

HEGEL'S

EDITED BY



POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Walter Kaufmann

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HEGEL'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

9 *Hegel and Nationalism*

SHLOMO AVINERI

I

Hegel was a resident of Jena when the Battle of Jena, a shattering defeat for Prussia, took place.¹ On October 13, 1806, the day on which the French entered the town and deployed for the engagement fought the next day, Hegel wrote to his friend Niethammer:

As I wrote to you earlier, all of us here wish the French victory and success. The Prussians are suffering the defeats they deserve. . . . This morning I saw the Emperor Napoleon, that World Soul (*diese Weltsiele*), riding through the town to a parade. It's a marvelous feeling to see such a personality dominating the entire world from horseback. . . . He is capable of doing anything. How wonderful he is!²

This paper appeared originally in *The Review of Politics*, October 1962. It was thus published before the second debate, above.

Three months later in a letter to another friend, Zelmann, Hegel summed up the historical lesson of the Battle of Jena: "There is no better proof than the events occurring before our eyes, that culture is triumphing over barbarism and the intellect over spirit-less mind."³

Hegel was writing this while Fichte was agitating, first in Königsberg and then in Berlin, against the French. What Fichte preached in his *Addresses to the German Nation* in 1807-8, he fulfilled in 1813, when he joined the nationalist university volunteer corps to fight against the French and died in that service. On his part Hegel, who had become headmaster of a Gymnasium in Nuremberg, remained loyal to his pro-French, anti-German orientation. Commenting on Nuremberg's liberation from French occupation, Hegel wrote, once again to Niethammer, on May 2, 1813: "Several hundred thousand Cossacks, Bashkirs and Prussian patriots have seized the city."⁴

Several days later he alluded to a nightmare his wife had had concerning the "Cossacks, Prussians and other savage troops."⁵ In another letter, dated December 23, 1813, he mocked the enthusiasm of the nationalist students over the liberation: "Liberation? Liberation from what? They talk a great deal here about Liberation. If I ever see one *liberated* person with my own eyes, I shall fall to the ground and prostrate myself before him."⁶

When echoes of Napoleon's final defeat reached Nuremberg, Hegel exclaimed: "Our great Napoleon—who would ever have believed that this would be his end?"⁷ And when the German romantic nationalistic movement agitated for the establishment of a united Germany subsequent to liberation, Hegel rejoiced at the outcome of the Congress of Vienna, which perpetuated the numerous small states of Germany.⁸ In an essay on the constitutional struggle in Württemberg, Hegel wrote (1816): "The vain idea known as the German Reich has disappeared."⁹

When the nationalist students' fraternities (the *Burschenschaften*) stirred up the Wartburg pilgrimage in 1817, and

Hegel's colleague and intellectual opponent at Berlin University, Jakob Friedrich Fries, delivered his famous speech at the rally, in which he visualized a unified and liberated Germany, Hegel devoted most of the Introduction to his *Philosophy of Right* to an attack on the Fries School and its subjectivism.

While the extreme Burschenschaft, Teutonia, wrote into its statutes the aim of a Pan-German consciousness in place of loyalty to the individual German states, Hegel pointed out that those who sought to establish in Germany political unity beyond and above the existing boundaries understood nothing of politics or history.¹⁰ When student fraternities refused to accept Jewish students as members, Hegel demanded the granting of full equality of political and civic rights to the Jews, since "a man counts as a man in virtue of his manhood alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc."¹¹

As a final example of Hegel's criticism of German nationalism, his hostility to the Aryan concept may be cited. F. von Schlegel's book, *The Language and Wisdom of the Indians*, appearing in the twenties, first expounded the Aryan view in Germany arguing for a national and racial affinity between the Germans and the Indians on the basis of the linguistic relationship between Sanskrit and Old Gothic. Schlegel was the first to coin the phrase, "the Aryan Peoples." In the *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* Hegel ridiculed these assumptions about the existence of an ancient "original" Indo-European *Ur-Volk*. He stated that any attempt to draw political and historical conclusions from linguistic evidence meant the conversion of science into mythology.¹²

II

The obvious question emerging from this survey of Hegel's actual attitudes toward the different political and cultural manifestations of German nationalism is: How did it happen that a thinker who expressed himself in such unequivocal terms

against the German national movement over a long period of years came to be regarded, as he still is today, as the intellectual and spiritual father of German nationalism? How did it come about that the man who so harshly criticized the first signs of the Aryan racial doctrine should be regarded as the founder of German nationalism and racialism by a scholar like Karl Popper,¹³ or that a thinker who opposed every attempt at political unity in Germany should be considered by Hermann Heller to be the first exponent of the modern nationalist state?¹⁴ It is easy to cite a long list of scholars who hold the same view as to the close connection between Hegel and German nationalism and racialist Nazism.¹⁵

It is of crucial importance to observe that this view of Hegel is a new and fundamentally revolutionary one. The Germans of the nineteenth century, who knew Hegel in the context of the German political reality of his period, saw him as utterly hostile to nationalism. Such, for example, is the view of Rudolf Haym, the nationalist historian of the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848.¹⁶ Writing in 1857, he denounced Hegel as the foe equally of liberalism and of German nationalism. Haym saw Hegel's attachment to Prussia as a proof of his antinationalism as well as of his antiliberalism. In his lectures of 1897 Treitschke, also, referred to Hegel in a rather condescending manner: Hegel did not, and could not, understand the nationalist connection between the *Volk* and the state.¹⁷

How did the evaluation of Hegel come to be altered in such a radical way during recent decades?

Three complementary answers may be suggested:

1. The Hegelian school in attempting to emerge from its political isolation and to become part of the German national movement of the fifties drew nearer to nationalism and took to interpreting Hegel in a nationalist spirit. This is rather obvious, for example, in Karl Rosenkranz's expositions of his master's doctrine. Rosenkranz wrote three books on Hegel. The first, *The Life of Hegel* published in 1844, made no specific mention of his subject's stand on the national question. The second, dating from 1858, was a rejoinder to Haym's accusations

(*Apologie Hegels gegen Dr. R. Haym*). Here Rosenkranz claimed for the first time that Hegel was not alien to German nationalism. The very title of the third book, published in the significant year 1870, revealed how far in assessing his master's doctrines Rosenkranz had been influenced by his own *Zeitgeist*: it was called *Hegel as a German National Philosopher* (*Hegel als deutscher Nationalphilosoph*)—a title completely inconceivable twenty or thirty years earlier.

2. The *volte-face* which occurred in the role of Prussia in German nationalism in the nineteenth century did much to confuse the meaning of Hegel's so-called "Prussianism." Up to Bismarck's time, Prussia's attitude to German unification was extremely hostile and in 1857 Haym could denounce Hegel for being antiliberal and antinational *on the ground of his Prussian connections*. Bismarck's policy, by directing Prussia to become the instrument of German unification, completely changed the image of Prussia in European thought: while still remaining antiliberal, it became utterly nationalistic in outlook. Thus Hegel's Prussianism was given not only an antiliberal connotation, but also a nationalistic one. This is clearly an anachronism, achieved by projecting the image of the Prussia of 1870 (or, perhaps, even of 1914–1918) back upon 1820. This was carried to its extreme by Popper, who looked on Hegel as the "servant" of the Prussian court *and* the prophet of German nationalism at the same time: these are mutually exclusive political orientations in the context of 1820, but Popper had the Bismarckian image of Prussia before him and read backwards from it to the Prussia of the Congress of Vienna.

3. The fragmentary publication of Hegel's manuscript "The Constitution of Germany" (*Die Verfassung Deutschlands*) did much to create a twisted image of Hegel's attitude toward nationalism. Extracts from his unpublished and unknown manuscript, written during 1801–2, were first published by Rosenkranz when, in his controversy with Haym, he was trying to prove Hegel's nationalism. In this essay Hegel offered an explanation of the collapse of the German states before the

French onslaught. Hegel attributed the collapse mainly to the feudal structure of the decrepit Holy Roman Empire. He tried to find a way in which the balance of power in Europe could be redressed by establishing a strong Central European power within the framework of the *historical Reich*, but only as a political unit, without national or ethnic-linguistic connotations. The essay trailed off on a rather pessimistic note when he expressed the opinion that the attempt would probably not succeed. Even the name given to the essay is not Hegel's, who left it without a title. The essay runs to some 140 pages, and the extracts published by Rosenkranz do not exceed a tenth of the total. This carefully biased fragmentary publication created around 1850 the impression that Hegel was advocating something like German unification, and readers were unable to verify this impression which would have been exploded had the work been published in its entirety. This fragmentary acquaintance served as a basis for a popular exposition of Hegel's views in the significant year 1870. The work, written by Karl Köstlin of Tübingen, treated Hegel as the philosopher of the national German states.¹⁸ This book was largely responsible for the popular image of Hegel in Wilhelmian Germany, and to prove his point Köstlin relied heavily on the extracts quoted by Rosenkranz—without ever having seen the full text of the original for himself.

The full text of the "Constitution of Germany" was published for the first time in 1893 by Georg Mollat. But by that time the public image of Hegel had already been so wholly transformed by the popular expositions of the fragmentary text, that the publication of the full text did not change much in the interpretation of Hegel's position. Scholars and publicists went on quoting the familiar passages and, though their pagination referred to Mollat's edition, they appear not to have looked afresh at the whole essay. The first one who based his interpretation of the essay on the whole text was Franz Rosenzweig whose study only appeared after the First World War. And he overlooked a key passage because it did not square with the established image of Hegel; it is the passage in which Hegel remarked about the characteristic of the modern states:

In our times, there is no need for integration or unity in the states as far as custom, tradition, culture, and language are concerned. . . . The dialects of many provinces of France and England differ from the dominant tongue. . . . In Wales and the Hebrides English is not spoken at all. . . . The Austrian and Russian monarchs do not even know how many languages are spoken in their states—and precisely their states are models of the modern state, whose integration arises . . . from the spirit and unity of a common political consciousness.¹⁹

It is not surprising that this passage, and others as well, were simply overlooked by those who tried to find in Hegel the philosopher of nationalism.

Thus Hegel came to be interpreted as a German nationalist by two absolutely opposed political traditions. First, the German national movement of the end of the last century claimed Hegel as part and parcel of the German heritage on nationalist terms; secondly, liberal Anglo-Saxons maintained during the Nazi regime that Hegel's antiliberalism must involve extreme nationalism—and went about tearing Hegel to pieces on those two grounds alike. It is significant that in the nineteenth century none of the English Hegelians ever mentioned any possibility of a nationalist connotation of Hegel's philosophy, though they were aware of his political *étatist* tenets.

It is true, of course, that Hegel would never have been interpreted in a nationalist vein had there not been similarities between some of his expressions, if not opinions, and those of nationalist thinkers. As for the affinities of Hegel's terminology with that of nationalism, the main point of overlapping seems to be Hegel's use of the terms *Volkgeist* and *Volk*, which held a central position in German nationalism itself. It may, then, be helpful, to ascertain Hegel's meaning in using those terms, and to relate it to the common usage of German nationalism, in an effort to determine whether the meaning of Hegel's term can be interpreted in a nationalist light.

The inquiry will be conducted on three levels: the concept of *Volkgeist* in Hegel's early writings will be presented; a comparison will be drawn between Hegel's usage of the term and the meaning attributed to it by Savigny's School of Ger-

man Historical Jurisprudence; and finally the meaning of this term in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* will be examined.

III

Hegel's early writings were first published by Hermann Nohl in 1907, and down to 1948 remained untranslated into any other language. The fact that they were completely unknown in the nineteenth century and are still very little known compared with his later writings, has certainly done a lot to influence the general image of Hegel's thought and its development.

These writings reveal Hegel's spiritual development while he was gradually liberating himself from Kantian philosophy and slowly working out his own conceptual system. Parallel to this, he was also gradually freeing himself from deep Herderian influences which must be considered in order to find out the significances of the concept of *Volk* to Hegel.

The first of Hegel's early writings, written in 1796,^a is called *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (*Die Positivität der christlichen Religion*). This is Hegel's sharpest attack on Christianity. In it he combined Kant's outlook in the realm of ethics with outlooks derived from Herder in the cultural sphere. He rebuked Christianity for being a "positive" religion, that is, based on normative, positive, and institutionalized commandments. These are external to the individual's self-consciousness and constitute moral coercion, as they prevent him from exercising his autonomous moral decision.

