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Thinking as Testing the Limits of Friendship: On the Voegelin-Schütz correspondence

Arpad Szakolczai

A review essay on *A Friendship That Lasted a Lifetime: The Correspondence Between Alfred Schütz and Eric Voegelin*, edited by Gerhard Wagner and Gilbert Weiss, translated by William Petropoulos, University of Missouri Press, Columbia (MO) and London, 2011, ISBN: 082621911X

The exchange of letters between Eric Voegelin and Alfred Schütz took place in between 1938, or the year in which both were forced to leave Vienna due to the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany, and 1959, when Schütz passed away. Several of the more important letters were published previously in various contexts, and the project of publishing them all goes back to the 1970s. The entire correspondence, in the original German, only appeared in 2004. This book is a comprehensive selection and English translation of that volume.

The book provides fascinating insights into the lives, times, works, and ideas of two master thinkers – though mostly to those who are already reasonably familiar with them. While the editors rightly state in their Introduction (the English version is a slightly modified translation of the German text) that it was not the place for a comprehensive reassessment of the work in light of this correspondence (p.5), more background details for a volume like this would have been helpful. However, the size of the book, both in English (261 pp.) and especially in German (579 pp.), might explain the limited space left for the 'Editor's Introduction' (5 pages of text, followed by 2 full pages of notes).

The most interesting part of the correspondence, without any doubt, are the often quite long letters that touch upon the heart of the work of the two thinkers, sparked by Voegelin's first comments on reading Husserl's *Crisis*. As both of them considered the other a privileged interlocutor, the ideas expressed have particular significance for the thinking of each. The exchange of letters is revealing not only concerning the substance of their disagreement, but also the manner in which this was addressed and handled. Here a central issue is played by the question of friendship.

Intellectual friendship

The title of the book, taken verbatim from a 1958 letter by Voegelin (p. 201), rightly places the emphasis on the close personal friendship that existed between the two thinkers, going back to their university years. In our world, dominated by interests and other 'rational' considerations, it is practically inconceivable how much both academic and political life, in classical Antiquity as in the Renaissance or in the early modern times, was based, as a norm and as a fact, on friendship.[1] The dividing line, not surprisingly, can be drawn with the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on critique and on adherence to ideological positions where, supposedly in the name of 'truth', personal relations were relegated into irrelevance, if not outright signs of favoritism and corruptness. The lasting, at once personal and intellectual friendship between Voegelin and Schütz could indeed be considered as something like a swan-song of this ideal. Significantly, in their generation, the generation of WWI thinkers – those who gained maturity during WWI – there were other examples;[2] while among the WWII generation it is difficult to identify one single relevant example.

Acknowledging the significance of 'intellectual friendship', the rest of the review will be devoted to the question of the substantive ideas that emerged from this exchange of letters, and to the manner in which disagreements were eventually handled. It is

exactly for such a purpose that the recent publication is of vital importance. While the content of the most important letters were known before, it is only with this publication that it is possible to reconstruct the exact dynamics of the interaction – something that, from the perspective of the experiential basis of thought, a central idea of Voegelin, is a matter of substance.

Voegelin's Husserl reading experience and its effects

The edition, quite rightly, focuses on the exchange of letters generated by Voegelin's reading of Husserl's *Crisis*, and its eventual follow-ups. This will also be the focus of this review essay, which discusses the three main cluster points of this exchange: the first lasting from Voegelin's letter of 17 September 1943 up to his letter of 28 December; the second from Voegelin's letter of 7 November 1949 up to his letter of 30 April 1951; while the third starts again with a letter by Voegelin (15 September 1952), and closes with his letter of 10 January 1953. Even this short resume renders evident the dominant role of Voegelin, given that each step of the exchange of starts with his letters. Their conclusion, however, reveals rather more about Schütz, as each step ended by the decision of Schütz not to reply. We need to understand the significance of such silences, just as what was exactly stated.

