



Juliusz Słowacki

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Introduction

In his CDAMM article on '[Polish Messianism](#),' Damian Cyrocki looks at various influential figures. Here is an excerpt on one figure: Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849).

Juliusz Słowacki

Juliusz Słowacki was another member of [Andrzej Towiański](#)'s circle. Like [Adam Mickiewicz](#), he was an eclectic thinker, drawing inspiration from theosophy, German idealism and Catholic thought. He also shared with Mickiewicz the idea of revolutionary messianism. According to his ideas, the laws governing spiritual progress were ruthless and implied a combination of voluntary suffering and heroism. In his vision, Poland played the role of a new Israel which, thanks to its revolutionary heroism, was able to establish a new Jerusalem (Walicki 1978, 8–9).

An important role in his theory was played by the above-mentioned idea of reincarnation (social palingenesis). Słowacki opposed elitism. In his thought, there was no connection between the more advanced spirits and the socially or economically privileged class. For this reason, he opposed already established forms of hierarchy. He believed in the spiritual potential of the masses, which had to be finally released in order for the kingdom of God to be brought about on earth (Porter 2000, 35).

It should not come as a surprise that Słowacki highly valued the liberum veto, which guaranteed the freedom of higher spirits, even if they were in the minority. The veto was a systemic principle of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, giving the right to each of the deputies participating in the Sejm (the lower house of the bicameral parliament) sessions to break it immediately and annul the resolutions adopted therein. It was enough for someone to cry out "Sisto activitatem!" (Latin for "I stop working!" or "I do not allow!"). In theory, the idea was to achieve unanimity, but in practice it often made it impossible for the Sejm to debate. For Słowacki, it was not only a political tool, but also a religious one. According to him, the majority of deputies were spirits that were highly developed spiritually, but nevertheless they could not impose their opinion on the minority. The latter could see some spiritual truths that the majority did not see.

Słowacki was of the opinion that progress on the spiritual path requires sacrifice and shedding of blood. The role of Poland in his system was connected with this grand idea. The spirit of the Poles was tested because they went through a lot and distinguished themselves on the international arena when it comes to heroism and holiness.

Like Mickiewicz, Słowacki was suspicious of the Catholic Church and tradition. He wrote about the fall of Rome and openly criticised the role of the Roman Church, although his words were often difficult to decipher and ambiguous (Słowacki 1909, 57). The concept of a Slavic pope appeared in his mind. According to Anna Dziedzic, Słowacki imagined the Slavic pope as a person who would break with the old system and officially support the Polish cause of freedom. It is possible that the Slavic pope did not represent one person but the whole nation, making Poland the redeemer and herald of a new order based on freedom and brotherhood (Dziedzic and Diatłowicki 2010).

Unlike Mickiewicz, Słowacki's messianism was exclusively Polish. He did not like the French and did not intend to give them spiritual leadership (Walicki 1978, 9).

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