The essay is a panegyric of the Greek popular religion of paganism (*Volksreligion*), contrasted with Christianity. In strict Herderian terms, Hegel saw religion, as well as morality and art, as a manifestation of the people's spirit (*Volksgeist*). Every people has its own *Volksgeist*, incorporating a unity of life which is peculiar to it. This appears in the spiritual wholeness of the individual, who merges his entire being into the spirit of

^a Actually, in 1795. It is "the first" only in the English edition. The German volume contains some earlier fragments on folk religion. w.k.

his people. Following Herder's "Christianity and the National Religions," Hegel stated that every people has its own specific sociocultural institutions corresponding to its national character. This also explains historically, according to Hegel, the appearance of Christ against the background of "the miserable situation of the Jewish nation."²⁰ This occurred because the divine legislation of Moses, accompanied as it was by numerous and burdensome statutory commandments, converted the Jewish people into a nation of recluses, priding itself on its servile obedience to the Law. When a foreign power, Rome, intruded into this closed system, imposing upon the Jews subjection to an *outside political order*, the hermetic character of Jewish religious exclusivism was impaired. Out of this tension there arose the messianic belief—and Hegel was one of the first moderns to interpret the Messiah as an embodiment of the national consciousness of the Jewish people. The Messiah, "girded with might as Jehova's plenipotentiary, was to rebuild the Jewish state from its foundations."²¹

This *political* interpretation of early Jewish Messianism is a consequence of the entire Herderian explanation of the historical background of the appearance of Jesus. It is a consequence of the uniqueness of Judaism: the Mosaic religion cannot coexist with any other link to the external world, Hegel maintained, and as Judaism and foreign rule are irreconcilable, the reconstruction of the Jewish state becomes a necessity arising from the *peculiar* (and rather heavily criticized from Hegel's side) character of Judaism. *This is not a universal demand for political independence as a prerequisite for every people.* Only the Jewish people, because of its peculiar and hermetic religion requires itself as "a people dwelling unto itself." Political independence, therefore, is not the historical norm but the deviation, which excludes Israel from the generality of the historical process itself.

In another work, dating from the same year, "On the Difference between the Imaginative Religion of the Greeks and Christian Positive Religion" (*Unterschied zwischen griechischer Phantasie und christlicher positiver Religion*), Hegel sought the

reason for the triumph of Christianity over paganism. This essay was written in a spirit similar to that of the work just discussed. But the conclusions deducible from it regarding our inquiry are somewhat different. Hegel ascribed the triumph of Christianity not to any rational superiority on its side, but to a certain prior revolution in habits and cultural outlook. His words strike a very typical note in 1796, and the mature Hegel may already be seen between the lines:

Great revolutions which strike the eye at a glance must have been preceded by a still and secret revolution in the spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*), a revolution not visible to every eye, especially imperceptible to contemporaries, and as hard to discern as to describe in words. It is lack of acquaintance with this spiritual revolution which makes the resulting changes astonishing.²²

What was this inner revolution which enabled and preconditioned the spread of Christianity? It was the transition from the free city-state to the Empire. The pagan religion was the religion of free citizens: the gods are the creation of their imagination in the same way as the *polis* is the creation of their consciousness. The *polis* is the eternal essence in which every citizen sees the continuation of his life even after his physical death. Thus pagan Greek religion could be content with gods replete with human failures, because the eternal and transcendental was engraved on the inner soul of each citizen. But the servility imposed by the Empire needed another sort of deity, and Christianity, itself, according to Hegel, as product of servitude, offered itself to a population degraded by fear and terror. The Christian deity was not produced by free will, as the Empire was no longer the voluntary republican *polis*. Prayer replaced will and this corrupt generation could without difficulty accept a religion based on the moral corruption of mankind, expressed in the Christian doctrine of sin. Sin itself became a religious value, immanent in human nature—and the Emperors viewed favorably a religion which would divert men's attention from their actual sociopolitical conditions to a salvation to be

found in heaven. The very debasement of life became a sanctified value.

Behind this fierce republican and anti-Christian tirade, a new meaning of the *Volkgeist* can be seen emerging. As in the previous work, religion appears as one of the manifestations of the *Volkgeist*. The concept itself is not primarily spiritual-cultural but turns out to be mainly political in its essence: the measure of political liberty, the methods of political and social institutionalization are no longer mere *phenomena* of a hidden, rather vague *Volkgeist* working from behind the scene—they are its very *essence*. The political sphere becomes dominant in determining the religious experience and the sociocultural attitudes and values. Thus, the *Zeitgeist* of the Roman imperial period differed from the republican not because the *Volkgeist* changed: the *Volkgeist* changed because of the transformation of political institutions, arising from a new social class and/or geographical structure. Thus the "totality" of the Herderian *Volkgeist* became highly politicized, probably under the impact of the French Revolution. Perhaps even more important, the *Volkgeist* became more of a descriptive than a genetic term.

With this in mind, the question of political independence raised once more by Hegel in connection with the Jewish nation (and it is not raised by him in any other connection at that period) may be considered. In a rather long and involved passage, Hegel held:

Similarly, so long as the Jewish state found spirit and strength enough in itself for the maintenance of its independence, the Jews seldom, or, as many hold, never, had recourse to the expectation of a Messiah. Not until they were subjugated by foreign nations, not until they had a sense of their impotence and weakness, do we find them burrowing in their sacred books for a consolation of that kind. Then, when they were offered a Messiah who did not fulfil their political expectations, they thought it worth toiling to insure that their state should still remain a state; a nation to which this is a matter of indifference will soon cease to be a nation. They very soon discarded their ineffective messianic hopes

and took up arms. . . . In history and the judgement of nations they would stand alongside the Carthaginians and Saguntines, and above the Greeks and Romans, whose cities outlived their polities, if the sense of what a nation may do for its independence were not too foreign to us. . . .²³

The impulse for independence on the part of the Jews is no longer here explained by the *unique* character of Jewish religion: it appears as a *universal* need, in that intriguing remark scribbled by Hegel on the margin of the original manuscript: "A nation to which this is a matter of indifference will soon cease to be a nation." Is this really a demand in the spirit of modern nationalism?

Hardly so, if it be read within the context of Hegel's essay. It is not the national independence of modern nations that Hegel is referring to, but the political independence of ancient city-states. In an essay in which political values are dominant, the existence of a *political organization* as such is conceived as absolutely necessary to the existence of intellectual and spiritual life. Thus, the Greek *polis* lost its spiritual life following its political subjection—a subjection which was *not necessarily a national one*. A unit which is no longer a political unit in the sense of having its own political institutions and of embodying the will of its citizens, is no longer a social unit at all: it becomes part of another unit, which has engulfed it. That Hegel does not mean national units in any modern sense, but the existence of a state as such as a preliminary condition to cultural life, is evident from the examples adduced of Carthage and Saguntum. Being a people means being organized in a political framework—this is the principle by which *Volk* is defined, here as well as in Hegel's later political writings. This is very similar to Rousseau's *peuple*. Later Hegel wrote about a Prussian *Volk* or a Bavarian *Volk*, etc., because those *states* did exist.

But this is not the last phase of the gradual but significant transformations of Hegel's *Volksgeist*. In the last work belonging to his early period, *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate*, written in 1799, the atmosphere is completely different. Under the influence of Hölderlin and possibly also Schlegel, Hegel

switched over from rationalistic criticism of Christianity to Christian mysticism,^b searching for a speculative expression for his religious experiences. As this development is beyond the scope of the present study, it can only be pointed out that thereafter Hegel considered himself a devout Christian,^c although he never fully agreed with the accepted theological justification of doctrinal terms and his Lutheranism is certainly open to criticism on theological grounds. In this essay, however, Hegel presented Christianity as a blending of Judaism, with its austere commandments, and of Hellenism, consisting here mainly in the cult of beauty and aesthetic experience. According to Hegel, those two qualities require each other in order to create the synthesis of *psyche* (soul) and *physis* (nature).

This is, of course, an obvious romanticization of Christianity, and consequently the Jewish and Greek *Volksgeister* involved cannot any longer be considered as *historical* entities. What Hegel meant here when he referred to Greek or Hebrew spirit has nothing to do with the *actual* Greeks or Hebrews: it is an abstraction of a quality, of a philosophical idea, placed rather arbitrarily by Hegel into a historical reality. The references are no longer to concrete manifestations of any historical phenomenon, a people or a culture, but to the realization of metaphysical ideas ("beauty," "morality," etc.). The concept of *Volksgeist* had in effect become void of all content ascribable to it as a tangibly historical entity.

But before Hegel reached this ultimate reconciliation with Christianity, he wrote, apparently while staying in Berne in 1797, a passage sometimes referred to as "Is Judea, then, the Teutons' Fatherland?" (*Ist denn Judäa der Teutonen Vaterland?*). Most characteristically, in their fullest form this passage expresses the Herderian ideas of *Volksgeist*—while dialectically refuting them and going beyond them.

Initially Hegel stated that every people possesses its own

^b This is Kroner's interpretation in his long introduction to Knox's translation. It has been criticized in detail by Kaufmann. See *From Shakespeare to Existentialism*, Chapter 8, w.k.

^c See the preceding footnote, w.k.

traditions and fantasies about gods, angels, demons, and heroes; they are transmitted from generation to generation, constituting the sociopolitical and cultural heritage. The ancient Germanic tribes possessed such a tradition—but it was destroyed by Christianity:

Christianity has emptied Valhalla, felled the sacred groves, extirpated the national imagery as a shameful superstition, as a devilish poison, and given us instead the imagery of a nation whose climate, laws, culture, and interests are stranger to us and whose history has no connection whatever with our own. A David or a Solomon lives in our popular imagination, but our own country's heroes slumber in learned history books. . . .²⁴

This looks as if it were a preliminary to a plea on Herderian lines to resuscitate the German *Ur-Mythos*. But dialectically Hegel proceeded to attack what he calls the "phoney Germanic literature," which tried to put new life into old Teutonic traditions. This sort of literature, very much connected with Klopstock's name, is severely criticized by Hegel:

But this imagery is not that of Germans today. The project of restoring to a nation an imagery once lost was always doomed to failure. . . . The old German imagery has nothing in our day to connect or adapt itself to; it stands as cut off from the whole circle of our ideas, opinions, and beliefs, and is as strange to us as the imagery of Ossian or of India.²⁵

Hegel never reversed this verdict on the German national Romantic attempt to revive the old mythology. Over thirty years later, when lecturing on aesthetics at Berlin University, he had this to say about Klopstock and his school:

Very prominent in Klopstock is the consciousness of the fatherland. As a poet he sensed the need for a rooted mythology, whose names and forms should compose in themselves a solid base for fantasy. . . . It may be said that out of national pride Klopstock tried to revive the mythology of Wothan, Herta and the rest. All he succeeded in doing was that the *names* of the Gods took on German instead of Greek forms, and no more. Klopstock attained to no greater influence and objective actuality than a man

who endeavors to argue that the Imperial Diet of Regensburg can constitute the ideal of our present national existence. *Those Gods who have sunk into oblivion will always remain hollow and false*, and a good deal of hypocrisy is needed to pretend that this fantasy is reconcilable with intelligence and with the present consciousness of the nation.²⁶

To sum up: Hegel used Herder's term *Volkgeist*, but with a connotation, which excludes any interpretation that he favored a return to the Germanic *Ur-Volk*. In Hegel's thought the *Volkgeist* underwent a profound process of rationalization; it is not the origin of the historical phenomena, but is really the outcome of them, and thus tautological with it. It cannot be interpreted in the spirit of national and romantic myth. The self-same myths which acted as a driving force in the development of revived German national consciousness were those later transformed into the racialist and pagan Nazi ideology. Hegel's historiosophical concepts, on the other hand, were not conceived as a means of romanticizing the present in the image of the past. For, as Heraclitus said, one cannot step twice into the same river and Hegel the dialectician always remained hostile to any attempt to revive the past: this was his point of view when he was a young private tutor in Berne and remanied his belief when in his later years he served as Professor of Philosophy in Berlin.

IV

The second level of our investigation is concerned with the respective meanings attached to the term *Volkgeist* in Hegel and in the writing of the German Historical School of Jurisprudence, founded by Savigny and Puchta.