Step One: September to December 1943

We must start by reconstructing the experiential basis of the first letter, faithful to the concept that Voegelin would later develop, largely on the basis of this reading of Husserl. After his first academic year spent in Louisiana, Voegelin meets Schütz, and other friends, in New York, for the rare pleasure of intense intellectual discussion. One of them, Fritz Kaufmann, lent Voegelin Husserl's book, which he immediately read after his return home on 13 September, and already on the 17th he wrote an 11-page long typed letter, sparked by his reading experience. From the perspective of 'rationalism', it could well be considered a product of haste, lacking maturity; however, from an experiential perspective, it might contain particularly clear traces of the spirit and substance of the experience.

Crisis is often seen as Husserl's most important work, where he frankly addresses the question of the role played by the type of knowledge and rationality propagated by the natural sciences in the ongoing crisis – science and knowledge, thus, as culprits, and not as solution. Voegelin, however, while acknowledging the character of the work and the standing of Husserl, does not buy the argument, and places the emphasis rather on the still shared commonalities between the type of techno-scientific 'rationality' that was – and still is – wreaking havoc on the world, and the type of philosophical tradition to which Husserl still claims to belong – which he considers in a matter of fact way as the only one existing. This tradition, however, to be traced back to Descartes and continued by Kant, is rather singularly impoverished due to its ignoring the spiritual aspect of human existence, in particular the experience of transcendence. This shortcoming is hidden by the ideology of progress, animating the singularly unfortunate but revealing expression by which Husserl defined as a 'functionary' of mankind (p.33). Thus Husserl's thinking, at its recognised height, is not fundamentally different from the various mass ideologies which cover their shortcomings by luring the unwary through trickful promises into abandoning themselves and taking a leap into following their ultimate aims – which is ultimately a leap into nothingness.

Instead, *real* philosophy, according to Voegelin, does not consist in enclosing oneself behind the walls of a closed, self-sustaining theoretical-ideological system, which attempts to refuse, indeed pre-empt, any critique in the pretence of uttering statements that are beyond doubt, rather one that penetrates the thoughts of other thinkers, up to their basic experiences (the term 'engendering' is not yet here), including, in particular, experiences of transcendence (p.38). In a particularly felicitous expression, Voegelin calls particular attention to the ' "personal testimonies" of the thinkers themselves' (p.39), from which a proper understanding should not stray away.

The line of thinking characterised by Descartes, Kant and Husserl, far from representing the culmination of the European tradition, is rather an erratic departure from the basic principles of classical thinking, the distance from this tradition only increasing with time, with every new generation failing to learn from the errors of the predecessors. A particularly good example is the so-called 'proof of God' problem, a major source of Kant's fame, though Kant simply failed to grasp that the point was not to prove 'beyond doubt' that God exists (a nonsensical effort that would have rendered faith meaningless), rather was a meditation on the nature of the experience of transcendence.

The ultimate problem with the tradition started by Descartes, of course, concerns the elevation of doubt into the animating principle of the 'rational' method of 'critique', and the subsequent closing of experience into the horizon of the consciousness of the ego. Instead, Voegelin calls for a return to classical thinking, and the search for meaningful, positive anthropological foundations for thinking – like grace, beauty, order, virtue, or the good life.

As Schütz's life-work was devoted to the re-founding of Weberian sociology on the principles of Husserl's phenomenology, it is not surprising that he was quite taken aback by Voegelin's comments. Yet, the exact modality was quite peculiar, and invites reflection. It starts with a delay in responding to, or even acknowledging, such a major letter, so 11 days later Voegelin sends another one, now about his reading of Schütz's articles, with the evident aim of inquiring about an answer. Two days later, on 30 September Schütz indeed responds, though apparently before receiving Voegelin's follow-up letter – or only making seem so, as at that time two days were enough for a letter to arrive. Schütz's letter, however, is rather an explicit non-response, and on several counts. It starts by admitting his surprise, his lack of preparation for such a letter; and his inability to give a response, so far, due to a lack of inner peace. He also asks permission to show it to others. Over three weeks later another letter from Schütz announces the strange and – especially then – most embarrassing news that he misplaced the letter; so Voegelin will have to type the entire thing again. What is even more surprising, eventually this copy would also be lost, as not be found among Schütz's papers. In about another three weeks, on 11 November 1943 (a date not without its own significance, being the 25th anniversary of the end of WWI – especially for Schütz, who participated in the Great War as a soldier), and having in the meanwhile received three further letters from Voegelin, the response is finally written and sent.

