rousseau and Hegel. The first version of ‘Apostasy’, a most important ‘joint’ piece (‘joint’ as in the sense of connecting members, like an ankle, a knee or an elbow), was written for this purpose already in early 1944. However, after the Schelling and Vico reading experiences, this part was split into two, one focusing on Vico (Part VIII Revolution in **Outline 4**), the other focusing, instead of Hegel, on Schelling and Hölderlin, his Jena friends (Part IX Last Orientation in **Outline 4**). The Rousseau part was then evidently abandoned - which could easily be read as a decisive indication that the book was not to be finished as ‘History of Political Ideas’.³¹ At this stage the ‘French’ Apostasy section was appended with the ‘English’ ‘Model Polity’ section, another crucial ‘joint’ piece, focusing similarly on the first half

of the eighteenth century and on the ‘sentiments’ out of which the dismantling of the Christian world view grew out.

This arrangement was modified for one last time, around the turn of 1947/48, when - upon finalising the ‘Origins of Scientism’ paper -, Voegelin added Chapter 4, entitled ‘The English Quest for the Concrete’. This had serious consequences for the chronological arrangement of the entire work, another clear indication that even the modified design of a standard reference work can no longer held the project together.

Outline 8

We have now arrived at the actual Table of Content of the eight published volumes (**Outline 8**). Given the vicissitudes of the work, it is of some interest that just as the *History of Political Ideas* was originally planned in eight chapters, it eventually came out in eight volumes. It goes without saying that the editors had to face a number of difficult choices. The work had no clean and final outline, and the first three parts and the first two sections of the fourth part were missing. Furthermore, one of the more perplexing character of all extant outlines is that they do not even contain allusion to a volume structure to accommodate publication exigencies.³² The three-volume structure on which Voegelin settled with Macmillan, alongside the simple Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modernity dimensions, was not at all guiding Voegelin’s own outline, and – given that most of the typescript on Antiquity was missing, as it was eventually built into *Order and History* - it was not practicable. It was therefore clear that editorial

decisions and interpretations, concerning both published volume titles and chapter order, had to be made.

The problems do not lie here. It is rather that the editors did not always inform readers concerning the nature and reasons of editorial decisions. The point is not to charge them for failing to produce a critical edition, as this was clearly not feasible at the moment. It is rather that – in the interest of producing the image of a clearly running, continuous manuscript – they failed to tell what they have actually done and why. To be fair, there is a note to the ‘Outline of the Cumulative Contents’, perhaps significantly signed by Sandoz only, which indicates that the typescript published is a ‘remnant’, and has a ‘fragmentary and unfinished character’ (HPI, vol. 19, p.239). This is reinforced by Gebhardt in his Introduction to Volume Seven, where he argues about the ‘unfinished and fragmentary form of a manuscript that Voegelin himself never prepared for the press’ (HPI, vol. 25, p.26).³³ This, however, is too little too late. Even if one could understand that a publication cannot start with a chapter entitled Part IV, section 3, still, in the ‘Outline of the Cumulative Contents’, published as an Appendix, there should have been some detailed allusions about the actual status of the entire project and its outline. From the reading of the editorial material to the volumes, one rather gains the opposite picture: that there was a definite attempt on the part of at least some of the editors to create the impression that the work was ‘almost’ complete, and that it runs quite ‘smoothly’ into *Order and History*. Perhaps the clearest, and most revealing, indication of such a position comes in the ‘Editorial Introduction’ to Volume 25. This piece ends by the claim that Voegelin’s editorial work ‘would of course have extended farther had the author lived to add the finishing touches to the

text' (vol. 25: 35). The fact that Voegelin 'failed' to add these 'finishing touches' for more than 35 years clearly reveals the untenability of the interpretative position contained in the sentence quoted above. Again perhaps significantly, the last less-than-a-page of this 'Editorial Introduction' containing this passage is signed by Gebhardt and Hollweck, while otherwise the entire piece is signed by Gebhardt only.

