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Historicism and historiosophy in Ludwig Gumplowicz's early writings. Gumplowicz between Gobineau and Schönerer

A necessary (though not sufficient) condition to discuss Gumplowicz as a historian is to overcome confusion over his alleged social Darwinism. The main argument arises, of course, from his *Rassenkampf, magnum opus* published in 1883 and often considered a work to be placed between Arthur de Gobineau's ideological racism, and programmatic anti-Semitism in the mainframe of the German nationalist movement promoted in Austria by Georg Heinrich von Schönerer at the turn of the twentieth century.

Starting from the latter, it must be underlined that any allegation of anti-Semitism on Gumplowicz's side can only be considered as a paradox. As demonstrated by Czesław Lechicki, among others, Gumplowicz not only had clear Jewish origins which, in spite of its many vicissitudes, he never denied, but he was also probably forced to abandon his native Kraków precisely because of the anti-Semitic attitudes of the Polish elites of the time, which translated into a heated ostracism against him.¹

This biographical feature of Gumplowicz clearly puts him in opposition to Schönerer's pan-Germanism, according to which Jews were allegedly "pigs," and not because of their religion, but because of "blood."² Besides, a whole series of anticlerical and libertarian beliefs contributed to the marginalisation of Gumplowicz regardless of his Jewish origins.³ One might even assume, when comparing Gumplowicz's experience to the biographies of other Jewish intellectuals of the period, that the ostracism by Polish conservative circles was

¹ C. Lechicki, *Krakowski „Kraj” 1869–74*, Wrocław 1971, p. 171.

² R. Opitz, *Faschismus und Neofaschismus*, Bonn 1996, p. 33.

³ C. Lechicki, op. cit., p. 173.

caused rather by Gumplowicz's *sensu lato* political positions than by his Jewish ancestry.⁴

Besides stating the absence of any affinity whatsoever with Schönerer's pan-Germanism in Gumplowicz's work, assumptions should also be denied about Gumplowicz being an "heir" of Gobineau's, who had laid the foundations of the Aryan myth in his *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853–1855), arguing for example that the origin of ethics and ideas lay in a supposed "ethnic balance of principles."⁵ Nothing could be placed further from Gumplowicz's beliefs. For instance, Gumplowicz argued that the decline of the "Jewish nation" at his time did not depend at all on their mingling with other ethnic groups, but upon the "medieval persecution" they had had to endure, and on the fact that "their whole intellectual life consisted only of prayers and religious services."⁶ In other words, Gumplowicz's idea of "races" is not based on any biological element, but on a concept of population groups which congregated according to criteria that ought to be considered basically linguistic and cultural. Their transversality is not very different from what can be found in the Marxist concept of "classes." Yet, unlike the latter, Gumplowicz's "races" seem to exist in a static way, that is, as immanent entities which do not evolve diachronically by themselves. At best, they happen to be assimilated into state entities if certain conditions appear,⁷ and still they do not lose their fundamental ahistoricity. The greatest paradox in Gumplowicz's historiosophy can be found precisely in such ahistoricity. Although Gumplowicz explains his "history of races" in a linear manner, according to an entirely Positivist historicism, such a "history" lacks both an eschatology of redemption and the possibility of a dynamic internal development, which points instead at a fundamental anti-historicism. Thence, interesting consequences are derived. Not only for the interpretation of existing phenomena, but also for the programmatic proposals Gumplowicz makes when it comes to state reformability. This is particularly clear in his early writings in general and, specifically, in the author's critical attitude towards the state in which he lived, that is the Habsburg Empire.

⁴ It may be worth noticing that, on the contrary, many a Jewish intellectuals were quite well integrated in Warsaw at the time. See A. Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864–1897): Postawy, konflikty, stereotypy*, Warsaw 1989.

⁵ A. de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, Paris 1967, p. 486.

⁶ L. Gumplowicz, *Stanisława Augusta projekt reformy żydowstwa polskiego*, Dygasiński, Kraków 1875), pp. 2–3.

⁷ L. Gumplowicz, *Rasse und Staat: Eine Untersuchung über das Gesetz der Staatenbildung*, Vienna 1875.