This response, not surprisingly given the time elapsed, is structured in order to refute, in the most resolute and efficient manner, Voegelin's criticism of Husserl. First, in contrast to Voegelin's complaining about the distance and the lack of possibility for personal discussion, Schütz valorises such distance – also the time elapsed – as it allowed him to express more precisely his argument (p.49). Second, and seemingly in the spirit of Voegelin, he starts by emphasising the long-term personal connection he had with Husserl, which would seem to render his account more authoritative (thus, a genuine 'personal testimony' – though the sense is different from Voegelin's), while explaining

the otherwise evident personal significance of the entire issue for him – subtly but unmistakenly implying that Voegelin's critique of his mentor was something of an unprovoked assault. On this basis, the central thrust of the argument is simply to restate Husserlian orthodoxy, and make Voegelin appear as an idiosyncratic outsider to the tradition of European thought. In particular, he reasserts that the Husserlian undertaking, not simply from the academic perspective of a 'critique of knowledge', but through his idea of 'philosophy as a rigorous science' (p.50), is indeed fundamental; and the apodictic method developed by Husserl, aiming at arriving at statements that cannot be doubted, indeed achieves the final foundations of philosophy. These foundations touch upon the anthropological essence of the human being, here reinforcing the Kantian perspective according to which 'rationality' is the most important anthropological constant of mankind. Husserl's undertaking, through his striving for the self-understanding of the philosopher is the culmination of the European philosophical tradition, while at the same time it contributes to the solution of the current crisis. Finally, truly as if he wanted to have his cake and eat it, this philosophy by no means represents a final, conclusive system, 'only' the final foundation, thus the definite beginning. The road ahead is infinite, we are only at the beginnings; one would need the life of a Methuselah to make a substantial move forward (p.56); but the way only lies on these apodictic foundations, which is the central legacy of European philosophy. This conclusive assertiong, while seeming to refute the charges of dogmatism and finality, does two enormous harms at the same time: it rules out of court any effort to question the direction of philosophy taken by the triad Descartes-Kant-Husserl, the road of doubt, critique and a permanent undermining of any meaning and solidity; while – purportedly in order to avoiding dogmatism – it decisively inaugurates at the heart of the philosophical undertaking a resignation to a permanent and eternal temporariness.

It is not clear when Schütz actually sent the letter, programmatically dated 11 November. In a follow-up letter, sent on 25 December, he claims to have sent the letter so that Voegelin could read it before Christmas – which certainly implies that it was actually posed well over a month after it was purportedly written. At any rate, a letter of 21 December by Voegelin makes it clear that by that time he has not yet received Schütz's response. But it did arrive before Christmas; and already on 28 December Voegelin wrote and posted in response another 11-page long, densely typed letter.

Voegelin starts at the same tone as Schütz, acknowledging the importance of distance for the precise formulation of ideas, and of closeness in terms of personal familiarity with Husserl, only further underlined by the fact that Voegelin had no access to Husserl's unpublished work. He therefore apologises for any related misunderstanding – though, as we'll see, based on his 'method' he comes up with an understanding of Husserl that in depth goes beyond Schütz's, which was weighed down, as he would eventually acknowledge, by the 'magical' force of Husserl's dominating personality.