In the usage of the Historical School the concept served as a lever for the German nationalist consciousness to identify itself with what was thought to have been the institutions of ancient German law. This self-identification reached its peak in the attempt to do away with the existing rational European legal system and reconstruct what was conceived to be ancient Ger-

man-national tribal law, thus replacing "formal" Roman law by "popular primeval" German justice.²⁷

The question here posed is whether the term *Volksgeist* had the same meaning in Hegel's writings as the one it received in the Historical School. The various scholars who have engaged in this line of inquiry agree on the fundamental facts relating to the actual use of the term:²⁸ the concept of *Volksgeist* reached the Historical School through Hegel. Savigny used it only after it had come to him through Puchta who was Hegel's pupil. But this is not yet an answer to the question, whether the meaning of the concept is identical.

In order to examine this, it is necessary to determine what the Historical School meant in using the term, then to ascertain whether the same meaning can be ascribed to the term in Hegel's writings, and finally to examine in what measure Hegel himself actually took issue with Savigny's school.

According to Savigny's *On Our Generation's Legislative Task* (1813) law stands in an organic connection with the nation's character. The nature of law constitutes the inner essence of the nation and stems from its history, for every nation has its own particular laws and customs in accordance with its particular and unique spirit. The reason and origin of the law are found in that layer of national consciousness which also produces language and custom. Law lives in the nation's original (*ursprünglich*) consciousness. It is created by unconscious historical forces, not by the conscious will of the formal legislator. Just as the grammarian never determines the laws of language, but describes them as they exist and function, so the legislator merely describes the prevailing procedures in the life of society. In accordance with German historical legal consciousness, Savigny stated that the legislator merely gives external formalization to contents already inherent in the national character. He is no more than the external representative of the *Volksgeist* which does its silent and secret work in concealment, in the bosom of the historical process itself.

In Puchta's works the romanticization of the concept of law goes deeper and further into the political sphere; as law is the product of an unconscious and primeval national force, so is

the state, which is not the outcome of rational, conscious will, but a product of dormant historical forces. Neither law nor the state is open to rational criticism or argument. Law and the state, according to the Historical School, always are what they should be. Positive legislation and conscious general codification—insofar as they reflect the *Volksgeist* and the existing legal values inherent in the people—are superfluous; insofar as they introduce innovations and impose new conceptions, as the *Code Napoléon* did in areas of Western Germany, they emasculate the people's consciousness. The Historical School violently opposed any attempt at codification and rationalization of existing legal customs.

To what extent can these notions be connected with Hegel? In his *Philosophy of Right* Hegel stated that the *Volksgeist* endows the state with its unique character.²⁹ But beneath the identity of the term, there exists a difference of content and principles. For the Jurists, the *Volksgeist* is an essence creating law, morality, religion, and language. It is a mythical quality which takes on various forms and is implicit in the people, working hidden and unknown to all. But for Hegel the *Volksgeist* does not create the unique character of each people, but is the product of its concrete arrangements in the realms of religion, tradition, and the like.

The Hegelian *Volksgeist* is identical with the features it is describing, and does not create them, as the Jurists and the Romantics generally held. For them it is the unconscious creator of law, for Hegel the conscious product aware of itself.³⁰ The Hegelian concept is descriptive, while that of the Jurists is genetic.⁴ Furthermore, Hegel's term is a rational one,

⁴ In two respects the contrast between Hegel and the Jurists is not as clear as it might be. In the preceding three sentences the Hegelian *Volksgeist* is twice called the product of that with which in the central sentence it seems to be identical, and the author himself italicizes these words. He also says in the central sentence that it "does not create them"; but in the second sentence of the second paragraph of section V we are told that "each *Volksgeist* has to create a state."

Then, at the end of the present paragraph, the concept of the Jurists is said to be "naturalistic" and "positivist"; but up to this point it had seemed to be romantic and mystical, and in footnote 37 the author speaks of "the general romantic outlook." w.k.

while that of the Jurists is naturalistic, an *Ursache* of all social existence. Marcuse rightly observed³¹ that the Jurists' conception is a positivist reaction to the rationalism immanent in the Hegelian *Volksgeist*.

The phenomenological similarity between law and language, as proposed by the Jurists, is also very remote from Hegel's view. For him, law embodies a rational, universalistic content, while language is an expression of chance attachment and arbitrary external affiliation. For Hegel the content of law embodies rational ethical qualities, while language is morally irrelevant: one legal norm may be said to be morally superior to another; it would be nonsense to say anything like this about languages.

Nor is this all: for Hegel the Idea, as an ethical quality realizing and embodying itself, attains realization only through its objectification in the world of phenomena, in its institution-alization. Where law is concerned this process of objectification of the ethical qualities takes place by explicit legislation and promulgation which posits the law as an objective fact, and not a mere subjective wish.³²

From this derived Hegel's specific support for such works of codification as that of Justinian, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon.³³ On this issue Hegel specifically criticized the ideas of the Historical School and of Ludwig von Haller. He saw their opposition to an objective statute law as a shibboleth for their subjectivist, relativist, and irrational philosophical premises.³⁴ As the criterion for the existence of a traditional customary law is subjective (whether it is known or has already been forgotten), it is basically arbitrary and unclear. From this point of view Hegel argued against the anomalies of the unreformed English Common Law of the 1820s.³⁵

Hegel was unable to accept the subjective test of law for an additional reason: it effaced the difference between law, which is objective, and personal morality, which is the specific province of subjectivity.³⁶ By maintaining a difference between the realms of law and private morality, Hegel also maintained the dual existence of state and society, amalgamated into one

concept in the Jurists' theory and by the whole romantic movement.

Since Hegel's notions of law are rational categories of universal applicability, the positive content of the law cannot be derived from any national characteristics: the law is one and universal.³⁷ Hence his positive sympathy with the introduction of the rational Napoleonic Code, which swept away so much old dead wood and was viewed by Hegel as a step toward the victory of the universal general norms of law; after all, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is an abstraction of those norms, a blueprint for their inevitable institutionalization.

Hegel devoted one whole essay to a controversy concerning the validity of an actual customary traditional law, his long article on the constitutional struggle in Württemberg, in which he attacked the attitude of those who supported the validity of the traditional customary feudal law of that kingdom. Around the banner of the Good Old Law had gathered members of the Historical School of Law, the romantic supporters of the national folk-poet Uhland and the aristocratic circles of Württemberg, whose traditional rights stood to suffer from any rationalization and modernization of the legal system. In the same fierce language in which he had rejected the attempt to revive German tribal mythology, Hegel here rejected the attempt to uphold antiquated traditional law on the ground that it is the "primeval," "original," "old" law. For him, the very reliance on historical rights was utterly baseless, as it proved nothing:

The question whether what is accepted as an ancient law and an existing right is good or bad cannot be decided solely by the age of the legal arrangement concerned. The abolition of human sacrifice and of slavery, putting an end to feudal despotism, and the abolition of an infinite number of other iniquitous institutions, has been invariably the abolition of something which had been valid law in its time. It has been repeatedly stressed that rights do not disappear with time, and that a hundred years of iniquity cannot make injustice into justice.³⁸

There exist, therefore, immanent rational criteria for the critique of social arrangements, and reliance on the past pos-

sesses no validating powers for the present. Such validation is possible only in the sphere of past events which always symbolize lower stages of consciousness. Whoever desires to remain within the confines of historical arrangements is reversing historical development, Hegel wrote in a passage in which he coupled social progress with a conscious effort at codification:

The sun and the planets have their laws too, but they do not know them. Savages are governed by impulses, customs, and feelings, but they are unconscious of this. When right is posited as law and is known, every accident of feeling vanishes together with the form of revenge, sympathy and selfishness, and in this way the right attains for the first time its true determinacy and is given its due honour.³⁹

These four characteristics of the Historical School are those that set them off from Hegel: legal positivism, seeing the *Volksgeist* as the unconscious original creator of law, aspiration to arrive at an original *Ur-German law*, and rejection of the value of conscious and explicit codification.

V

Only one aspect of Hegel's philosophy of history can be discussed here: the allegation that his philosophy of history is linked with German nationalism. To support the charge it is argued: first Hegel saw historical development in cycles of nations in successive order ruling over the entire world; and he saw the present age being realized among the German peoples, and as he conceived the present age to be the supreme stage of historical development, there is here correspondence with the Nazi idea of German supremacy.

Now, it is true that the formal division of the *Philosophy of History* into oriental, Greek, Roman, and Germanic periods points to the interpretation of epochs characterized each by a different dominant nation. But these stages, though characterized by successive *Volksgeister*, are not characterized by the

political domination of any one national state: true, each *Volksgeist* has to create a state, but this is by no means *one, national* state. The Greek *polis*, any Greek *polis*, was the outcome of the Greek *Volksgeist*, although Greece never achieved political and national unification. Achieving a state means achieving self-consciousness: wherever there exists a body of people who see in some general political arrangements the embodiment of their essential will, there you have a state. How many states will be the outcome of any particular *Volksgeist* is immaterial: in the Greek case it was probably several hundred. Ethnic, linguistic, or racial frontiers have nothing to do with it. The Greek world was declining when it achieved its political unity by an outside agent and Meinecke saw this as a clear indication that Hegel never considered or valued or preached "national" unity.⁴⁰ He had nothing in common with later German historiography, already infected by nationalism, which criticized the Greeks, as Mommsen did, for not achieving unification. But the criticism was really aimed at contemporary Germany. The later German veneration for the Roman Empire cannot be found in Hegel, who had some rather harsh words to say about Roman imperialism, and who unqualifiedly preferred the Greek spirit to the Roman.⁴¹

But there is a frequently cited famous passage from the *Philosophy of History*, in which Hegel seemed to maintain that every World Historical Nation had an absolute right to dominance during its period of hegemony.⁴² From this Popper and McGovern, to say nothing of general textbooks of history and political science, conclude that Hegel believed in world domination by one nation, Germany.

This interpretation, however, does not really sustain examination. It is mainly a projection of a twentieth-century situation back into Hegel's time and mind. Hegel never ascribed *political domination* to what he termed World Historical Nations. They seemed to possess quite different attributes: "All historical peoples embody power of literary creation, poetry, art, sculpture and painting, science and philosophy."⁴³ The *absolute right* is not in the realm of international politics, but in the

sphere of cultural leadership. Thus, divided classical Greece was the stage at which the Greek spirit was dominant. Hegel was quite explicit that the Greek World never had any *political* meanings, that it was a cultural sphere—Magna Graecia.⁴⁴ The time of universal Greek political hegemony, during and after the Macedonian Empire, was, according to Hegel, a period of decadence.

Thus, it may be concluded that Hegel's cycles of history are cycles of the cultural sphere, and not of political domination or military conquest, and this may also explain the meaning of what Hegel termed the Germanic World or period.

Initially, some semantic misunderstanding has to be cleared. Hegel termed the last phase of historical development *die germanische Welt* (the Germanic World) and not *die deutsche Welt* (the German World). It is significant—and deplorable—that Sibree in his translation of the *Philosophy of History* never distinguished between *germanisch* and *deutsch* and translated both terms as "German."⁴⁵ The term "Germanic" is, in the German usage, always used to connote a cultural sphere, and had no political implications, whereas the term "German" aroused in Anglo-Saxon readers of the last half century every possible association with German political world domination.

