

DISCUSSION

RÜSTOW'S THESIS ON RUSSELL'S PARADOX*

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In 1910 the B.G. Teubner Verlag in Leipzig published a book entitled *Der Lügner. Theorie, Geschichte und Auflösung* by Alexander Rüstow (1885–1963), who was at that time member of the scientific staff of that publishing house and later became famous as one of the fathers of German social market economy. It was the printed version of his dissertation presented already in 1908 to the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Erlangen. The printed version has three parts. After a discussion of the logical and set-theoretical paradoxes (I “Theorie”) Rüstow treats the history of the paradoxes (II “Geschichte”), presenting above all several versions of the Liar Paradox in ancient philosophy. In the last part (III “Auflösung”) he attempts a solution of the paradoxes, among them Russell’s paradox. As Kenneth Blackwell pointed out to me, Rüstow’s doctoral thesis might be one of the oldest theses on Russell. Therefore it seems to be worthwhile to sketch its historical context.

Rüstow was already in his school times in Berlin a friend of Leonard Nelson (1882–1927) who became later the founder of the Neue Fries’sche Schule in Göttingen. Rüstow’s thesis is an outgrowth of the early philosophical discussion of Russell’s paradox in Göttingen. This discussion was evoked by Hilbert’s early reaction on the publication of the paradoxes in his Heidelberg lecture “Über die Grundlagen der Logik und der Arithmetik” (1904, published 1905). It became relevant for the Nelson circle because Gerhard Hessenberg (1874–1925), another friend of Nelson’s, and co-editor of the circle’s journal *Abhandlungen der Fries’schen Schule. N.F.*, intended to write a report on set-theory for this

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