The response is organised around two central issues. On the one hand, Voegelin claims that the definite advances in thought, attributed to Husserl, rather constitute a closed system which becomes impossible to escape for the incautious who was lured inside it by its promises – exactly like it happens with the different modalities of the modern revolutionary tradition. Husserl's approach is a-historical and a-spiritual, pretending to be pure, rigorous science, yet its appeal is due to a combination of eschatological promises – like infinite progress, definite foundations, the final understanding of man's place in the universe; and the personal messianistic appeal of Husserl's personality. Husserlian philosophy, thus, far from representing the last word in thinking, is rather oriented to the establishment of a closed apocalyptic sect, animated by

a 'gospel of philosophical reason' (p.65). Thus reversing Schütz's assertion and charge, it does not represent 'the' philosophical tradition, compared to which Voegelin is a marginal idiosyncratic outsider; rather, it is a deviation from the classical tradition, which Voegelin proposes to renew and continue.

Central to this real European philosophical tradition – and Voegelin here to a large extent reiterates ideas already expressed in his first letter – is the personal depth of concrete thinkers, whose philosophising is motivated by their own personal experiences. Here a prominent place is taken up by experiences of transcendence, but also central is the awareness about the concrete historical 'situation' in which thinkers find themselves, in particular if this situation constitutes a 'crisis'. Here Voegelin's ideas strongly rely on the thinking of Jaspers, whose work is singled out for attention as a most important contemporary effort (p,69). And as a crisis is fundamentally due to a dissolution of order, to a large extent due to the dissolution of myth, the 'effort to establish order' (p.69) constitutes a prime aim of thinking. And it is exactly to this primary task that '*one* of the great strands of tradition contributes very little […] the thread of the transcendental critique of knowledge that runs from Descartes to Husserl (p.70). And the reason for this, touched but evaded in Husserl's *Crisis*, is very simple: this tradition of 'rationalism' is part of the cause of the problem, and not its solution; a recognition that is shared by Max Weber (p.69). However, here, formulating as a positive task of thinking the *creation* of order, Voegelin moves dangerously beyond what can be assigned as the task of a thinking person.

As one can see, the *elements* of Voegelin's thought are almost the same as Husserl's: personal knowledge, crisis, reflexivity on the times, conviction in the significance of thinking. However, in Husserl's thinking, the elements confused, thus the lure, even blackmail to follow, is greater, constituting a trap, just as in the cases of Freud, Marx, or even Durkheim; while Voegelin's thinking constitutes a harmonious whole, with everything in its proper place – or almost, as we have already seen the problem concerning the 'solution' of the problem of order.

This letter is left unanswered by Schütz; and indeed the conversation became stalled. Voegelin's further, probing letters, just as the attached, crucial essays on Nietzsche, Pascal the crisis and the War, sections of the *History of Political Ideas*, remain unanswered. A gesture of re-opening is only made by Schütz with a letter of 17 March 1945, where he acknowledges the 'inexcusably long time' for not writing to his friend (p.74), and asks for more sections of the *History of Political Ideas* manuscript. Voegelin promptly complies, and the exchange takes off again, restored to the more limited aim of commenting this work.

Step Two: November 1949 to April 1951

The conversation re-gained depth, and thus interest, only about four and a half years later, on 7 November 1949 (interestingly, another major political anniversary, this time of the Russian Revolution), when – in the context of an exchange about the *History of Political Ideas* manuscript – Voegelin returned to some of the fundamental philosophical questions that were previously approached in the context of his Husserl reading experience.

The letter reiterates some of the main, and most controversial, themes of the previous correspondence, about the historicity of truth, due to the event-like character of the major transcendental experiences that are the basis of philosophising, and the necessary spiritual preconditions for a genuinely rational thinking, in contrast to the positing of individual reasoning power as some kind of anthropological foundation. The

letter contains one fundamental new idea, the importance of persuading power (*peitho*), whose appearance Voegelin traces to Aeschylus and Plato (p.130). The appeal is to the spirit, assuming a fundamental likemindedness (the Aristotelian *homonoia*) as genuine anthropological foundation, in contrast to sheer force, political activism, or mere reasoning. Within mentioning Descartes, Kant or Hobbes, though evidently implying them, Voegelin focuses his attack on Hobbes as the origin of modern psychology, which 'emerged as the empirical science of the spiritually disoriented, merely motivated, human being' (p.131).