Hegel, in generally referring to this Germanic period as the *Christian World*, may have revealed his real meaning: the last and present historical epoch has nothing to do with German political domination, which would be completely incompatible with Hegel's own opposition to German unification. Like the former historical periods, this period has to be interpreted in cultural terms, and the only meaning behind the term "Germanic World" in Hegel implies that Hegel saw in Western Civilization the highlight of mankind's spiritual development. The values of this Germanic world are Christian values; in spite of the fact that his new and last historical phase started with the disintegration of the Roman world, Hegel never forgot that the bearers of the new civilization, the Germanic tribes, accepted the Christianity of the Roman culture. The principle dominating Europe, though sometimes called Germanic by

Hegel, is the Christian principle, and not an original Germanic contribution to World History: no *Ur-Volk* mythology can be ascribed to Hegel's terming the last phase as a Germanic one, for he explicitly wrote:

It is extremely important to stress how different is the course of Germanic history from that of the Greeks and Romans. While the latter embodied their own original principles, the impulse to Germanic development was imparted to the Germans by alien culture. The principles realized by them, their culture and development, their law and religion, were borrowed.⁴⁶

There could be no stronger condemnation of the Germanistic interpretation of history than this: while Herder and the Romantics were basing their national ideology on the "originality" (*Ursprünglichkeit*) of the Germans, Hegel regarded them as the bearers of a foreign culture and saw in this their main virtue, as their own "original" culture could never have attained any historical importance because of its inherent barbarism:

Before the Germans adopted the Christian principles, they had lived in a state of barbarism. Their pagan religion was superficial and lacking essential contents. . . . Germanic law is not true law, for under it murder is not a crime from the point of view of moral values, but merely a private offense compensated by a payment of damages. . . . The Germanic individual is free, but free as the wild animal is free, possessing no value as a moral being. . . . Ever since Tacitus, much has been said of the ancient original liberty of the Germans. But woe to us were we to confuse this state of savagery and barbarism with a state of liberty, and let us not be induced to follow Rousseau's fallacy, who saw in the wild American Indians the embodiment of liberty.⁴⁷

The Germanic world is not, therefore, an ethnic, racial, or political nation. It is Christian Europe, Western Civilization, including according to Hegel, not only Germany, but Spain and France, England and Italy as well—and, perhaps, even Russia.⁴⁸ It is not associated with the geographical region inhab-

ited by Germanic Tribes, just as it has no connection with the modern political hegemony of Germany. From a political point of view the settlement of 1815, basically antinational, corresponded to the Christian and conservative *Weltanschauung* of Hegel. This *gens Christiana* had no need for the subjectivist nationalist consciousness or for the ethnic-linguistic links, which are accidental and have no rational or moral meaning. Hegel envisaged the modern world as a world containing a multiplicity of political units and powers, in the manner of classical Greece.⁴⁹ It is held together not by political power, but by what Hegel metaphysically termed the Spirit, realizing in Christian Europe, what Hegel understood, with a strong Lutheran undercurrent, as liberty: the recognition of necessity.

One may beg to differ from this sort of metaphysics, and historically Hegel's analysis seems to be rather naive, though, for a generation torn by a quarter century of wars, this may be understandable. This comes out clearly when one observes that according to Hegel the unifying common spirit was also affecting a humanization of international conduct in his contemporary world: "The European peoples form a family in accordance with the universal principle underlying their legal codes, their customs, and their civilization. This principle has accordingly modified their international conduct in a state of affairs (i.e., war), otherwise dominated by the mutual infliction of evil."⁵⁰

To read here a nationalist meaning twists Hegel's philosophy into meaninglessness. It is understandable how such a peculiar misreading gained currency in a generation which projected its own image of German unity, German nationalism, and finally Nazism upon the entire German philosophy and history of the nineteenth century. The annals of the historiography of Hegel's teaching, to which some allusions were made at the outset of this discussion, are themselves an interesting chapter in the metamorphosis of the modern *Zeitgeist*. But this explanation cannot alter the nature of Hegel's philosophy itself.

One reservation should, perhaps, be made. The development of modern nationalism may be attributed to two main

currents: on the one hand, the increased value attributed to the cultural and ethnic association and to romantic communal togetherness; on the other hand, it sprang up from the crystallization of the modern territorial state that constituted the context in which the national claims were realized.

Both are distinct phenomena, caused by different historical and cultural developments. They met in the course of the nineteenth century through the grafting of the national *idea* into the political *structure* of the territorial machinery produced by monarchical absolutism.

The first phenomenon was completely alien to Hegel. But in relation to the second, more "political," or even better, *étatist* aspect, Hegel's thought may stand in some contributory relation. As A.D. Lindsay once remarked,⁵¹ the transition from the dynastic to the national state arose out of the transition from the individual's allegiance first to his ruler, and later to his fellow citizens in the political unit, the mediation for such allegiance being furnished by rational, political, and universalistic-anonymous institutions. Political obligation, so to speak, was refined and institutionalized. To this development Hegel's contribution was undoubtedly large, for in his philosophy the political sphere became the dominant set of interhuman relations. The political sphere, by becoming dominant, makes the modern state strong in comparison with other historical political arrangements, and, though it was not Hegel's intention, this powerful state became an instrument of nationalism—for without a clear-cut idea of a modern, strong and rationally-organized state, nationalism could not have laid its claim to primacy.

In *this*, then, may lie Hegel's contribution, albeit an unconscious one, to the crystallization of the modern national state. It is, perhaps, dialectically fascinating to discover that the doctrine of a thinker who rejected any manifestation of nationalism, should be found to have ultimately contributed to this process from an unexpected angle. But, to Hegel, familiar as he was with the "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*), possibly this would not have been surprising.

NOTES

1. This is an extended version of a paper read before the Israel Historical Association in Jerusalem. I am deeply indebted for the help I was privileged to receive from Professor J. L. Talmon, under whom this study was conducted. I am further indebted to Professor Karl Popper of the London School of Economics, Dr. J. Rodman of Harvard University, Dr. Z. A. Pelczynski of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Mr. R. Friedman of Johns Hopkins for the stimulating discussions I had with them. That we sometimes had to agree to differ did not diminish the value of those discussions in clarifying my own ideas.
2. *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), I, 120.
3. *Ibid.*, I, 137. [der Geist über geistlosen Verstand might be rendered more literally as "spirit over spiritless understanding." w.k.]
4. *Ibid.*, II, 6.
5. *Ibid.*, II, 27.
6. *Ibid.*, II, 14-15.
7. *Ibid.*, II, 23.
8. *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig, 1913), p. 159.
9. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig, 1920), p. 937 (subsequently referred to as *Weltgeschichte*).
10. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1945), § 322.
11. *Ibid.*, § 209; cf. also § 270. See Avineri, "The Hegelian Position on the Emancipation of the Jews," *Iyyun* (Jerusalem, 1960), XXV, No. 2, 134-136 (in Hebrew).
12. G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte—Einleitung zur Geschichtsphilosophie*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1955), p. 159 (subsequently referred to as *Einleitung*).
13. K. R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton, 1950), pp. 255-273.
14. H. Heller, *Hegel und der nationale Machtstaatsgedanke in Deutschland* (Leipzig & Berlin, 1921).
15. E. F. Carr, "Hegel and Prussianism," *Philosophy*, XV (Jan. 1940), 51-56; J. Bowle, *Politics and Opinion in the 19th Century* (London, 1954), pp. 34-50; W. M. McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler* (New York, 1940), pp. 317-355. Cf. also the recent work by A. Hacker, *Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science* (New York, 1961), pp. 438-445. This view, however, is by no means unchallenged. Cf. Georg Lukacs, "Der deutsche Faschismus und Hegel," in his *Schicksalswende: Beiträge zu einer neuen deutschen Ideologie* (Berlin, 1948), pp. 37-67; H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London, 1955); W. Kaufmann, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (New York, 1960); also F. Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, 3. Aufl. (Munich and Berlin, 1915), pp. 275ff.
16. R. Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Berlin, 1857).
17. H. V. Treitschke, *Politics*, trans. B. Dugdale and T. de Bille (London, 1916), I, 22-23, 53.
18. K. Köstlin, *Hegel in philosophischer, politischer und nationaler Beziehung* (Tübingen, 1870), pp. 158-165, 174.
19. *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 24-25.
20. G. W. F. Hegel, *On Christianity: Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox and R. Kroner (New York, 1961), p. 69.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
26. Quoted by Köstlin, *op. cit.*, p. 170 (my italics).
27. For the connection between the Historical School and political romanticism and nationalism, cf. C. Schmitt, *Politische Romantik*, 2. Aufl. (Munich, 1925), pp. 46ff. For the indebtedness of the Nazi lawyers to this tradition, see O. Dietrich, *Die philosophischen Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus* (Breslau, 1935); H. Nicolai, *Die rassengesetzliche Rechtslehre* (Munich, 1933).
28. G. Rexius, "Studien zur Staatslehre der historischen Schule," *Historische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 107 (1911), 520; H. V. Kantorowicz, "Volksgesist und historische Schule," *ibid.*, Vol. 108 (1912), 303ff; S. Brie, *Der Volksgeist bei Hegel und in der historischen Rechtsschule* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1909), pp. 25ff.
29. §§ 33, 331, addition to 259.
30. Cf. J. Löwenstein, *Hegels Staatsidee—Ihr Doppelgesicht und Einfluss im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 41-42.
31. *Reason and Revolution*, p. 237.
32. *Philosophy of Right*, §§ 349-350.
33. *Ibid.*, § 211.
34. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 10; §§ 258-259.
35. *Ibid.*, § 211. The unreformed English Common Law is frequently used by Hegel as an example of the anxiety, irrationality and eventual cruelty of uncodified customary law. He kept a whole collection of press-cuttings illustrating some of the more blatant absurdities of early nineteenth-century Common Law. These cuttings have been published in *Hegels Berliner Schriften*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1956), sec. VIII, ch. 31, pp. 718-724.
36. *Philosophy of Right*, § 213. Hegel's disciple, Edward Gans, held the same position in his Introduction to his master's *Philosophy of Right*, pp. xiii-xiv, as well as in his own work, *Erbrecht in weltgeschichtlicher Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1824), I, vi.
37. This has been characteristically criticized as being contradictory to Hegel's system by Ferdinand Lassalle, *System der erworbenen Rechte*, 2. Aufl., I, xv-xvii, 58-61. Lassalle, in spite of his Hegelianism, was very much influenced by the Historical School (his book was dedicated to one of its leading members), and his concept of *Volksgeist* is identical with their and with the general romantic outlook. Those interested in the involved problem of Lassalle's nationalism may find this of some interest.
38. *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 199. That this attitude is very far from a Burkean one should be borne in mind, especially by those who tend to see in Hegel strong traces of Burke's influence. The fact that Hegel accepted rational criteria for a critique of social conditions should make his attitude quite distinct from Burke's, in spite of the fact that Hegel did not go very far in applying those criteria to immediate reality.
39. *Philosophy of Right*, addition to § 211.
40. *Op. cit.*, p. 275. Cf. also F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat* (Berlin, 1920), II, 5.
41. *Einleitung*, p. 250; *Weltgeschichte*, pp. 705, 711.
42. *Philosophy of Right*, § 347. [History in the sentence above is clearly a slip. w.k.]

43. *Einleitung*, p. 174.
44. *Weltgeschichte*, pp. 533-542.
45. *Hegel's Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, new edition (New York, 1956), pp. xv, 341. I have refrained from using this translation, and rendered my own translation of the passages quoted from the various parts of the *Philosophy of History*, because of the rather unreliable and fragmentary German edition which served as a basis for Sibree's translation. See Hoffmeister's Appendix to his edition of the *Einleitung* for a detailed account of these problems.
46. *Weltgeschichte*, p. 758.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 775.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 774ff.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 761.
50. *Philosophy of Right*, addition to § 339. A similar note is voiced by Hegel in his *Aesthetics*: "In contemporary Europe, every nation is limited by another one, and cannot, therefore, embark on a course of war against another European nation" (*Werke*, ed. Glockner, XIV, 335). Cf. *Weltgeschichte* p. 761 and Avineri, "The Problem of War in Hegel's Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXII (1961), 463-474.
51. *The Modern Democratic State* (London, 1943), I, 146-149.

10

The Hegel Myth and Its Method

WALTER KAUFMANN

1. HEGEL'S IMPORTANCE

Hegel was not a pagan like Shakespeare and Goethe but a philosopher who considered himself Christian and tried to do from a Protestant point of view what Aquinas had attempted six hundred years earlier: he sought to fashion a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Christianity, making full use of the labors of his predecessors. Among these he counted not only the great philosophers from Heraclitus and Plato down to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling but also such world-

The first version of this paper appeared in *The Philosophical Review*, October 1951. The revised version here reprinted was included in Kaufmann's book, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1959), published in England under the title *The Owl and the Nightingale* (London, Faber and Faber, 1960). The Doubleday Anchor Books paperback edition is subtitled "A New Edition, with Additions," but the present essay was not revised further. It should be noted that this paper antedates Chapters 5-9 above.

historic individuals as Paul and the men who had made the French Revolution. As he saw it, philosophy did not stand between religion and poetry but above both. Philosophy was, according to him, its age comprehended in thought, and—to exaggerate a little—the philosopher's task was to *comprehend* what the religious person and the poet *feel*.