Apart from the problem concerning the order of parts and the lack of clear indications about the exact status of the manuscript, there are a small number of minor issues concerning a series of editorial choices not dictated by perceived or real publication needs that have to be mentioned here. Thus, the editors sometimes broke up units into smaller pieces, or created larger units that was not granted by the extant outlines. Such cases include the distinction between *Part Four: The Modern World* and *Part Five: The Great Confusion*, not contained in any extant outlines produced by Voegelin; and the joint arrangement of the planned first three chapters of the part on 'The New Order' as three sections under Chapter 1 'The National State'. The reason for this choice seems to be that the editors wanted to insert such broad titles like 'The Modern World' or 'National State', used for a long time but eventually dismantled by Voegelin, into the published volumes. Though the publishing of such important marks is certainly a worthy undertaking, it seems to me that it would have been a better idea to insert such considerations into the editorial material.

The last comments concern the way the last chapters of the two main parts of volume 25 came to be published. On the one hand, these contain material (the 'Nietzsche and Pascal' paper and the sections 'Spleen and Scepticism', 'Montesquieu' and

'The Enlargement of the Geographical Horizon') that were clearly not part of the final outline structure. Concerning the attempt to publish extant manuscript pieces, in spite of their place being problematic, the problem is again only the lack of an editorial comment or footnote. My only genuine concern is the way Chapter 7 'Intermission' was put together. As we have seen earlier, such a chapter was not part of the 1938-43 manuscript, but was already inserted in the summer 1944 Macmillan outline. There, however, it only contained two sections. The added sections not only do not go well together with the texts of the first two sections of the 'Intermission', but are difficult to subsume under either of the Part titles ('National State' or 'New Order'). Even further, they blur the fact that the two original paragraphs of the 'Intermission' not only play a concluding role to the Part, but are one of the most important 'joint' pieces of the book, providing a summary and a restatement of purpose, and also a forward look to the next Part. Their misplacing after and not before the part on 'Revolution', and the placing of three further sections after them undermined their exceptional significance. In the right context, however, it becomes clear that the first paragraph ('The First Cycle: Order against Spirit) resumes the argument of the previous part ('The New Order'), while the second paragraph ('The Second Cycle: The Reassertion of Spirit) projects forward, on the one hand, the 'New Science' of Vico, but also Nietzsche and Weber; and on the other, the 'spiritual activists' like Marx, or the thinkers to be contained in the last parts - though, as the text was probably unrevised after 1944, the difference with the eventual draft versions of the later chapters is of course considerable.

Outline 9

In light of the foregoing, let me then offer an attempt to reconstruct the 'last stage' of the Outline of the 'History of Political Ideas' (see **Outline 9**). In doing so, I must start by acknowledging that it is simply not possible to produce an unambiguous 'master plan'. This is because the eventual abandoning of the project overlapped with an attempt to 'archive' the phases of the undertaking and the re-conceptualisation of the project into *Order and History*. Thus, the cutting out and editing of sections and chapters turned into an evident attempt to preserve and document parts of the manuscript as they were written in a certain period. Still, I would argue that it is possible to reconstruct with considerable precision the outline as it existed at the moment when - around 1950 - the 'History of Political Ideas' definitely turned into the *Order and History*. For the sake of simplicity, this outline goes only into as much detail as compared to the published outline as necessary.

Concluding Remarks

Work of the type of the 'History of Political Ideas', just as Weber's 'Economic Ethic of World Religions' and *Economy and Society*, or Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, can only be understood in its *dynamics*. This dynamics implies not simply the accumulation of materials in a positivistic sense, nor the deepening of understanding in a humanistic sense, but a certain *rhythm*. This implies a distinction between long periods of research work and writing, done in closeness to the actual source material, and shorter and intense periods of theoretical

and methodological reflection *on* the drafts already completed. The main outputs of such periods are either methodological-meditative pieces, reflecting on the stakes and methods of the entire undertaking, or substantive-summary pieces, resuming the central lines of the argument and ‘introducing’ (literally projecting, launching) the next stage of research work.

The manuscript of the ‘History of Political Ideas’ contains quite a few such pieces. They were all identified above, related to the particular reflexive (or ‘liminal’) period in which they were written. Here they will be shortly collected together. The idea is that, when read together, they provide a condensed ‘essence’ of the central concerns and arguments of the book; something like a ‘guide to Voegelin by Voegelin’; or, borrowing an expression Benjamin Nelson (1974) used for Weber’s *Vorbemerkung*, a ‘master clue’ to the entire work. This should not be understood as a replacement of the reading of the work, but as a series of small texts that should be read, perhaps one after another, both *before* reading the work, and *after* studying the concrete individual chapters.