No reply came this time from Schütz, and – apart from a courtesy letter – no exchange of any substance takes place until April 1951, when on the 15th Voegelin sends the Introduction to the *New Science of Politics*. Schütz now replies quite quickly, on the 22nd, though the letter is only finished and sent off on the 27th, and starts by giving the reasons for his silence: he got the 'impression', from some of Voegelin's earlier letters, that their 'ways had parted' (p.135). This could only refer to the 7 November 1949 letter; and the reason could only be that Schütz felt that a return to the controversial themes of 1943, left unanswered then by him, was a hostile act on the part of Voegelin, touching upon delicate aspects of Schütz's identity (given that matters of ideas and identity for genuine thinkers, but to a large extent for any academic, can never be separated). The letter is clearly conciliatory in tone, trying to re-build bridges on shared understanding, including a common hostility to 'positivism' (an eternal means for social scientists to bridge differences in face of a common enemy), and the thinking of Max Weber as a fundamental and shared positive reference point, which of course recalls their formative experiences at the University of Vienna right after WWI. It is by referring to Weber's ideas concerning the 'relevance' of a work that however remains 'value free', thus not being tied to a political and religious position, that Schütz introduces his recent work concerning relevance, a the same time sheltering it from Voegelin's threatening incorporation of spirituality and transcendence.

Voegelin's response is again immediate and overwhelming, on all counts. It is full of joy that his friend again responded; most distressed by the reasons for his long silence; and goes out of his way to avoid upsetting him again. The response is not very long, at any rate significantly shorter than Schütz's letter; it reassures his friend about the fundamentally shared elements of their ideas; and takes up the concrete issue of relevance, central to Schütz's current work. However, this does not and cannot mean that he retreated from his position. Quite on the contrary, Voegelin must state that the problem extends to Weber; that his sociology lacks the proper foundations in philosophical anthropology (and not merely in epistemology, as Schütz would have wanted); and that thus the fundamental issue concerns something 'positive', at the level of values – not the kind of politicised values Weber rightly dismissed, but the questions of philosophical anthropology that 'culminates in the understanding of man as that thing capable of transcendental experiences' – an issue that Weber simply evaded (pp.141-2).

This letter again remains unanswered, but there is no break this time – Schütz responded positively to the sections of the manuscript Voegelin would send him, and the contact is thus re-established.

Step Three: September 1952 to January 1953

The third, and final, stage of the correspondence about fundamental issues of philosophical anthropology started in September 1952. The context is again crucial: after a long gap, the two friends finally met personally; and *New Science of Politics* was just about to being published. The short letter starts by Voegelin's enthusiastic comments on two papers by Schütz, where the analysis of the shortcomings of the thinking of Sartre and

Santayana, their arbitrary elimination of the experiences of the spirit, and the question of the constitution of the 'Thou', were exposed with evident affinities to Voegelin's ideas. It is this affinity that pushes Voegelin to re-state his position that these questions cannot be properly approached from the work of Husserl, starting from the 'I', thus prioritising distancing, but must start 'from undifferentiated participation in the being of other […] existences', again founding the tradition inaugurated by Descartes singularly unhelpful, and thus trying to convince Schütz – evidently using the 'gentle' persuasion of *peitho* – that his own work on action and choice requires a positive foundation, in the order of 'goods and virtues' (p.148).