Hegel's enormous importance becomes clear as soon as we reflect on his historic role. There is, *first*, his direct influence, which appears not only in philosophic idealism, which, at the turn of the last century, dominated British and American philosophy—Bradley, Bosanquet, McTaggart, T. H. Green, and Royce, to give but five examples—but also in almost all subsequent histories of philosophy, beginning with the epoch-making works of Erdmann, Zeller, and Kuno Fischer. It was Hegel who established the history of philosophy as a central academic discipline and as part of the core of any philosophic education. It was also Hegel who established the view that the different philosophic systems that we find in history are to be comprehended in terms of development and that they are generally one-sided because they owe their origins to a reaction against what has gone before.

Secondly, most of the more important philosophic movements since his death have been so many reactions against Hegel's own idealism and cannot be fully understood without some grasp of his philosophy. The first two great revolts were those of Kierkegaard and Marx, who swallowed easily as much of his philosophy as they rejected: notably, his dialectic. Today Marx's dialectic dominates a large part of the total population of the globe, while Kierkegaard's has been adapted by some of the most outstanding thinkers of the free world, notably Heidegger and Tillich, Barth and Niebuhr.

Two later revolts against Hegelianism dominate English and American philosophy in the twentieth century: pragmatism and analytic philosophy. William James, though occasionally he attacked Hegel himself, reconstructed Hegel somewhat in the image of his Harvard colleague, Royce, who was then the outstanding American idealist; while Moore, at Cambridge,

who was joined by Russell, led the fight against the influence of Bradley and McTaggart.

One of the few things on which the analysts, pragmatists, and existentialists agree with the dialectical theologians is that Hegel is to be repudiated: their attitude toward Kant, Aristotle, Plato, and the other great philosophers is not at all unanimous even within each movement; but opposition to Hegel is part of the platform of all four, and of the Marxists, too. Oddly, the man whom all these movements take to be so crucially important is but little known to most of their adherents; very few indeed have read as many as two of the four books that Hegel published.

Hegel is known largely through secondary sources and a few incriminating slogans and generalizations. The resulting myth, however, lacked a comprehensive, documented statement till Karl Popper found a place for it in his widely discussed book, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. After it had gone through three impressions in England, a revised one-volume edition was brought out in the United States in 1950, five years after its original appearance.

2. CRITIQUE OF A CRITIC

To explode the popular Hegel legend one can hardly do better than to deal in some detail with Popper's Hegel chapter. This involves a temporary departure from religion and poetry, but the development "from Shakespeare to existentialism" cannot be understood without some grasp of Hegel and some discussion of the widely accepted image of Hegel. Moreover, Hegel is so frequently mentioned in contemporary discussions that it is intrinsically worth while to show how wrong many widespread assumptions about him are. Thirdly, our study should include some explicit consideration of questions of method, and especially of common pitfalls. Finally, we shall have occasion, as we develop Hegel's actual views, to call attention to the religious roots of some of his most characteris-

tic notions. . . . Gross falsifications of history are not the monopoly of Miniver Cheevy. Forward-looking liberals and even believers in "piecemeal social engineering," like Popper, often distort history, too. And so, alas, did Hegel.

A detailed critique of Popper's sixty-nine pages on Hegel may be prefaced with a motto from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo*: "I only avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass with which one can render visible a general but creeping calamity which it is otherwise hard to get hold of."

The calamity in our case is twofold. First, Popper's treatment contains more misconceptions about Hegel than any other single essay. Secondly, if one agrees with Popper that "intellectual honesty is fundamental for everything we cherish" (p. 253), one should protest against his methods; for although his hatred of totalitarianism is the inspiration and central motif of his book, his methods are unfortunately similar to those of totalitarian "scholars"—and they are spreading in the free world, too.

3. SCHOLARSHIP

Although the mere presence of nineteen pages of notes suggests that his attack on Hegel is based on careful scholarship, Popper ignores the most important works on his subject. This is doubly serious because he is intent on psychologizing the men he attacks: he deals not only with their arguments but also—if not altogether more—with their alleged motives. This practice is as dangerous as it is fashionable, but in some cases there is no outright evidence to the contrary: one can only say that Popper credits all the men he criticizes, except Marx, with the worst possible intentions. (Marx he credits with the best intentions.)

In the case of Hegel, there is voluminous evidence that Popper ignores: beginning with Dilthey's pioneering study of 1906 and the subsequent publication of Hegel's early writings, ample material has been made available concerning the de-

velopment of his ideas. There is even a two-volume study by Franz Rosenzweig, the friend of Martin Buber, that specifically treats the development of those ideas with which Popper is concerned above all: *Hegel und der Staat*.

Furthermore, Popper has relied largely on Scribner's *Hegel Selections*, a little anthology for students that contain not a single complete work. Like Gilson in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (p. 246), Popper takes over such a gross mistranslation as "the State is the march of God through the world," although the original says merely that it is the way of God with the world that there should be the State, and even this sentence is lacking in the text published by Hegel and comes from one of the editor's additions to the posthumous edition of *The Philosophy of Right*—and the editor admitted in his Preface that, though these additions were based on lecture notes, "the choice of words" was sometimes his rather than Hegel's.

Popper also appears to be unaware of crucial passages, if not entire works, that are not included in these *Selections*; for example, the passage on war in Hegel's first book, which shows that his later conception of war, which is far more moderate, was not adopted to accommodate the king of Prussia, as Popper maintains. The passage on war in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, in the section on "The Ethical World," was written when Hegel—a Swabian, not a Prussian—admired Napoleon and was published in 1807, a year after Prussia's devastating defeat at Jena. Hegel's views on war will be considered soon (in section 11); but questions of method require our attention first.

4. QUILT QUOTATIONS

This device, used by other writers, too, has not received the criticism it deserves. Sentences are picked from various contexts, often even out of different books, enclosed by a single set of quotation marks, and separated only by three dots, which

are generally taken to indicate no more than the omission of a few words. Plainly, this device can be used to impute to an author views he never held.

Here, for example, is a quilt quotation about war and arson: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. . . . I came to cast fire upon the earth. . . . Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you. . . . Let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one." This is scarcely the best way to establish Jesus' views of war and arson. In the works of some philosophers, too—notably, Nietzsche—only the context can show whether a word is meant literally.

The writings of Hegel and Plato abound in admittedly one-sided statements that are clearly meant to formulate points of view that are then shown to be inadequate and are countered by another perspective. Thus an impressive quilt quotation could be patched together to convince gullible readers that Hegel was—depending on the "scholar's" plans—either emphatically for or utterly opposed to, say, "equality." But the understanding of Hegel would be advanced ever so much more by citing one of his remarks about equality *in context*, showing how it is a step in an argument that is designed to lead the reader to a better comprehension of equality and not to enlist his emotions either for it or against it.

Even those who would not reduce all philosophy to such analyses should surely grant the ambiguity of words like equality and freedom, good and God—and also that philosophers can be of service by distinguishing some of the different meanings of such terms instead of aping politicians by assuring us that they are heartily in favor of all four. Popper writes like a district attorney who wants to persuade his audience that Hegel was against God, freedom, and equality—and uses quilt quotations to convince us.

The first of these (p. 227) consists of eight fragments of which every single one is due to one of Hegel's students and was not published by him. Although Popper scrupulously marks references to Gans's additions to the *Philosophy of*

Right with an "L" and invariably gives all the references for his quilt quotations—e.g., "For the eight quotations in this paragraph, cf. *Selections* . . ."—a few readers indeed will recall when they come to the Notes at the end of the book that "the eight quotations" are the quilt quotations that they took for a single passage. And Popper advises his readers "first to read without interruption through the text of a chapter, and then to turn to the Notes."

Quilt quotations invite comparison with composite photographs. In a campaign for a seat in the U. S. Senate, one such photograph was used that showed one candidate shaking hands with the head of the Communist party. It matters little whether it was labeled in fine print "composite photograph."

To be sure, quotations and photographs that are not patched together may be grossly unfair. But a self-respecting candidate will not use patched-up photographs of his opponent; and a scholar should not use a quilt quotation to indict the men he criticizes.

5. "INFLUENCE"

No conception is bandied about more unscrupulously in the history of ideas than "influence." Popper's notion of it is so utterly unscientific that one should never guess that he has done important work on logic and on scientific method. At best, it is reducible to *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. Thus he speaks of "the Hegelian Bergson" (p. 256 and n. 66) and assumes, without giving any evidence whatever, that Bergson, Smuts, Alexander, and Whitehead were all interested in Hegel, simply because they were "evolutionists" (p. 225 and n. 6).

What especially concerns Popper—and many another critic of German thinkers—is the "influence" that the accused had on the Nazis. His Hegel chapter is studded with quotations from recent German writers, almost all of which are taken from *The War Against the West* by Kolnai. In this remarkable book Friedrich Gundolf, Werner Jaeger (Harvard), and Max

Scheler are pictured as 'representative of Nazism or at least its general trend and atmosphere.' Kolnai is also under the impression that the men who contributed most "to the rise of National Socialism as a creed" were Nietzsche "and Stefan George, less great but, perhaps because of his homosexuality, more directly instrumental in creating the Third Reich" (p. 14); that Nietzsche was a "half-Pole" (p. 453); that the great racist H. S. Chamberlain "was a mellow Englishman tainted by noxious German influences" (p. 455); and that Jaspers is a "follower" of Heidegger (p. 207). It would seem advisable to check the context of any quotations from Kolnai's book before one uses them, but Kolnai generally gives no references. Popper writes:

I am greatly indebted to Kolnai's book, which has made it possible for me to quote in the remaining part of this chapter a considerable number of authors who would otherwise have been inaccessible to me. (I have not, however, always followed the wording of Kolnai's translations.)

He evidently changed the wording without checking the originals or even the context.

Popper uses quotation after quotation from Kolnai to point out supposed similarities with Hegel, but never stops to ask whether the men he cites had read Hegel, what they thought of him, or where, in fact, they did get their ideas. Thus we are told that the idea of "fame is revived by Hegel" (p. 266), for Hegel spoke of fame as a "reward" of the men whose deeds are recorded in our history books—which would seem a trite enough idea that could also be ascribed to scores of sincere democrats—but Popper goes on: "and Stapel, a propagator of the new paganized Christianity, promptly [i.e., one hundred years later] repeats [*sic*]: 'All great deeds were done for the sake of fame or glory.'" This is surely quite a different idea and not trite but false. Popper himself admits that Stapel "is even more radical than Hegel." Surely, one must question the relevance of the whole section dealing with Stapel and other recent writers; this is not history of ideas but an attempt to

establish guilt by association on the same page—in the hope, it seems, that *semper aliquid haeret*.

It is also the height of naiveté. A quick dip into a good dictionary of quotations would have shown Popper a great many closer parallels to Stapel than he found in Hegel. Perhaps the most extreme, and also the most memorable, formulations are found in some poets whose influence would be hard to gauge. Shakespeare writes:

*Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs.*

And though these lines occur in one of his comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost*, he certainly did not think meanly of fame. Ben Jonson even went a step further in *Sejanus* (I, ii): "Contempt of fame begets contempt of virtue." And Friedrich Schiller voiced a still more radical view—in a poem that many German school children learn by heart, *Das Siegesfest*, which deals with the Greeks' celebration of their triumph over Troy:

*Of the goods that man has cherished
Not one is as high as fame;
When the body has long perished
What survives is the great name.*

For every Nazi who knew Hegel's remarks about fame there must have been dozens who knew these lines. Does that prove Schiller a bad man? Or does it show that he was responsible for Nazism?

Besides, Popper often lacks the knowledge of who influenced whom. Thus he speaks of Heidegger and "his master Hegel" (p. 271) and asserts falsely that Jaspers began as a follower "of the essentialist philosophers Husserl and Scheler" (p. 270). More important, he contrasts the vicious Hegel with superior men "such as Schopenhauer or J. F. Fries" (p. 223), and he constantly makes common cause with Schopenhauer against the allegedly protofascist Hegel, whom he blames even for the Nazis' racism—evidently unaware that Fries and Schopenhauer, unlike the mature Hegel, were anti-Semites.

Hegel's earliest essays, which he himself did not publish, show that he started out with violent prejudices against the Jews. These essays will be considered later; but they are not represented in *Scribner's Hegel Selections* and hence were not exploited by Popper. Nor have they exerted any perceivable influence. When Hegel later became a man of influence, he insisted that the Jews should be granted equal rights because civic rights belong to man because he is a man and not on account of his ethnic origins or his religion.