These ‘summary’, ‘reflexive/ meditative’ or ‘joint’ pieces are the following:

- the Introduction to the eight published volumes, entitled ‘The Spiritual Disintegration’, a first summary of the chapters on Antiquity and a projection to the ‘line of meaning’ leading to the ‘Rise of Christianity’, written in 1940; (15 pages)
- ‘The People of God’ chapter, widely recognised as central, both concerning the substance of the argument and the dynamics of the writing process, joining the

parts on the Middle Ages and modernity, written first in 1940-1 and re-written in 1948; (80 pages)

- ‘The Model Polity’ from ‘The English Quest’, written in summer 1943; (15 pages)
- ‘Nietzsche and Pascal’, written in spring 1944, concluding the meditative period started by the ‘anamnetic experiements’; (52 pages).
- ‘Apostasy’, especially its first 4-page section, written in spring 1944; (40 pages)
- ‘Intermission’, §1 and §2, written in summer 1944; (4 pages)
- ‘Introductory Remarks’ from Last Orientation, written in summer 1945; (2 pages)
- ‘The Problem of Modernity’, written probably in 1946, when the entire chapter was fitted at the end of the sixteenth century part; (3 pages)

The value of the exegetic-methodological exercise that was performed in this paper could be further assessed by trying to reconstruct Voegelin’s ‘position’ or ‘world-view’ that comes out of the study of these texts. This task, however, would require another paper.

Zusammenfassung

Das vorliegende Papier will zur Rekonstruktion der Dynamik des intellektuellen Prozesses beitragen, der dem „History of Political Ideas“-Projekt und seiner Transformation in „Order and History“ zugrunde liegt. Dabei geht es insbesondere darum, die Änderungen in der Struktur der geplanten „Outline“ zu rekonstruieren. Es wird argumentiert, dass sich eine solche Untersuchung nicht auf die formale Ebene beschränken kann, sondern den Weg zu dokumentieren hat, auf dem Voegelin über den gegenwärtigen Zustand seines Projekts reflektierte; ferner dass solche Überlegungen Teil von „meditativen Übungen“ waren, bei denen die Richtung des Projekts insgesamt auf dem Spiel stand. Die „Outlines“ liefern deshalb einen einzigartigen Zugang zu dem Rhythmus des zugrundeliegenden intellektuellen Prozesses. Bei der Rekonstruktion des Lebenswerkes bedeutender Autoren als Suche losgelöst von Voegelins Idee von anamnetischen Experimenten und experienciellen Grundlagen des Denkens orientiert sich das Papier an den Ideen von Victor Turner hinsichtlich der „Bewusstseinschwelle“ und an Pierre Hadots Vorstellung von „philosophischen“ oder „geistigen Übungen“.

Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the reconstruction of the dynamics of the intellectual process underlying the „History of Political Ideas“ project, and its transformation into „Order and History“. More particularly, it intends to reconstruct the changes in the planned outline structure. It is argued that such a study is not restricted to a formal level, but documents the way Voegelin reflected upon the actual status of his project; and that such reflections were, or were part of, „meditative exercises“ in which the entire direction of the project was at stake. The outlines therefore provide a unique access to the rhythm of the underlying intellectual process. Methodologically, in reconstructing the lifework of major authors as quests, apart from Voegelin’s idea on anamnestic experiments and the experiential bases of thought, the paper relies on the ideas of Victor Turner concerning „liminality“ and of Pierre Hadot on „philosophical“ or „spiritual exercises“.

Appendix: The Outlines

Outline 1 (Winter 1939)

Introduction

Ch.I. The Orient

Ch.II. Greece

1. The Aegeans

2. The Polis

3. The Myth of the Soul

4. The End of Hellas

Ch.1. Aristotle

Ch.2. The Failure of the Leagues

Ch.III. From Alexander to Actium

Ch.IV. The Magian Nations

Ch.V. The Empires of the Migration Period

Ch.VI. The Sacrum Imperium and the Secular Forces

Ch.VII. The National State

Ch.VIII. The Twilight of the National State

(Source: Opitz, 1994: 134, and holograph, box 56:9.)

Outline 2 (Summer-Fall 1941)

Introduction

Ch.I. The Orient

Ch.II. Greece

[...]