In his reply, written after about three weeks, Schütz now accepts the substance of Voegelin's critique of Husserl (p.150), a very major concession, together with the importance attributed to 'the primordial participation of those who exist' (Ibid.). Yet, he tries to defend and reassert the particular approach to the study of action and choice taken by him, motivated by an effort to study what is simply ' "unquestionably given" ' in everyday life. He claims that Plato or Aristotle is of no use to this undertaking, as they saw no problem there; and thus he takes exception, in a particularly strong manner, to what he perceives as the exclusiveness inherent in Voegelin's reasoning: 'But why, why, why do you assume such a monopolistic-imperialistic position?' (p.151).

Voegelin's response is again quick (within a week of receipt), and relatively short; for details, it simply sends his friend to his book, just about to appear. It basically reiterates the point about the need for a philosophical anthropology and the deficiency of the Cartesian tradition of starting from a 'monadizing isolation of consciousness' (p.152). Careful enough not to spell it out explicitly, he tries to render Schütz sensitive to the fact that the very way he posed his problem, in his previous letter, might still be fatally caught up in this tradition.

The response of Schütz now came within somewhat less than three weeks – though it was not a real response, only a promise of one: a response to the letter, and also to the book, which meanwhile have arrived. It was in fact finalised sometime in November 1952, and is the longest letter of the entire book, running up to 15 book pages (pp.155-69). The general tone of the letter is very positive and conciliatory. He starts by saying that he 'basically' thinks that Voegelin 'completely' understood him; accepts the failure of the Cartesian monadic thinking, even states that the failure to confront its shortcomings, 'right down to the present day', is 'a scandal of philosophy' (p.159); and expresses the greatest admiration for the *New Science of Politics*. However, most of the long letter is devoted to two major points of critique that much anticipate the later criticism of the book. One of this, already alluded to in the 9 November preliminary letter, concerns the modern Gnosticism thesis; while the other, even more central to this letter, takes exception to Voegelin's identification of modern secularism with a merely secularised version of Christian eschatology; or, basically, it advances Blumenberg's defence of the 'legitimacy of modernity'.

Concerning the problem of inner-worldly eschatology, the original central core of the *History of Political Ideas* project, before it was overshadowed by the modern Gnosticism thesis, Schütz especially challenges the claim that the connection was necessary, even considers it as a theoretical non sequitur (p.164), adding that for e.g. the escape into a dream-world, characteristic of modern romantic revolutionaries, is something completely different from an immanentisation of the Christian eschaton (p.168). Concerning Gnosticism, the charges are just as strong: Schütz accuses Voegelin of simply asserting a Christian position, thus reading his attack on Gnosticism as a renewal of the early Christian attacks on Gnostic heretics. Without going into further details, the position of the long letter can be resumed in the following claims: negatively, it tries to dismantle the vision of Voegelin concerning the shared Gnosticism of modern

politics, art, and science, accepting the Gnosticism of the radical revolutionaries, but not of the rational philosophers, and separating secularism from daydreaming; while positively it reasserts both the legitimacy of modernity and the crucial value of modern rationalism: 'Why [for Voegelin] is *ratio*, reason, not a basic virtue rather the original sin?' (p.168).

Due to an operation, Voegelin had to delay his response. It eventually came in two segments, on 1 and 10 January 1953, which together almost equal the length of Schütz's letter. The first segment is concerned with the question of Christianity. It starts by throwing the ball back, claiming that the problem is not the inclusion but the exclusion of Christianity, characteristic of the modern treatment of the history of philosophy; argues that his anthropological position is not based on Christianity, rather on experiences of transcendence, which are shared by many religious and spiritual traditions; but adds that a definite novelty of Christianity concerns the manner in which the converting power of grace goes beyond the Platonic 'forcing' of the periagoge. Here particular importance is played by St. Thomas Aquinas's ideas concerning *fides caritata formata*, and the misunderstandings surrounding the problem of the *sacrificium intellectus* (pp.173-4). Most of the letter is devoted to a long and most interesting presentation of what Voegelin considered as ' "essential" Christianity' (pp.175-9). The second letter responds to Schütz's arguments concerning modern secular eschatology and Gnosticism, reiterating the argument that secularization 'in indeed re-divinization', adding that modern Gnosticism is even more pathological, representing a 'harrowing corruption of the soul' (p.182), than its classical variants, which still had a degree of naiveté in their cosmological focus.