Fries, who was Hegel's predecessor at the University of Heidelberg, has often been considered a great liberal, and Hegel has often been condemned for taking a strong stand against him; it is rarely, if ever, mentioned in this context that Fries published a pamphlet in the summer of 1816 in which he called for the "extermination" of Jewry. It appeared simultaneously as a review article in *Heidelbergsche Jahrbücher der Literatur* and as a pamphlet with the title "How the Jews endanger the prosperity and the character of the Germans." According to Fries, the Jews "were and are the bloodsuckers of the people" (p. 243) and "do not at all live and teach according to Mosaic doctrine but according to the Talmud" (p. 251) of which Fries conjures up a frightening picture. "Thus the Jewish caste . . . should be exterminated completely [mit Stumpf und Stiel ausgerottet] because it is obviously of all secret and political societies and states within the state the most dangerous" (p. 256). "Any immigration of Jews should be forbidden, their emigration should be promoted. Their freedom to marry should . . . be limited. . . . It should be forbidden that any Christian be hired by a Jew" (p. 260); and one should again force on them "a special mark on their clothing" (p. 261). In between, Fries protests: "Not against the Jews, our brothers, but against Jewry [der Judenschaft] we declare war" (p. 248).

This may help us to understand why Hegel, in the Preface to his *Philosophy of Right*, scorned Fries's substitution of "the pap of 'heart, friendship, and enthusiasm'" for moral laws. It would certainly have been unwise of the Jews to rely on Fries's brotherly enthusiasm.

Hegel's often obscure style may have evened the way for later obscurantism, but Fries's and Schopenhauer's flamboyant irrationalism was, stylistically, too, much closer to most Nazi literature. It does not follow that Fries influenced the Nazis. He was soon forgotten, till, in the twentieth century, Leonard Nelson, a Jewish philosopher, founded a neo-Friesian school that had nothing to do with Fries's racial prejudices. The one influential thinker whom Nelson succeeded in leading back to Fries was Rudolf Otto, the Protestant theologian, who is best known for his book on *The Idea of the Holy*. What makes that book so notable is its fine description of the "numinous" experience; but the confused discussion of "The Holy as an A Priori Category" and the romantic notions about "divining" are indebted to Fries.

Popper, though he has written an important book on *Die Logik der Forschung*, "The Logic of Research," does not find it necessary to check his hunches by research when he is concerned with influences in his Hegel chapter. He simply decrees that Hegel "represents the 'missing link,' as it were, between Plato and the modern form of totalitarianism. Most of the modern totalitarians are quite unaware that their ideas can be traced back to Plato. But many know of their indebtedness to Hegel" (p. 226). Seeing that the context indicates a reference to the Nazis and that all the totalitarians cited in this chapter are Fascists, not Communists, Popper only shows his ignorance of this brand of totalitarianism.

Hegel was rarely cited in the Nazi literature, and, when he was referred to, it was usually by way of disapproval. The Nazis' official "philosopher," Alfred Rosenberg, mentioned, and denounced, Hegel twice in his best-selling *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*. Originally published in 1930, this book had reached an edition of 878,000 copies by 1940. In the same book, a whole chapter is devoted to Popper's beloved Schopenhauer, whom Rosenberg admired greatly. Rosenberg also celebrates Plato as "one who wanted in the end to save his people [Volk] on a racial basis, through a forcible constitution, dictatorial in every detail." Rosenberg also stressed, and ex-coriated, the "Socratic" elements in Plato.

Plato, unlike Hegel, was widely read in German schools, and special editions were prepared for Greek classes in the *Gymnasium*, gathering together allegedly fascist passages. In his introduction to one such selection from the *Republic*, published by Teubner in the series of *Eclogae Graecolatinae*, Dr. Holtorf helpfully listed some of his relevant articles on Plato, including one in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, which was Hitler's own paper. Instead of compiling a list of the many similar contributions to the Plato literature, it may suffice to mention that Dr. Hans F. K. Günther, from whom the Nazis admittedly received their racial theories, also devoted a whole book to Plato—not to Hegel—as early as 1928. In 1935, a second edition was published.

Whether Hegel did, or did not, influence the Nazis may not be particularly relevant to Popper's central theses in his book—but then most of his book is not. His often stimulating ideas are amalgamated with a great deal of thoroughly unsound intellectual history; and Section V of his Hegel chapter (eighteen pages) is representative of the latter. It is also representative of scores of similar attempts by authors who have less to offer than Karl Popper.

6. VITUPERATION AND ALLEGATION OF MOTIVES

Although Popper, in his introduction, speaks of "the application of the critical and rational methods of science to the problems of the open society" (p. 3), he writes about Hegel in the accents of a prosecutor who addresses a jury. He says of Fichte and Hegel, "such clowns are taken seriously" (p. 249); he demands, "I ask whether it is possible to outdo this despicable perversion of everything that is decent" (p. 244); and he denounces "Hegel's hysterical historicism" (p. 253; cf. p. 269).

Hegel certainly has grievous faults. Among these is his obscure style, but it is dry and unemotional in the extreme. A detailed account of his almost incredibly unemotional style as a lecturer has been given by one of his students, H. G. Hotho, and is quoted in Hermann Glockner's *Hegel* (I, 440 ff.), and

in Kuno Fisher's *Hegel*, too. If "hysterical" means, as Webster says, "wildly emotional," Popper deserves this epithet much more than Hegel. For all of Hegel's shortcomings, it seems wildly emotional indeed to say that "he is supreme only in his outstanding lack of originality" and was not even "talented" (p. 227). And "the critical and rational methods of science" could hardly establish Popper's contention that the philosophy of Jaspers is a "gangster" philosophy (p. 272). Nor is this proved by a note on "the gangster philosophy" in the back of the volume, which turns out to furnish us with a quilt quotation (see above) from Ernst von Solomon's book, *The Outlaws*, which bears no perceivable relation to Karl Jaspers—not to speak of Hegel.

Popper's allegation of motives is scarcely distinguishable from vituperation. Hegel is accused of "a perversion . . . of a sincere belief in God" (p. 244), but no evidence whatever is given to substantiate this charge. "Hegel's radical collectivism . . . depends on Frederick William III, king of Prussia" and his "one aim" was "to serve his employer, Frederick William of Prussia" (pp. 227 f.); and it is hinted that Hegel misused philosophy as a means of financial gain (p. 241); but Popper ignores the literature on this question, which includes, in addition to the volumes cited above, T. M. Knox's article on "Hegel and Prussianism" in *Philosophy*, January 1940, and his discussion with Carrington in the April and July issues.

Hegel, we are told, "wants to stop rational argument, and with it, scientific and intellectual progress" (p. 235), and his dialectics "are very largely designed to pervert the ideas of 1789" (p. 237). When Hegel explicitly comes out in favor of the things that, according to his accuser, he opposed, this is called "lip service" (ns. 11 and 43). Thus Popper claims—like Bäumler in his Nazi version of Nietzsche—that the man whom he professes to interpret did not mean what he clearly said. Quilt quotations are used to establish a man's views, and his explicit statements are discounted when they are inconvenient.

In the name of "the critical and rational methods of science," one must also protest against such emotional *ad hominem* arguments as that Heidegger's philosophy must be wrong

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In the name of "the critical and rational methods of science," one must also protest against such emotional *ad hominem* arguments as that Heidegger's philosophy must be wrong

because he became a Nazi later on (p. 271), or that 'Haeckel can hardly be taken seriously as a philosopher or scientist. He called himself a free thinker, but this thinking was not sufficiently independent to prevent him from demanding in 1914 'the following fruits of victory . . . ' (n. 65). By the same token, one might seek to discredit Popper's philosophy of science by pointing to his treatment of Hegel, or Newton's physics by calling attention to his absorbing concern with magic, which Lord Keynes has described in his *Essays and Sketches in Biography*.

Popper's occasional references to "the doctrine of the chosen people," which he associates with totalitarianism, show little knowledge of the prophets though a great deal of emotion, and his references to Christianity are also based on sentiment rather than the logic of research. He is "for" Christianity, but means by it something that is utterly at variance with the explicit teachings of Paul, the Catholic Church, Luther, and Calvin.

Hegel's rejection of the adequacy of conscience as a guide in moral questions is countered by Popper's parenthesis, "that is to say, the moralists who refer, for example, to the New Testament" (p. 262)—as if no crimes had ever been committed in the name of the New Testament. Julius Streicher, in his violently anti-Semitic paper, *Der Stürmer*, constantly quoted the Gospel according to St. John.

One of the most important criticisms of Popper's approach, and of the large literature that resembles his attack on Hegel, might be summed up by citing Maritain's epigram from *Scholasticism and Politics* (p. 147): "If books were judged by the bad uses man can put them to, what book has been more misused than the Bible?"

7. HEGEL'S METAPHYSICS

Two simple points may illustrate how thoroughly Popper misunderstands the whole framework of Hegel's thought. First, he claims that Hegel taught that "self-evidence is the same as

truth" (p. 237), although Hegel's first book begins with the denial of this view and Hegel never changed his mind about this.

The second point is more important because Hegel has so often been misunderstood in this way. "Hegel believes, with Aristotle, that the Ideas or essences are *in* the things in flux; or more precisely (as far as we can treat a Hegel with precision), Hegel teaches that they are identical with the things in flux: "Everything actual is an Idea," he says" (p. 231). Yet one need not look farther than Royce's helpful article on Hegel's terminology in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* to find that "actual" is, in Hegel's work, a technical term (as its equivalent was in Plato's and Aristotle's), and that he very emphatically did not claim that Ideas—another technical term—"are identical with the things in flux."

The dictum around which these misinterpretations have been woven most persistently, beginning when Hegel was still alive, occurs in the Preface to his *Philosophy of Right* and reads: "What is rational, is actual; and what is actual, is rational."

This dictum is very similar to Leibniz's idea that this world is the best of all possible worlds. Without sympathizing in the least with either of these two ideas, one should realize that both are rooted in religion. In the third edition of his *Encyclopaedia* (1830; § 6) Hegel himself said of his epigram:

These simple sentences have seemed striking to some and have excited hostility—even from people who would not wish to deny some understanding of philosophy, not to speak of religion. . . . When I have spoken of actuality, one might have inquired, without being told to do so, in what sense I use this expression; after all, I have treated actuality in an elaborate *Logic* and there distinguished it precisely not only from the accidental, which, of course, has existence, too, but also, in great detail, from being there, existence, and other concepts.

Alas, this passage was not included in *Scribner's Selections*; hence these distinctions are overlooked by Popper, who reiter-

ates the popular myth that, according to Hegel, "everything that is now real or actual . . . must be reasonable as well as good. And particularly good is, as we shall see, the actually existing Prussian state."

It would prevent some confusion if Hegel's term *wirklich* were translated *actual*, seeing that he opposed it to *potential* rather than to *unreal* or *nonexistent*. An acorn, though certainly real enough in the usual sense of that word, is not, as Hegel uses that term, *wirklich*. Only that is actual in Hegel's sense which fully realizes its own nature or, as Hegel might say, the "idea" of which most existent things fall short. And the Prussian state, though, according to Hegel, more rational than a state that is based on slavery, yet fell short in some respects, as his *Philosophy of Right* makes clear, of the "idea" of the state.

8. THE STATE

When Hegel speaks of "the State" he does not mean every state encountered in experience. Immediately after first offering his epigram about the rational and actual, he himself continued:

What matters is this: to recognize in the semblance of the temporal and transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present in it. For the rational (which is synonymous with the Idea), in its actuality, also embeds itself in external existence and thus manifests itself in an infinite wealth of forms, appearances, and figures, shrouding its core in a multicolored rind. Our consciousness first dwells on this rind, and only after that does philosophic thinking penetrate it to detect the inward pulse and to perceive its beat even in the external forms. The infinitely varied relations, however, which take shape in this externality . . . this infinite material and its organization are not the subject matter of philosophy.

Thus Hegel would distinguish between the Idea of the State, which he means when he speaks of "the State," and the many states around us. But the Idea, he claims, does not reside in a

Platonic heaven, but is present, more or less distorted, in these states. The philosopher should neither immerse himself in the description and detailed analysis of various historical states, nor turn his back on history to behold some inner vision: he should disentangle the rational core from the web of history.