Eight Letters from Vienna

The 1867 edition of the book opens with a frontal attack on “Austrian centralisers and Germanisers as a whole, and those in Vienna in particular.”⁸ According to the author of those eight letters originally sent to the Lwów-based “*Dziennik Literacki*” throughout 1866, that is, immediately before and immediately after Sadowa, Vienna was a “moral nil,” and still it aimed at “putting its foot on the neck of independent nations.”⁹ For a better explanation, Gumplowicz compared Vienna to those he considered as real capital cities: not only Paris and London, but also Bismarck’s Berlin. While Vienna was nothing but a self-declared imperial capital, he argued, the latter showed an actual “spiritual hegemony.”¹⁰ And it is precisely here, in terminology itself, that a first clue can be found about the interpretation tools Gumplowicz makes use of. The Polish adjective *duchowy*, which he used extensively, appears to be a kind of a literal translation of the German *Geist*, referring to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. More: the very fact that Gumplowicz did not want to clarify what he meant by *duch narodowy* (itself a literally translated *Volksgeist*), though he used the expression repeatedly, seems to indicate that he considered Hegel’s Idealistic historiosophy as self-explanatory.

The following statement that “Vienna will never excel in the sciences and the arts of any nation”¹¹ seems instead to be based upon a Kantian epistemology of practical reason, in the light of which “morality” (*Moral* understood as *Vernunft*) should be interpreted, which the Austrian capital was totally missing. What most concerns us here, however, is the genitive case. When using the phrase *nauki i sztuki jakiegoś narodu* (literally: the sciences and the arts of any nation), Gumplowicz seems to posit two things. First, the sciences and the arts are not universal, but they exist as such only in relation to their owners, that is “nations.” Secondly, those “nations” appear as given once and forever, diachronically unchanged entities. And precisely here anti-historicism is made patent.

Which are the “nations” settled in the state just recovering at the time from those two military and political disasters which were the 1859 “Italian war” (as Gumplowicz literally calls it) and the 1866 war against Prussia? This question is to be left unanswered, as the author of the letters never specifies which “nations” he had in mind. The information can only be inferred from the tone and the content of the letters themselves.

In the first letter, dated 28th December 1865, Gumplowicz wrote about a “Slavic Babylon” of hired workers toiling to turn Vienna from the “humble

⁸ L. Gumplowicz, *Ośm listów z Wiednia*, Władysław Jaworski, Kraków 1867, foreword dated 25th December 1866, no page number.

⁹ *Ibid.*, foreword.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, foreword.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, foreword.

capital of Lower Austria” into a great European capital city.¹² The nationalities he listed include Czechs, Slovaks, Moravians, Silesians, Croats and Slovenes, but it can be assumed that the list is incomplete. From the context, it might be argued that Gumplowicz’s main criterion for the identification of “nations” is the language spoken by their representatives. Still, soon thereafter, Gumplowicz himself admits that “the only true Pan-Slavic language” of his time was German. Indeed, it was in German that the upper classes of “Vienna’s Slavic stocks” communicated.¹³ Through this one statement, two possible identifications must be simultaneously dropped: belonging to a “nation” did not depend on the language spoken, as the various Slavic languages appeared to be diastatically characterised to a significant extent (Slavic languages were mainly spoken by the working class), and it also did not depend on being part of a social class, as the Vienna Germanised elites did not stop, according to Gumplowicz, belonging to their “nation” of birth, but they constituted its “upper classes” instead.

The predominance of this Slavic element is taken by Gumplowicz as an explanation of the fact that the “German nation” refused to consider Vienna as their potential centre of political aggregation to achieve unification as Italians had done, but they rather considered “Bismarck to be their Cavour, and the King of Prussia — their Victor Emmanuel.”¹⁴ According to Gumplowicz, Vienna had instead “some trace of its original character and destiny left; [...] if the weapons of the Germanic emperors had not halted the process, [...] Vienna might now be a Slavic boundary city and perhaps also the capital of a large Slavic confederation.”¹⁵

From these statements an identificatory antithesis seems to emerge. Everything not related to the inheritance of the “Germanic emperors” is not German. Not even the elites of Slavic origin, though Germanised in the meantime. This does not provide positive identification elements for the “Slavic nations,” yet it provides a negative one for the “German nation,” that is military aggression. Gumplowicz’s “nation” thus seems to be a “race” *in nuce*, provided we read “race” in the light of Gumplowicz’s later works, especially the *Rassenkampf*. In this respect, it may be interesting to see what Gumplowicz would write later, on 20th May 1866, about the “Germanisation of Austria.”¹⁶

The key point appears to be the (eventually diachronic!) difference drawn by Gumplowicz between the “Germanisation brought about by the Babenbergs and the early Habsburgs” and that performed by the “late Habsburg dynasty.” Here is what the author stated:

While the former, in their statelet, ruled on a mix of populations including Slavic, Hungarian and Celtic elements lingering on a still very primitive cultural level, lacking both civilisation

¹² Ibid., p. 4.