4. The End of Hellas

§1. Aristotle

§ 2. The Failure of the Leagues

§ 3. The Spiritual Disintegration

Ch.III. From Alexander to Actium

Ch.IV. Christianity and Rome

Ch.V. Sacrum Imperium

Ch.VI. Transition

Ch.VII. The National State

Ch.VIII. The Twilight of the National State

(Source: Opitz, 1995: 128; correspondence with Engel-Janosi)

Outline 3 (Summer 1944)

Pt. VI. Transition

Ch.1. Machiavelli

Ch.2. The People of God

Ch.3. The Great Confusion

1. General

a. theoretical positions

b. The Structure of the Revolution

(includes sections on Spain, Germany, France, England, and the Counter-reformation)

2. Luther

3. Calvin

4. Controversies of Royal Power

5. Internationalism and Imperialism (includes sections on the Protestant International, Vitoria, Suarez; end: National-Socialist Applications)

6. Utopia

7. The Christian Commonwealth (includes Hooker)

Ch.4. Bodin

Pt. VII. The New Order

Ch.1. Tabula Rasa

Ch.2. In Search of Order – Grotius

Ch.3. Hobbes

Ch.4. The English Revolution

Ch.5. Cromwell

Ch.6. *Fronde* and Monarchy in France

Ch.7. Spinoza

Ch.8. Locke

Ch.9. Intermission

1. The First Cycle

2. The Second Cycle

Pt. VIII From Vico to Hegel (not finished)

Pt. IX The Crisis (not finished)

(Source: Outline dossier, second outline, box 56:8.)

Outline 4 (Winter-Summer 1946)

Pt. VI. Transition

Ch.1. Machiavelli

Ch.2. The People of God

Ch.3. The Great Confusion

Ch.4. Bodin

Ch.5. Man in History and Nature

Pt. VII. The New Order

Pt. VIII. Revolution

Ch.1. Apostasy (includes 'Model Polity')

Ch.2. The Schismatic Nations

Ch.3. Vico

Pt. IX. Last Orientation

Introductory Remarks

1. Phenomenalism

2. Schelling

3. Note on Hölderlin

Part X. The Crisis

(Source: letters to Engel-Janosi, 13 March and 2 Dec 1946)

Outline 5 (1948-9?)

Pt.V. (crossing typed III): From Alexander to Actium

Pt.VI. (crossing typed IV): Christianity and Rome

Pt.V. (uncorrected): Sacrum Imperium

– then, without any Part title, come the sixteenth century chapters:

Ch.1. The Order of Power: Machiavelli

Ch.2. The Order of Reason: Erasmus and More

Ch.2 [sic]. The People of God

Ch.5. The Great Confusion II: Decisions and Positions

Ch.6. The English Commonwealth: Hooker

Ch.7. Interpolity Relations: Vitoria

Ch.8. Man in History and Nature

Pt.VIII. Revolution

Ch.1. Apostasy

Ch.2. The Schismatic Nations

Ch.3. Vico

Ch.4. The English Quest for the Concrete

Pt.XI. Last Orientation

Introductory Remarks

1. Phenomenalism

2. Schelling

3. Note on Hölderlin

4. Revolutionary Existence: Bakunin

5. Gnostic Socialism: Marx

(Source: Outline dossier, first outline, box 56:8.)

Outline 6 (1949-50?)

Part V. From Alexander to Actium (includes pages numbers)

Part VI. Christianity and Rome (includes pages numbers)

Part VII. Sacrum Imperium (no pages numbers)

– up to Ch.21. The Imperial Zone; then come:

Ch.4. The English Revolution

Ch.5. Cromwell

Ch.6. *Fronde* and Monarchy in France

Ch.7. Spinoza

– followed by:

Pt. VIII Revolution

Ch.1. Apostasy

Ch.2. The Schismatic Nations

Ch.3. Vico

then Ch.22. The Conciliar Movement; then:

Pt. IX The National State

Ch.1. Tabula Rosa [sic] pp.1-7

Ch.2. In Search of Order pp.8-16

Ch.3. Hobbes pp.17-35

Ch.4. Bodin (no page no-s)

Ch.5. Man in History and Nature

– then, as last page of the entire file: Chapter [sic; blank]
Bodin; corresponds to the published version.

(Source: Outline dossier, third and last outline, box 56:8.)

Outline 7 (1985-6?)