The second letter closes with a Postscript that arguably represents the height of the entire exchange; a crucial afterthought in which Voegelin rendered his position particularly clear – strikingly, using formulations by Heidegger, a thinker otherwise not held by him in the highest regard, but who – strikingly now for this entire exchange – in an early autobiography defined as the three most important thinkers for his formation Husserl, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Bonaventure – the last being, still strikingly, never properly recognised and discussed by Voegelin. The passage starts by discussing the Gnostic attempt to render the very posing of questions related to transcendence socially impossible (evidently alluding to the problem of ridicule, in my reading a crucial aspect of the 'byzantinization' of European culture); continues with a direct quote from Heidegger, capturing his own (i.e. Voegelin's) position: ' "He who has no faith cannot think" '; and ends by a transliteration of Heidegger's position, according to which 'immanent [here there is an unfortunate typo in the book – A.Sz.] speculation on being prevents the knowledge of being; "rationalism", as he calls it, obstructs thought.' (p.184).

Epilogue: the friendship goes on

This was a definite concluding word, especially given that Heidegger's thinking, decades before, grew out of his overcoming of Husserl's position; and indeed no answer came forth from Schütz. Yet, it did not create a break, as it happened twice before. A letter of 23 March by Schütz acknowledges the delays in answering, attributing this to overwork, and – though the substance of Voegelin's letters would never be touched – the correspondence would continue until Schütz's death, thus making Voegelin to formulate, in a letter of 3 August 1958, the expression which gave the title to this book (p.201). And, as always, that claim was made in a very special context. Most concretely, the occasion was Schütz's letter of 28 July, which stated, in the context of an imminent meeting in Europe, after a long – and, as it turned out, for the last – time, in no uncertain terms the central importance the reading of Voegelin's work had for Schütz: 'from no

work of our time have I profited so much, or derived so much pleasure, as I have from yours' (p.200). The slightly broader context is from two other letters by Schütz, written slightly earlier and later, which demonstrate, after all, how much Voegelin's ideas concerning Husserl, transcendence and Gnosticism made a genuine impact on Schütz. A letter of 11 June 1957, written after a conference, acknowledges that Voegelin's 'remarks on Husserl's Gnosticism were of particular importance' to him (p.192); while a letter of 16 October 1958, written after a visit at the Husserl Archive in Louvain, sounds as a definite assessment, written after he (almost) managed to overcome the lure of the 'master', classifying Husserl as 'the supreme sorcerer who always overwhelms one, however many objections one may have to his philosophy' (p.202). One wonders whether this was exactly the sense in which Voegelin's famous but much lamented essay about Hegel as a sorcerer should be understood.

Arpad Szakolczai is Professor of Sociology at the University College, Cork. His books include *The Dissolution of Communist Power* (Routledge, 1992, with Agnes Horvath), *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel Life-Works* (Routledge, 1998), *Reflexive Historical Sociology* (Routledge, 2000), *The Genesis of Modernity* (Routledge, 2003), and *Sociology, Religion and Grace: A Quest for the Renaissance* (Routledge, 2007). His new book *Comedy and the Public Sphere* is being published in October 2012 by Routledge.

Notes

[1] The term 'Aristotlean friendship' is mentioned by the editors (p.4); see also von Heyking (2008).
[2] See the friendship between Norbert Elias (born 1897) and Franz Borkenau (born 1900), or between Karl Kerényi and Béla Hamvas, the two most important Hungarian thinkers of the past century (both born 1897). Significantly enough, in both cases the events around WWII resulted in a definite breaking away.