¹³ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶ The following quotations are all taken from the sixth letter. See *ibid.*, pp. 40–51.

and collective national strength, and they were able to impose on them not only the German political yoke, but the German language, institutions, laws and rules as well, in short, a German nationality!, the latter could instead not succeed in turning independent nations, endowed with well developed languages, literatures and civilisations of their own, into another, totally alien nationality. And succeed did they not!

In this passage, Gumplowicz implicitly deemed the “ingredients” of nationality to be a mix of language and “institutions, laws and rules.” “Literature and civilization” are added to the list shortly thereafter. It should be kept in mind, however, that Gumplowicz, throughout his works, did not link the word “literature” to *belles lettres*, but to what is nowadays named “legal theory.” Therefore, there are grounds to assume that, for the author, “nationality” is strictly linked to the possession of a regulatory system which is steadily enforced, universally accepted by the community, and internally consistent. It seems indeed that, to some extent, Gumplowicz justified the colonisation of Slavs and Magyars by the Babenbergs in the tenth century. His intellectual basis was not, however, the same as Gobineau’s. According to Gumplowicz, it was not an alleged biological inferiority of the colonised that justified colonisation, but their lack of a consistent legal system and a set of “high culture” models, which the Germans possessed instead. Once again, therefore, Gumplowicz did not identify the “nation,” which was later to be expanded to become a “race,” by means of biology, but based upon the cultural models inspiring those who belong in the “nation” itself. To some extent, this also explains why, according to Gumplowicz, the “nation” is not diastatically characterised. It is not a “class” in the Marxian sense, that is a historically given entity, appurtenance to which would be therefore a matter of fact. It is rather a matter of a more or less conscious, more or less imposed choice to follow certain cultural patterns, regardless of the social and economic position which the individual holds in the community he belongs in.

In summary: Gumplowicz’s “nation” is a comprehensive set of individuals who, beyond common language, share the same legal culture and the same cultural patterns. And they share them subjectively, that is, independently of their belonging to the privileged social classes, or to the exploited. They also share them when, for expediency or necessity, they decide to begin speaking in a different language, like the Viennese elites did, making use of German as a *lingua franca* of politics and business in spite of their Slavic background.

Such an axiology places Gumplowicz at the antipodes of Gobineau. Colonisation, in fact, is admissible only if the colonisers’ cultural hegemony is huge and undisputed; if roles were inverted, that is, if today’s colonists became so decadent as to fall below the *Moral* level of those they had colonised, even a counter-colonisation by the latter to the detriment of the former could be justified. The example Gumplowicz proposed in his letters is, once again, taken from the deeds of the Babenberg dynasty, namely: the end of their dynasty after the death of Frederick the Warlike in 1246. The collapse of “the whole building the Babenbergs

had raised for a century and a half” was evidence, according to Gumplowicz, of the decline of the idea of “nation” that the dynasty had represented. On the contrary, Ottokar Přemyslid, being a “valiant Duke elected unanimously by the Austrian people,” was to be considered the quintessence of the new subjectivity by the formerly subjugated Slavic peoples. So, in the second half of the thirteenth century, “a glorious period of domination and political hegemony by the Slavs” began which would only come to an end with the battle of the Marchfeld Plains in 1278, won by Rudolf of Habsburg thanks to the entirely political support he received from the Roman Curia after Pope Nicholas III had purposely excommunicated all opponents of the Habsburgs.