Pt. IV The Spiritual Disintegration	pp.1-22
Pt. V. From Alexander to Actium	pp.75-150
Pt. VI. Christianity and Rome	pp.1-107
Pt. VII – I: Sacrum Imperium	pp.1-589
Pt. VII – II:	
Ch.1. The Order of Power: Machiavelli	
Ch.2. The Order of Reason: Erasmus and More	
Ch.3. The People of God	
Ch.4. The Great Confusion I: Luther and Calvin	
Ch.5. The Great Confusion II: Decisions and Positions	
Ch.6. The English Commonwealth: Hooker	
Ch.7. Interpolity Relations: Vitoria	
Ch.8. Bodin	
Pt.VIII. Revolution	
Ch.1. Apostasy	pp.1-61
Ch.2. The Schismatic Nations	pp.58-73 ns
Ch.3. The Scienza Nuova	pp.75-170
Ch.4. The English Quest for the Concrete	pp.171-260
Pt.IX. [I?] The National State	
Ch.1. Tabula Rasa	pp.1-7
Ch.2. In Search of Order - Grotius	pp.8-16
Ch.3. Hobbes	pp.17-35
Ch.4. The English Revolution	pp.1-47
Ch.5. Cromwell	pp.48-63
Ch.6. <i>Fronde</i> and Monarchy in France	pp.64-79
Ch.7. Spinoza	pp.80-94
Ch.8. Man in History and Nature	pp.58-132

* * *

Pt.IX. [II?] Last Orientation	
Introductory Remarks	pp.126-8
Ch.1. Phenomenalism	pp.129-151
Ch.2. Schelling	pp.152-235
Ch.3. Note on Hölderlin	pp.236-244

* * *

Nietzsche and Pascal pp. 1-62

(Source: bound typescript of *History of Political Ideas*, as available in the Archive)

Outline 8 (1990)

As this is the published Outline in Volume 19, it is not reproduced here

Outline 9 (the suggested status as of 1950)

Introduction

Part I. The Orient

Part II. The World of the Polis

Part III. Plato

Part IV. The End of Hellas

Ch.1. Aristotle

Ch.2. The Failure of the Leagues

Ch.3. The Spiritual Disintegration

Part V. From Alexander to Actium

Part VI. Christianity and Rome

Part VII. Sacrum Imperium

Part VIII. Transition

Ch.1. The Order of Power: Machiavelli

Ch.2. The Order of Reason: Erasmus and More

Ch.3. The People of God

Ch.4. The Great Confusion I: Luther and Calvin

Ch.5. The Great Confusion II: Decisions and Positions

Ch.6. The English Commonwealth: Hooker

Ch.7. Interpolity Relations: Vitoria

Ch.8. Man in History and Nature

Ch.9. Bodin

Part IX. The New Order

Ch.1. Tabula Rasa

Ch.2. In Search of Order

Ch.3. Hobbes

Ch.4. The English Revolution

Ch.5. Cromwell

Ch.6. *Fronde* and Monarchy in France

Ch.7. Spinoza

Ch.8. Locke

Ch.9. Intermission

1. The First Cycle

2. The Second Cycle

Appendix:

§1. Spleen and Scepticism

§2. Montesquieu

§3. The Enlargement of the Geographical Horizon

Part X. Revolution

Ch.1. Apostasy

Ch.2. The Schismatic Nations

Ch.3. Vico

Ch.4. The English Quest for the Concrete

Part XI. Last Orientation

Introductory Remarks

1. Phenomenalism

2. Schelling

3. Note on Hölderlin

Appendix: Nietzsche and Pascal

Part XII. The Crisis

Notes

- ¹ Volumes 1 to 8 of the *History of Political Ideas*, published as volumes 19 to 26 of *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, are referred in the text by the abbreviation 'HPI', then by volume and page numbers.
- ² The reasons given later by Gebhardt in his Introduction to Volume 7 will be discussed later, and will be found wanting.
- ³ Even though this is discussed in the intellectual biography of Schutz by Helmut Wagner (1981), awareness about Voegelin's work is minimal among sociologists using the works of Schutz. For a recent and thorough discussion of the Schutz - Voegelin connection, see Weiss (2000).
- ⁴ See the works of Erdélyi (1992), Scaff (1984, 1989), Tenbruck (1980), and especially Hennis (1988). Interestingly, even though Hennis was in close contact with Voegelin at various stages of their career (see Hennis 1998: 42-3, and letter of 20 July 1998 to the author), he identified Voegelin as one of the four main 'dissenters' from Weber (Hennis 1988: 199), and did not consider Voegelin as somebody who took up Weber's work in the sense championed by himself - though I would certainly argue that this was the case.
- ⁵ These points are argued in detail in Szakolczai (1996, 1998).
- ⁶ Weber himself alluded in his famous lectures/ texts of 1917 ('Science As A Vocation' and 'The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality') that the real followers of his work would be the soldiers returning front the front.
- ⁷ The similarities between the Voegelin - Schutz and Elias - Borkenau parallels are most important for further situating Voegelin's work in the context of social theory and intellectual history. All four thinkers belong to the same, tightly defined generation, the respective birth dates being 1897 (Elias), 1899 (Schutz), 1900 (Borkenau), and 1901 (Voegelin). Some possible parallels are drawn in Szakolczai (2000a, esp. 235, fn.13; and 2000b).
- ⁸ This is the title of the third essay of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*.
- ⁹ See more below. In this context it is important to note that Voegelin's original interest in returning to Ancient Greece after

1945 was motivated by the question why the eschatological dimension was missing in Greece. This is alluded to, among others, in the letter of P. J. Vatikiotis to Geoffrey Price, 13 July 1994. Thanks are due to Geoffrey Price and Pat Vatikiotis for permission to use this letter. But see even an 1972 correspondence between Voegelin and John Tashjean, a Borkenau scholar. Tashjean sent Voegelin an article on revolution for comments. In his response of 20 September 1972, Voegelin claimed that the core of the problem has been analysed by Aristotle, in Book 5 of the *Politics*; and called immediately attention to the additional problem of Apocalyptic thought (see Voegelin Archive, box 37:9).

¹⁰ Even further, in this sense there are striking parallels between the works of Voegelin and Michel Foucault. The common points in their reading of Bentham's *Panopticon* will be discussed later (see note 29 below). To mention only one further point, in his editorial Introduction to Volume 7 Gebhardt resumes Voegelin's work using the term 'historicity of truth' - a term that can be found at the centre of Foucault's interest, and that he always traced back to Nietzsche. For e.g., see a series of lectures delivered in 1973 in Brazil, where Foucault defined the central interest of his work by the question whether 'la vérité elle-même a une histoire' (truth itself has a history) (Foucault 1994, vol 2, p.539); or the claim that '[s]ince Nietzsche this question of truth has been transformed. It is no longer, "What is the surest path to Truth?", but, "What is the hazardous career that Truth has followed?"' (Foucault 1980: 66); or, finally, in the conclusive review of his entire life-work done in the Introduction to Volume 2 of *History of Sexuality*, when he defined his work as 'une entreprise pour dégager quelques-uns des éléments qui pourraient servir à une histoire de la vérité' (an undertaking to isolate some of the elements that might serve for a history of the truth) (Foucault 1984a: 12).

¹¹ Hadot (1995a) is the English version of Hadot (1993). Unfortunately, this is a selection only, and is based on the second and not the third French edition.

¹² This concept is elaborated in detail in Szokolczai (1998: 28). It implies a situation in which an encounter with a book leaves a lasting mark on the entire intellectual outlook of the reader, in the

sense of a transformative experience, ultimately even close to religious conversion.