Hegel is not driven to "juridical positivism" and the approbation of every state with which he is confronted, as Popper supposes (p. 252): he can pass judgment. Hegel makes a sharp distinction between such philosophic judgment and the arbitrary criticisms that reflect personal idiosyncrasies and prejudices. This would not involve any difficulty if he were willing to restrict himself to internal criticism, pointing out the multifarious inconsistencies that are so striking in the utterances of most statesmen, in the platforms of most parties, and in the basic convictions of most people. Hegel, however, goes further.

He believes in a rational world order and in his ability to understand it. For him, life is not "a tale told by an idiot"; and history, not merely, although also, a succession of tragedies. There is an ultimate purpose—freedom—and this furnishes a standard of judgment.

A few quotations from the *Philosophy of Right* may illustrate this. "One may be able to show how a law is completely founded in, and consistent with, both circumstances and existing legal institutions, and yet is truly illegitimate and irrational" (§ 3). Hegel also speaks of "*unalienable*" rights and condemnns, without qualification,

slavery, serfdom, the disqualification from holding property or the prevention of its use or the like, and the deprivation of intelligent rationality, of morality, ethics, and religion, which is encountered in superstition and the concession to others of the authority and full power to determine and prescribe for me what actions I am to perform . . . or what duties my conscience is to demand from me, or what is to be religious truth for me [§66]

According to the addition of Gans, the editor, Hegel remarked in his lectures in this connection that "the slave has an absolute right to liberate himself" (cf. also § 77).

Hegel is not inconsistent when he writes: "the State cannot recognize conscience [*Gewissen*] in its peculiar form, i.e., as subjective knowledge [*Wissen*], just as in science, too, subjective opinion, assurance, and the appeal to subjective opinion have no validity" (§ 137). Conscience is fallible; and, while no government or church has the right to dictate to our conscience, no government can afford to recognize conscience as a legal standard. As several of his interpreters have pointed out, Hegel, when he wrote the *Philosophy of Right*, was concerned about the recent assassination of the poet Kotzebue by a student who was convinced that the poet was a Russian spy and deserved death.

We are bound to misunderstand Hegel when we apply his remarks about conscience within the framework of the Nazi state. It would be more pertinent if we thought of the German Republic before 1933 and of the conscience of Hitler. For by "the State" Hegel means one in which freedom is realized and "a human being counts because he is a human being, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, or the like"—and this "is of infinite importance" (§ 209; cf. § 270 n.). Hegel would consider rational the conscience of an opponent of Hitler who recognized his own absolute right to make himself free and to realize his unalienable rights—but not the conscience of a fanatic impelled by personal motives or perhaps by an equally objectionable ideology.

It is no wonder that the Nazis found small comfort in a book that is based on the conviction that "the hatred of law, of right made determinate by law, is the shibboleth which reveals, and permits us to recognize infallibly, fanaticism, feeble-mindedness, and the hypocrisy of good intentions, however they may disguise themselves" (§ 258 n.). In his Preface, too, Hegel called the law "the best shibboleth to distinguish the false brothers and friends of the so-called people." One may agree with Herbert Marcuse when he says in *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*: "There is no concept less compatible with Fascist ideology than that which founds the state on a universal and rational law that safeguards

the interests of every individual, whatever the contingencies of his natural and social status" (pp. 180 f.).

In sum: Popper is mistaken when he says, like many another critic, that, according to Hegel, "the only possible standard of judgment upon the state is the world historical *success* of its actions" (p. 260). Success is not the standard invoked in the *Philosophy of Right* when Hegel speaks of "bad states." "The State" does not refer to one of "the things in flux," but to an Idea and a standard of judgment, to what states would be like if they lived up fully to their *raison d'être*. This reason is to be found partly "in a higher sphere" (§ 270) for which Hegel himself refers the reader to his system as outlined in his *Encyclopaedia*. The whole realm of Objective Spirit and human institutions that culminates in the State is but the foundation of a higher realm of Absolute Spirit that comprises art, religion, and philosophy.

The discussion of "the State" in the *Philosophy of Right* opens with the pronouncement: "The State is the actuality of the ethical idea." If he were a Platonist, he would mean justice; but Hegel means freedom: not that freedom from all restraints which, at its worst, culminates in anarchy, license, and bestiality, but, rather, man's freedom to develop his humanity and to cultivate art, religion, and philosophy. He considers the State supreme among human institutions because he would subordinate all such institutions to the highest spiritual pursuits and because he believes that these are possible only in "the State." He himself says: "To be sure, all great human beings have formed themselves in solitude—but only by assimilating what had already been created in the State."¹ One might nevertheless insist, as Hegel does not, that conformity should be discouraged beyond the necessary minimum, and one might dwell, as Nietzsche did half a century later, on the dangers of the State.

It would be absurd to represent Hegel as a radical individualist; but it is equally absurd to claim, as Popper does (p. 258), that Hegel's State is "totalitarian, that is to say, its might must permeate and control the whole life of the people in all its

functions: 'The State is therefore the basis and center of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science.' " Popper's claim simply ignores Hegel's emphatic insistence on the sphere of "subjective freedom," which he himself considered a decisive advance over Plato. The quotation from Hegel, of course, does not at all prove the preceding contention: it means—and the context in the lectures on the *Philosophy of History* (Preface) makes this quite clear—that the State alone makes possible the development of art, law, morals, religion, and science. And Hegel's formulation here shows less the influence of Plato, whom Popper represents as a terrible totalitarian, than the impact of Pericles, whom Popper admires. The sentence Popper quotes could almost come from Thucydides' version of Pericles' most famous speech.

Hegel's philosophy is open to many objections, but to confront it with totalitarianism means to misunderstand it. Ernst Cassirer puts the matter very clearly in *The Myth of the State* (1946), a book dealing with much the same material as Popper's, but in a much more scholarly manner. His Hegel chapter ends: "Hegel could extol and glorify the state, he could even apotheosize it. There is, however, a clear and unmistakable difference between his idealization of the power of the state and that sort of idolization that is the characteristic of our modern totalitarian systems."

9. HISTORY

Hegel, like Augustine, Lessing, and Kant before him and Comte, Marx, Spengler, and Toynbee after him, believed that history has a pattern and made bold to reveal it. All these attempts are controversial in detail and questionable in principle; but a sound critique of Hegel should also take into account his remarkable restraint: he did not attempt to play the prophet and was content to comprehend the past.

Popper says that his own book could be "described as a collection of marginal notes on the development of certain historicist philosophies" (p. 4); and, as we have seen, he accuses Hegel of "hysterical historicism." But according to Popper's definition, Hegel was no historicist at all: he was not one of those who "believe that they have discovered laws of history which enable them to prophesy the course of historical events." This addition to predictions is what Popper means by historicism (p. 5).

We are told that Hegel was guilty of

historical and evolutionary relativism—in the form of the dangerous doctrine that what is believed today is, in fact, true today, and in the equally dangerous corollary that what was true yesterday (*true* and not merely "believed") may be false tomorrow—a doctrine which, surely, is not likely to encourage an appreciation of the significance of tradition [p. 254].

Hegel, of course, excelled in his appreciation of the significance of tradition; in his books and lectures he took for granted its essential rationality, and he condemned as arbitrary any criticism of the past or present that was not accompanied by an appreciation of the significance of tradition.

He did not maintain "that what is believed today is, in fact, true today" but insisted that many of his contemporaries, both philosophers and "men in the street," held many mistaken beliefs. And "what was true yesterday . . . may be false tomorrow" is, in a sense, a commonplace—as when we take such statements as "it is raining" or "the Americans, while saying that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, including liberty, hold slaves" or "another war might well spread the ideals of the French Revolution, without endangering the future of civilization." The same consideration applies to many a generalization about a nation and about war.

Hegel did not believe that such propositions as "two plus two equals four" were true at one time but not at another; he

thought that the truth comes to light gradually and tried to show this in his pioneering lectures on the history of philosophy. He emphasized not how utterly wrong his predecessors had been but how much truth they had seen; yet Plato's and Spinoza's truths were not "all of the truth" but were in need of subsequent qualification and amendment.

Hegel's approach is not amoral. Although he finds the aim of history in its "result" (p. 260) and considers the history of the world the world's court of justice (p. 233 and n. 11), he does not idolize success. His attitude depends on his religious faith that in the long run, somewhere, somehow freedom will and must triumph: *that* is Hegel's "historicism." Those of us who lack his confidence should still note that he does not believe that things are good because they succeed, but that they succeed because they are good. He finds God's revelation in history.

This point is best illustrated by Hegel's polemic against Von Haller in the *Philosophy of Right* (§ 258). Throughout, he tries to avoid the Scylla of that revolutionary lawlessness that he associates with Fries and the Wartburg festival and the Charybdis of conservative lawlessness that he finds in Von Haller's *Restauration der Staatswissenschaft*. He cites Von Haller (I, 342 ff.): "As in the inorganic world the greater represses the smaller, and the mighty, the weak, etc., thus among the animals, too, and then among human beings, the same law recurs in nobler forms." And Hegel interposes. "Perhaps frequently also in ignoble forms?" He then quotes Von Haller again: "This is thus the eternal, immutable order of God, that the mightier rules, must rule, and always will rule." And Hegel comments: "One sees from this alone, and also from what follows, in what sense might is spoken of here: not the might of the moral and ethical, but the accidental force of nature."

Popper quotes Hegel: "A people can only die a violent death when it has become naturally dead in itself" (p. 263); and Hegel continues, "as e.g. the German Imperial Cities, the German Imperial Constitution" (n. 77). Applied to the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, Hegel's remark

makes sense, while his bold generalization invites criticism. But one should take into account that Hegel is in agreement with a religious tradition that extends from Isaiah to Toynbee.

Intent on dissociating Hegel from this religious tradition and on associating him with the Nazis instead, Popper fastens on Hegel's conception of world-historical peoples. He quotes (p. 258) Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (§ 550) as saying that "the Spirit of the Time invests its Will" in "the self-consciousness of a particular Nation" that "dominates the World." This would seem to be another instance where Popper improved a translation without checking the original (cf. section 5 above). The passage in the *Encyclopaedia* reads: "The self-consciousness of a particular people is the carrier of the current stage of development of the universal spirit as it is present, and the objective actuality into which this spirit lays its will." In *Scribner's Hegel Selections*, this becomes "... in which that spirit for a time invests its will." And in Popper, finally, we suddenly encounter "the Spirit of the Time." His profuse capitalization of nouns in his quotations from Hegel is apparently intended to make Hegel look silly.

Hegel goes on to say, though Popper does not quote this, that the spirit "steps onward" and "delivers it over to its chance and doom." His position depends on his assumption that ultimate reality is spiritual and that the spirit reveals itself progressively in history. The stages of this revelation are represented by different peoples, but by only one people at any one time.

This strange notion was adapted by Stefan George and, with the individual prophet in the place of a whole people, became part of the creed of his Circle:

In jeder ewe
Ist nur ein gott und einer nur sein künster.

This idea that "in every epoch, there is but one god, and but one his prophet" is even more obviously false than Hegel's view; and it is doubly ironical because, even in the relatively small field of German poetry, George was no solitary giant but was eclipsed by his contemporary, Rilke.

Hegel's notion was surely suggested to him by the way in which the Romans succeeded the Greeks—and perhaps also the Greeks, the Persians; and the Persians, the Babylonians.

This people is the *dominant* one in world history for this epoch—and it can be *epoch-making* in this sense *only once*. Against this absolute right which it has to be the embodiment of the current stage of development of the world spirit, the spirits of the other peoples have no right, and they, even as those whose epoch has passed, do not any longer count in world history.²

Above all, Hegel was probably also influenced by the Christian conception of the relation of Christianity to Jew and Greek.

Hegel's conception is dated today: we know more than he did about the history of a great number of civilizations. We can no longer reduce world history to a straight line that leads from the Greeks via the Romans to ourselves; nor can we dispose of ancient Asia as "The Oriental Realm" and understand it simply as the background of the Greeks. We are also aware of ambiguities in the conception of a *Volk* or nation and should not apply such terms to the carriers of Greek or Roman civilization. We understand the flowering of medieval philosophy in terms of the interaction of Jews, Muslims, and Christians against a Greek background, and should not care to say who in that epoch represented the world spirit. Some of us have even lost all belief in a world spirit.