In the light of what has emerged so far, a first hypothesis can be formulated to explain the historiographic paradox in Gumplowicz’s work. “Nations” are not to be interpreted as immanent entities existing regardless of the course of events. It is rather their ascension to the very role of national structures, that is communities with their own legal systems and cultural patterns, that results in being irreversible. “Nations,” in short, do not exist by divine decree. It is a people (or a group of peoples) who, having taken the legal and cultural features mentioned above, become a “nation,” and they cannot cease being so thereafter. Gumplowicz thus confirms the very core of Hegel’s Idealism, namely, that once a synthesis is reached, it is impossible to go back to the thesis the process had departed from. In this respect, Gumplowicz is unmistakably a historicist.

What consequences flow from this attitude, if history interpretation has to be translated into policy proposals to reform the socio-political system prevailing in the second half of the nineteenth century? Gumplowicz did definitely not approve of supranational empires. Still, he was also far from proposing a simple return to the *status quo ante*, that is, to the state of things as they were prior to the political and military expansion of the empires. As we shall see below, this also concerns Poland before the partitions of the late eighteenth century, a period which Gumplowicz is far from considering a golden age. It seems rather that his convictions in this respect, that is, the alternatives he proposed to centralised supranational empires, show an affinity with Giuseppe Mazzini’s. Although devoid of a political project exposed as such, Gumplowicz’s early writings contain an apology for “federations of national bodies,” as he explicitly wrote at the end of his last letter from Vienna.¹⁷

On the margin and to the purpose of supporting this latter assumption, it should be noticed that Kraków, and the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria as a whole, that is Gumplowicz’s homeland, had become a favourite goal of Polish Carbonari after the Austrian government had destroyed their organisation around 1835. One of Young Poland’s leaders, Szymon Konarski, who had embraced Mazzini’s ideas after the failure of the November Uprising of 1830, also abode for

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

a time in Kraków. Konarski's political program, which included both a basic work of education of the working classes, and the emancipation of the Jews, would later witness attempts to be implemented in the neighbouring Ukraine.¹⁸ More than twenty years after Konarski's death, those same postulates were taken over by Gumplowicz, and they still retained Mazzini's original footprint.

Polish legislatures and the Jews

Gumplowicz definitely did not tend to idealise what Poland was in the period immediately preceding the partitions, and that is apparent in many of his writings. For example, in the foreword to the edition of the correspondence between the last elective King of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, and his *Venator regni*, Xavier Branicki, Gumplowicz states that the Confederation of Bar was "a major cause" of the first partition.¹⁹ The Confederation of Bar was a military alliance of Polish magnates who, driven by the politically powerful Roman Catholic clergy, had risen up in 1768 against the King's Acts of Emancipation of religious dissenters. The ultimate purpose of the magnates' armed uprising was to keep the believers of denominations other than Roman Catholic from enjoying equal rights in the territories of the Crown of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. To achieve their goal, the magnates started an actual civil war against the troops loyal to Poniatowski, and they even sought an alliance with the Ottoman Empire and the Khanate of Crimea. A confrontation with Russia became then inevitable, and it eventually led to the first partition of 1772.

According to Gumplowicz, the period of the elective monarchy was far from being a blessed time in Polish history. In spite of messianism, which was so fashionable in the nineteenth century and according to which Poland was to be considered an innocent victim of its neighbours' aggression, Gumplowicz proposed an alternative periodisation of Polish history in the foreword to a review of laws and bills concerning the Jews in Poland. He singled out "three main periods of Polish history: The Piasts' era, the Jagiellonian one, and that of the elective monarchy."²⁰ In each of them, he assessed the coexistence of three main sources of law: the sovereign, the noblemen's parliamentary bodies, and the clergy, warning that "in none of the three periods there was concord or harmony between the legislative acts that proceeded from these three sources, so different they were from each other."²¹ Which of the three sources was dominant, depended in turn on how much power each of the legislators had to enforce its rules in an authoritarian

¹⁸ A. Barszczewska-Krupa, *Szymon Konarski*, Warszawa 1976.

¹⁹ L. Gumplowicz (ed.), *Konfederacja Barska: Korespondencja między Stanisławem Augustem a Ksawerym Branickim, Łowczym Koronnym, w roku 1768*, Kraków 1872, p. I.