- ¹³ See for e.g. Walter Kaufmann's Introduction and editorial apparatus to his edition of the *Will to Power*.
- ¹⁴ In fact, though it is rarely recognised, Voegelin was quite appreciative of Spengler, acknowledging both the short-coming and the importance of the work. For his assessment, see especially Voegelin (1989: 14).
- ¹⁵ Spengler called Arabian culture as 'Magian culture'.
- ¹⁶ Weber's most important letters to Siebeck on the status of his project were often contained in letters written on or close to 31 December (see letters of 28 December 1909, 30 December 1913, and note of 31 December 1919 to the publishers).
- ¹⁷ Thus, for e.g., in 1942-44 he would regularly send Engel-Janosi the chapters he would complete. These chapters followed the order of presentation of the book. But instead of working on a linear time horizon, in some months Voegelin sent chapters on the Middle Ages, in others on the early modern period. For e.g., in December 1942 and January 1943, they would discuss the sections on Siger de Brabant, Dante, and Thomas Aquinas; in February and March they discuss the drafts on Machiavelli, Luther and Bodin; then on 13 April Engel-Janosi would acknowledge the Ockham chapter, while in his 17 May 1943 letter he would discuss the recently received Spinoza and Locke chapters.
- ¹⁸ In fact, the parallels between Weber and Voegelin were tight even here. Just as the context in which Weber wrote these two reflexive summary pieces was the increasing pressure from the publisher, Paul Siebeck, to finalise the volume, the first three reflexive summaries, the 'Introduction', the 'People of God' and 'The Spiritual Disintegration' were all written in the context of the mounting pressure from the publishers, in Voegelin's case represented by Fritz Morstein Marx. Furthermore, the 'mental' space necessary for writing such essays was rendered possible by the fact that in April 1940 Voegelin was assured of reappointment for two years as an associate professor in Alabama (Barry Cooper 1999: 26).
- ¹⁹ The term 'intramundane eschatology' is contained frequently in the text (see especially HPI, vol. 22, pp.118, 148, 174; and

vol.24, pp.32-3). The term 'intramundane' is the Latin-English version of Weber's term 'innerweltliche', that would be later translated as 'inner-worldly' (Parsons in his 1930 translation of the *Protestant Ethic* used the expression 'worldly asceticism'). In the future, in order to make the connections between Voegelin and Weber in this regard more apparent, I'll use the expression 'inner-worldly eschatology' as a technical term. This point is elaborated in detail in Szakolczai (2001, forthcoming).

- ²⁰ The direct Weberian inspiration is particularly strong in the first half of the 1940s, would diminish in the second half, and all but disappear in the 1950s. This is the long-term context of Voegelin's highly negative evaluation of Weber in the *New Science of Politics*. The 'disappearance', however, only applies to the direct level, as indirectly the entire concern with 'Gnosticism' is in the line of Weber's concern with the 'religious rejections of the world', as argued in the crucial *Zwischenbetrachtung*. This is elaborated further in Szakolczai (2000a: 152-5).
- ²¹ According to the earlier plan, the Machiavelli chapter was supposed to start with a section entitled 'Solitary position between medieval and modern' (see Archive, box 56: 8). This chapter outline, arguably based on the draft of 1939 but still in use by the mid-1940s is particularly revealing, as it contains a good indication of the joint presence of the Weberian-sociological and Platonic-philosophical inspirations. Thus, on the one hand, the planned section 12 was entitled 'Max Weber: ethics of responsibility and *raison d'état*', and other section titles used expressions like 'charismatic order', 'non-charismatic power', or 'Elite and mass'; on the other, the last (23rd) section was entitled 'The myth of the demonic hero vs. the myth of the soul', with expressions like 'The psychology of disoriented man', 'disintegration' and the contrast between 'political tension' and 'religious tension' used elsewhere. This was before Voegelin succumbed, temporarily, to the interpretation then dominant in American academic life of the 'positivist Weber'.
- ²² See especially the letter of 17 December 1944, in which Voegelin claimed that without Nietzsche, it is impossible to understand the present (Archive, box 24:4).
- ²³ The 'Model Polity' was sent to Schutz on 14 July 1943 (Weiss 2000: 310).

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- ²⁴ The 'Apostasy' chapter is acknowledged in a letter of 8 April 1944 by Engel-Janosi, while the 'Nietzsche and Pascal' manuscript was sent only about a week earlier, acknowledged on 31 March (box 11:7).
- ²⁵ The importance of this piece has been recognised by Gebhardt (HPI, vol. 25). The section, and only containing the first two paragraphs, appears in the 1944 summer Outline (**Outline 3**), but was not contained in the dossier entitled 'The National State, 1938-43' (Opitz 1995: 129-30).
- ²⁶ About this, see two crucial letters to Engel-Janosi, on 13 March 1946 and on 2 December 1946 (box 11:8).
- ²⁷ In a 6 October 1946 letter, Engel-Janosi acknowledged receipt of the Vico chapter, while the Helvétius chapter is discussed in letters of 27 October and 1 November by Engel-Janosi.
- ²⁸ As a quite amazing piece of coincidence, that nevertheless further tightens the circle around the historically oriented and Nietzsche-Weber inspired social and political theorists this paper tries to bring together, two pieces of information should be added at this point. First, this part of the *History of Political Ideas* appeared in 1975 in a book edited by John Hallowell, entitled *From Enlightenment to Revolution*. In the same year Michel Foucault published in France his most widely read book, translated into English as *Discipline and Punish*, which had at its centre an analysis of Bentham's *Panopticon*, in a sense quite close to Voegelin's indications. As a particularly striking example, the book contains a picture of an inmate kneeling in front of the inspection tower, as if it was indeed, in Voegelin's terminology, an 'intramundane counterforce to God'. Second, just a few months later, in March 1976, Norbert Elias finished one of his most important self-reflexive/ meditative essays, the late Preface to the Dutch edition of his book *The Established and Outsiders*. The essay is closed by the following sentences, resuming the underlying logic of power relations uncovered by the book: 'Rightly or wrongly they, like many other established groups, felt exposed to a three-pronged attack - against their monopolised power resources, against their group charisma and against their norms. They repelled what they experienced as an attack by closing their ranks against the outsiders, by excluding and humiliating them. The outsiders themselves had hardly any