²⁰ L. Gumplowicz, *Prawodawstwo polskie względem Żydów*, Kraków 1867, p. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

manner. “The issue of law became an issue of power,”²² Gumplowicz explicitly stated. He specified that in the first period, which he identified with the rule of the Piast dynasty and which we can place up to the mid-thirteenth century, the sovereigns’ power was practically unopposed; yet, in the subsequent period, the Jagiellonian dynasty had to be seeking with increasing diligence for the approval of the magnate class; finally, during the elective monarchy, the power of nobility also declined, leaving the field open to the authoritarianism of “the Roman hierarchy, the Catholic clergy and the Jesuits.”²³

From these considerations, we can infer which was, according to Gumplowicz, the fourth most important element the “nation” is composed of besides the three identified above, that is language, legal culture, and cultural models. This fourth element is power itself, meaning with it the ability to forcibly impose their own legal culture and cultural patterns by a class or caste in a given territory. This is a disruptive, destabilising factor which directly conditions at least two of the criteria for national identification implicitly contained in the letters from Vienna. In other words, power causes the very criteria by which national affiliation is determined (except language) to be thoroughly rethought.

At this point, it shall be interesting to check what Gumplowicz stated about the differences in power during the three roughly drawn periods in the history of Poland before the partitions. He wrote:

The most peculiar and, at the same time, the saddest feature of the decline of Poland during the elective monarchy is the noblemen’s moral decay. They alone were the essence and the best part of the Polish nation. Their spiritual decay in the seventeenth century caused them to become totally amoral, which resulted in the partition of the country.²⁴

Noblemen as the “essence and the best part” of the nation. Leaving aside the “spiritual decay” which once more recalls the *Geist* of philosophical Idealism, it is this identification of the “nation” with the noblemen’s birthright that sheds the most negative light on Gumplowicz’s thought as a whole. Though Gumplowicz is not a racist in a biological sense, and though he is certainly not a clerical nationalist postulating that a confessional homogeneity is a necessary precondition to the community cohesion, he is still ensnared by a decidedly pre-modern form of thought. His “nation” is closely tied to the idea of strict social hierarchies, in the most philological sense the term takes in Polish, as the term “nation,” that is *naród*, patently shows the root *ród*, meaning “noble lineage.” Noblemen may be judged worthy or not according to their “morality,” still they do not cease to be entitled, by birthright, to constitute the only factor in legitimising the sovereigns’ power. It appears thence that Gumplowicz shared progressive ideas, yet the very idea of democracy as “supremacy of the people” was still quite alien to him.

²² Ibid., pp. 2–3.

²³ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴ Ibid.

Opposed as he was to supranational empires, as widely seen above, he still did not approve of national independence if it had to bring along a democratisation of decision-making too.

This does not mean that he saw his hierarchically ordered “nation” as a body consisting of blood ties only. It emerges from his remarks on the attempts of emancipation and national integration of Polish Jews *in limine mortis Poloniae*, that is, during the reign of Stanislaus Augustus after the first partition had already occurred.

“The efforts made by Polish statesmen and the Government towards a reform of the Jews²⁵ would become an appreciable testimony of the political sense and patriotism²⁶ of the former, wrote Gumplowicz, though his general attitude to those same efforts was altogether critical. His main criticism arose from what he considered to be proven evidence: policy makers intended to standardise Polish Jews into either peasants or the bourgeoisie, that is, they plainly meant to integrate a group of people who had so far remained on the margins of society by assimilating them through the imposition of pre-existing cultural patterns. As seen above, the fact that a ruling class, the landed gentry in this case, tried to impose their law and cultural models with authoritarian methods, was not considered objectionable by Gumplowicz, who instead assumed that noblemen were the very best part of the “nation.” Assimilation in itself was not therefore the main issue in Gumplowicz’s criticism. Instead, he pointed at the ineffectiveness of the initiatives undertaken at the time of Stanislaus Augustus. In his opinion, such lack of effectiveness derived directly from the fact that the gentry and their representatives had not understood that a condition should have been met before assimilation could be achieved. Gumplowicz summarised that condition with a strapline of sorts: “The Polish Jews should be made human first.”²⁷ The understatement here is that religious obscurantism had deprived the Polish Jews of their very humanity up to that point.

Since Gumplowicz hoped this weakness in Stanislaus Augustus’ project could be corrected in the future, it must be stated that his alleged social Darwinism was, in fact, nonexistent. As the author assigned the task of overcoming Jewish obscurantism to the sovereign, the reformers, in short to one of the “authorities” who had been able to establish themselves in the state, he thereby also denied the legitimacy of vexation by one class over another, one “race” over the other, one “nation” over the other. Indeed, according to him, integration should have been imposed from above, thus becoming, in fact, assimilation. There is a clear root of authoritarian thought in all this, but it still has very little to share with social Darwinism proper.