intention of attacking the old residents. But they were placed in an unhappy and often humiliating position. *The whole drama was played out by the two sides as if they were puppets on a string (my italics)*' (Elias 1994).

- ²⁹ As a further indication, significantly Voegelin would only reply to the two letters of Engel-Janosi a month later, on 2 December. This only makes sense if we assume that by that time he was no longer interested in feedback on the Helvetius chapter, having already plunged back to Antiquity, especially Plato. Indeed, in a letter of 4 March 1947, resuming the correspondence, Voegelin would announce that he spent the last 'weeks' (i.e.: rather months) working on Plato. One should recall here the recollection of P.J. Vatikiotis that Voegelin's interest in the Greeks in the late 1940s was driven by the concern why there was no eschatological dimension in Greek thought. See also the letter of 29 January 1948 to William Y. Elliot, as quoted in Opitz (2001a).
- ³⁰ At this point one must address the related comments of Gebhardt in his editorial Introduction to Volume Seven. There he acknowledges that the placing of the seventeenth century part presented special problems to the editors; furthermore, that 'Voegelin himself placed it before Part Six, "Revolution"' (p.25). However, he justifies the reversal of the chronological order by claiming that 'the typescript of "The National State" does not end with Locke' (ibid.). These claims, however, are deeply problematic. First of all, one does not just reverse the fundamental chronological chapter order of an entire manuscript because the last sections of one of the parts might take the story-line a bit farther in time. Even further, the sections on Hume and Montesquieu were not part of the original chapter on National State, do not appear in the various outline versions, are much less polished drafts than most of the other sections, ending abruptly, and their placing after Locke in the bound typescript may have been the result of editorial choice, making use of extant draft chapters whose place was unclear. At any rate, they can hardly justify the reversal of chronological order, against clear authorial intentions. The argument therefore sounds rather as an after the fact reasoning, trying to justify what is really not defensible.

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- ³¹ The significance of these two omissions could not be greater. There can simply be no question that in any account of the political ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Rousseau and Hegel should figure at the centre stage. Such an omission only makes sense if we recognise that at this moment the modern part of the project shifted from a history to a *genealogy* of (modern) political ideas, in the strict Nietzsche-Weberian sense of genealogy, that was also taken up by Foucault. Such a genealogy shifts attention to the conditions of emergence and the lasting effects (see especially Section 6 of the Preface to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*), not the 'thing' itself. Weber's use of the Nietzschean 'methodological' hints can be best captured in the first lines of the 'Religious Groups' chapter in *Economy and Society*, where Weber refused to give a definition of religion, and instead argued that '[t]he essence of religion is not even our concern, as we make it our task to study the conditions and effects of a particular type of social action' (Weber 1978: 399).
- ³² Much of the secondary literature on the dynamics of the *History of Political Ideas* places large emphasis on the volume structure of the work. However, such questions were only raised by the publishers, were merely external exigencies, and never had any visible impact on the various versions of the 'real' outlines guiding the work.
- ³³ There are many signs indicating that this piece is to be read as an explicit attempt to correct the interpretation of the general series editors. Most evidently, while the volume is edited by Gebhardt and Hollweck, the Introduction, except for the last page, and in opposition to the general editorial policy of the eight volumes, is signed only by Gebhardt.

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