²⁵ The phrase “a reform of the Jews” (literally: *reforma żydów*) ought to be understood as a reform of the legal status of Jews in Poland.

²⁶ L. Gumplowicz, *Stanisława Augusta projekt...*, p. 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Conclusion

Having cleared the field from doubts on Gumplowicz's alleged racism and social Darwinism, the initial question still remains to be answered: Do his early writings reveal a historicist persuasion or an anti-historicist one? As seen above, Gumplowicz adopted (or, at least, he did not openly question) interpretative tools deriving from Idealism, with the Hegelian *Geist* as his main argument. A doubt may arise whether that Idealism translated into historicism or not, given the implicit concept of "nation" the author extensively adopted. At first sight, that concept appears to be ahistorical in its immanency. The paradox, however, disappears once it is ascertained that, according to Gumplowicz, "nation" means above all a noblemen's community. A "nation," in other words, is not made up solely of blood ties dating back to the dawn of history, but it also (and especially) consists of a hereditary elite's ability to encode a language, give birth to an internally consistent legal system, and enforce a set of cultural models thanks to their power. Gumplowicz's "nation," therefore, arises at a precise moment in history, coagulating around a privileged class of noblemen. This process is arbitrarily supposed to be irreversible, and yet it is historical, as it does show a beginning.

Gumplowicz refuses Marxist-like eschatologies according to which history shows a linear development, one class will replace another, and the process cannot be reversed. And still, he does not refuse the historicist approach as a whole. His noblemen are only entitled to rule as long as they are moral, that is, as long as they take responsibility for the whole community. In this respect, Gumplowicz proposes an eschatology too: not the victory of one class over another, but the gentry who are capable of self-reform, which allows them to become, or get back to being, a driving force for "spiritual progress." How this concept, which is apparently authoritarian and undemocratic, can be considered consistent with Mazzini's ideas on overcoming absolute monarchies, and replacing them with a federation of independent nations (ideas which Gumplowicz also supported), is surely a matter for a debate. This latter issue, however, does not represent an obstacle to stating that, from his earliest works, Gumplowicz was basically inspired by historicism.

HISTORICISM AND HISTORIOSOPHY IN LUDWIG GUMFLOWICZ'S EARLY WRITINGS. GUMFLOWICZ BETWEEN GOBINEAU AND SCHÖNERER

Summary

The research question concerns the scientific approach of Ludwik Gumplowicz to history, including the history of the pre-partition Poland, analyzed on the basis of his works written in Polish during the period preceding his final emigration to Graz in the 1870s. The paper starts with explanations referring to some misunderstandings resulting from terminology used by Gumplowicz in his later works, such as *Rassenkampf*. The concept of "race" applied by Gumplowicz in his scholarly publications cannot be identified with a systematic and comprehensive racism of other authors, like

anti-Semite Arthur de Gobineau or German Nationalist Georg Heinrich von Schönerer. According to Gumplowicz, “race” is a *sui generis* elaboration on the concept of “nation” which does not have strictly biological connotations but rather rests on historical-and-civilizational foundations. The fact of belonging to a certain “nation” does not depend — in Gumplowicz’s view — either on a biological origin or a native language but on the approbation of patterns and formulas based on and rooted in a given legal culture and legislation. In this respect, a “nation” comes into existence only when a certain community reveals a sufficient level of cultural (including legal) development and when — by the virtue of this development — it is capable of establishing an independent state. In this respect, a “nation” should be identified with an elite which made statehood a reality (meaning nobility). On the basis of the preceding description it can be concluded that Gumplowicz’s approach to history is not inconsistent with Hegelian historicism because the emergence of “nations” is placed in a particular historical moment; after that moment “nations” will never cease to exist; therefore there is no return to a thesis (in Hegelian sense) when, after successfully overcoming an antithesis, a synthesis is achieved. At the same time the identification of a “nation” with aristocratic elite betrays at bottom antidemocratic convictions which are not easy to reconcile with pro-independence ideas (which were nevertheless adopted by Gumplowicz from Giuseppe Mazzini, with Young Poland movement serving as an intermediary).