All this does not imply that Hegel's views are wicked or that his basic error is due to his alleged nationalism or tribalism. Toynbee's conception of separate civilizations is open to almost the same objections.

With the exception of entirely isolated communities, no unit can be understood completely without reference to others. But any unit whatever, whether it be Western civilization, France, Athens, or the Burlington Railroad, can be made the object of a historical study. In each instance, one will introduce other units as sparingly as possible and only to throw light on the history of the unit under consideration.

Hegel's whole conception of "world history" is arbitrary and amounts to an attempt to study the development of his own

civilization. But here he was at one with almost all of his contemporaries and predecessors who were also under the influence of the Bible. For it is from the Bible that the Western idea that history has a single beginning and moves along a single track toward a single goal received its impetus and sanction. Today we are apt to be more agnostic about the beginning; we are bound to deny the single track; but we may once again think in another sense of the unity of world history—a unity that is established by the present confluence of hitherto independent streams.

Hegel was not impeded by the recognition that some of the ancestors of his own civilization had made their epoch-making contributions simultaneously. Homer may have been a contemporary of the earliest prophets; Thales and Jeremiah wrote at the same time; and Stoicism flourished while Christianity developed out of Judaism. Elsewhere, Confucius and the Buddha were contemporaries. A pluralistic perspective is needed, as is more respect for individual units. There is no single plan into which all data can be fitted, and Hegel was certainly something of a Procrustes.

Any attempt, however, to read into Hegel's conception of "world domination" an exclusively political or even military sense in order to link him with Hitler is quite illegitimate. It is doubly misleading when one does not emphasize that Hegel was not making predictions or offering suggestions for the future but was scrupulously limiting himself to an attempt to understand the past. Pedagogically, the single-track conception has the virtue of simplicity; and it is still adopted almost universally in the field of Hegel's primary competence—the history of philosophy.

10. GREAT MEN AND EQUALITY

Hegel's conception of world-historical peoples is closely related to his notion of world-historical personalities. Both notions are justifiable up to a point. Some peoples have had little effect on anybody outside themselves, while the Greeks and the Jews,

for example, have affected the history of the world out of all proportion to their numbers. Similarly, Socrates and Caesar might well be called world-historical personalities.

It is the rankest emotionalism when Popper writes:

Glory cannot be acquired by everybody; the religion of glory implies antiequality—it implies a religion of "Great Men." Modern racialism accordingly "knows no equality between souls, no equality between men" (Rosenberg). Thus there are no obstacles to adopting the Leader Principles from the Arsenal of the perennial revolt against freedom, or as Hegel calls it, the idea of the World Historical Personality [pp. 266 f.]

Popper implies that we ought to be "for" equalitarianism; but if it involves the belief that no man can achieve anything that cannot be achieved by everybody else, too, it is simply silly. In any sense in which it is at all worth while, equalitarianism is entirely compatible with belief in great men.

According to Popper,

Hegel twists equality into inequality: "That the citizens are equal before the law," Hegel admits, "contains a great truth. But expressed in this way, it is only a tautology; it only states in general that a legal status exists, that the laws rule. But to be more concrete, the citizens . . . are equal before the law only in the points in which they are equal *outside the law* also. *Only that equality which they possess in property, age, . . . etc., can deserve equal treatment before the law.* . . . The laws themselves presuppose unequal conditions. . . . It should be said that it is just the great development and maturity of form in modern states which produces the supreme concrete inequality of individuals in actuality" [p. 239].

The omissions in the Hegel quotation are Popper's, and Popper explains them in the very next sentence:

In this outline of Hegel's twist of the "great truth" of equalitarianism into its opposite, I have radically abbreviated his argument; and I must warn the reader that I shall have to do the same throughout the chapter; for only in this way is it at all possible to present, in a readable manner, his verbosity and the flight of his thoughts (which, I do not doubt, is pathological).

A look at the *Encyclopaedia* (§ 539) shows that Hegel is not "for" or "against" equality but tries to determine in what sense it can be embodied in the modern state.

With the appearance of the State, inequality enters; namely, the difference between the governing forces and the governed, authorities, magistrates, directories, etc. The principle of equality, carried out consistently, would repudiate all differences and thus be at odds with any kind of state.

It is in the following discussion that we find the sentence italicized by Popper, and it seems best to quote it without omissions and with Hegel's, rather than Popper's, italics:

Only that equality which, in whatever way, *happens to exist independently*, regarding wealth, age, physical strength, talents, aptitude, etc., or also crimes, etc., can also justify an equal treatment of these before the law—in regard to taxes, liability to military service, admission to public office, etc., or punishment, etc.

Hegel's sentence, though hardly elegant, is carefully constructed and exhibits a crucial parallelism. Only those with equal wealth should be taxed equally; age and physical strength should be taken into account by draft boards; talents and aptitudes are relevant qualifications for public service; and so forth. Or should we have equal punishment for all, regardless of whether they have committed equal crimes? Should we induct children into the armed forces and exact equal taxes from the poor and the rich? Is it Hegel that is guilty of a "twist"?

To return to "great men": Hegel said, according to Gans's addition to section 318: "Public opinion contains everything false and everything true, and to find what is true in it is the gift of the great man. Whoever tells his age, and accomplishes, what his age wants and expresses, is the great man of his age." (Popper's "translation" of this passage [p. 267] makes nonsense of it: "In public opinion of all is false and true. . . .") Hegel's passage ends, in Popper's translation: "He who does not understand *how to despise public opinion*, as it makes itself heard here and there, will never accomplish anything great."

Popper's italics as well as his comments appeal to the reader's prejudice in favor of the supremacy of public opinion, though he previously appealed to the prejudice in favor of the supremacy of conscience. These two standards, however, are very different; and Hegel recognized the fallibility of both because he did not believe, as Popper alleges (p. 237), that "self-evidence is the same as truth." Hegel argued, in the body of section 318, that "to be independent of [public opinion] is the first formal condition of anything great and rational"; and he had the faith that public opinion "will eventually accept it, recognize it, and make it one of its own prejudices."

In the above quotation from Gans's addition, Popper finds an "excellent description of the Leader as a publicist"; and since he has introduced it with a reference to "the Leader principle," one is led to think of the *Führer* and to consider Hegel a proto-Nazi. The quotation, however, is not at odds with a sincere belief in democracy and fits beautifully not only Franklin D. Roosevelt's "interventionism" but also Lincoln's great speeches; for example, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" or "With malice toward none; with charity for all." And it is true of Lincoln, too, when Hegel says of the world-historical personalities, "They were practical, political men. But at the same time they were thinking men, who had an insight into the requirements of the time—into what was ripe for development."

Hegel found that world-historical individuals are always propelled by some passion ("Nothing Great in the World has been accomplished without *passion*") and that their motivation is rarely entirely disinterested. The latter point he expressed in terms of "the cunning of reason." The individual may be motivated not only by profound insights but also by "private interests" and even "self-seeking designs." Alexander was passionately ambitious; but in the long run his private interests furthered Western civilization. The same consideration applies to Caesar and to Franklin D. Roosevelt; in *The American Political Tradition*, Richard Hofstadter has shown how Lin-

coln, too, was fired by political ambitions until he was elected president.

Popper links Hegel with "the fascist appeal to 'human nature' [which] is to our passions" and proposes that we call this appeal the "*cunning of the revolt against reason*" (p. 268). Yet he himself evidently believes that Napoleon, whose motivation was hardly entirely disinterested and whose methods could scarcely be approved by a devotee of "the open society," was furthering Western civilization to such an extent that the German uprising against him must be labeled "one of these typical tribal reactions against the expansion of a supernatural empire" (p. 250).

11. WAR

Without accepting Hegel's view of war, one should distinguish it clearly from the Fascists'. Three points may suffice here.

First, Hegel looks back, not forward. He is not less interested than Popper in "the furthering of civilization" (p. 268) but finds that our civilization has been furthered by any number of wars in the past; for example, the Greeks' war against the Persians, Alexander's wars of conquest, some of the Romans' wars, and Charlemagne's conquest of the Saxons. Believing that it is the philosopher's task to comprehend "that which is"—to cite the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*—and not to construct utopias, Hegel speaks of war as one of the factors that have actually furthered civilization.

Second, we should not confuse Hegel's estimate of the wars that had occurred up to his own time with a celebration of war as we know it today or imagine it in the future.

Third, Hegel's attitude is not fully comprehensible when considered apart from its religious roots. He considered all that is finite ephemeral. According to Gans's addition to section 324, he said: "From the pulpits much is preached concerning the insecurity, vanity, and instability of temporal things, and

yet everyone . . . thinks that he, at least, will manage to hold on to his possessions." What the preachers fail to get across, "Hussars with drawn sabres" really bring home to us. (Popper writes "glistening sabres" [p. 269]; and the change, though slight, affects the tone of the passage.)

These three points are sufficient to show how Popper misrepresents Hegel's view. "Hegel's theory," we are told, "implies that war is good in itself. 'There is an ethical element in war,' we read" (p. 262). This is a curious notion of implication: from Hegel's contention that "there is an ethical element in war, which should not be considered an absolute evil" (§ 324), Popper deduces that Hegel considered war "good in itself." Hegel attempted to solve the problem of evil by demonstrating that even evil serves a positive function. He accepted Goethe's conception of "that force which would/Do evil evermore and yet creates the good." It is of the very essence of Hegel's dialectical approach to penetrate beyond such assertions as that war is good or evil to a specification of the respects in which it is good and those in which it is evil. Today the evil so far outweighs any conceivable good that we are apt to be impatient with anyone who as much as mentions any good aspects; but in a concrete predicament, the majority still feels that the good outweighs the evil, even if this point is made by speaking of "the lesser evil."

The one passage in which Hegel does consider the question of future wars is not well known and is worth quoting. It is found in his Berlin lectures on aesthetics:

Suppose that, after having considered the great epics of the past [the *Iliad*, *Cid*, and Tasso's, Ariosto's, and Camoëns' poems], which describe the triumph of the Occident over the Orient, of European measure, of individual beauty, and of self-critical reason over Asiatic splendor, . . . one now wished to think of great epics which might be written in the future: they would only have to represent the victory of the living rationality which may develop in America, over the incarceration into an infinitely progressing measuring and particularizing. For in Europe every people is now limited by another and may not, on its part, begin a war against another European people. If one now wants to go beyond Europe, it can only be to America.³

In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel also hailed the United States as "the land of the future."⁴ Plainly, he did not believe that world history would culminate in Prussia. His lectures on history do not lead up to a prediction but to the pronouncement: "To this point consciousness has come."

This may also be the clue to the famous expression of resignation at the end of the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*—a passage that, at first glance, seems at odds with the subsequent demand for trial by jury and for a real parliament with public proceedings, institutions then still lacking in Prussia. But apparently Hegel did not believe that Prussia, or Europe, had any real future: "When philosophy paints its grey on grey, a form of life has grown old, and with grey on grey it cannot be rejuvenated, but only comprehended. The owl of Minerva begins its flight only at dusk."

12. NATIONALISM

On this point Popper's account is particularly confused. "When nationalism was revived a hundred years ago [about 1850?], it was in one of the most mixed regions of Europe, in Germany, and especially in Prussia" (p. 245). A page later, we hear of "the invasion of German lands by the first national army, the French army under Napoleon." Three pages later we are told that Fichte's "windbaggery" gave "rise to modern nationalism." Fichte died in 1814. Contemptuous of the concept of nationality, Popper maintains that it is a common belief in democracy, "which forms, one might say, the uniting factor of multilingual Switzerland" (p. 246). Why, then, have the Swiss no wish to unite with any democratic neighbor? Popper's opposition to many features of modern nationalism is well taken; but those who are interested in its development, or who wish to understand it, will do better to turn to Hans Kohn's *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944) and to his chapter on "Nationalism and the Open Society" in *The Twentieth Century* (1949).

One of the major themes of Popper's Hegel chapter is that "Hegelianism is the renaissance of tribalism" (p. 226). Pop-

per's use of "tribalism" and "nationalism" is emotional rather than precise, and he accuses Hegel of both. Even so he must admit that Hegel "sometimes attacked the nationalists" (p. 251). Popper cites Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* where the so-called nation is condemned as rabble:

And with regard to it, it is the one aim of a state that a nation should *not* come into existence, to power and action, as such an aggregate. Such a condition of a nation is a condition of lawlessness, demoralization, brutishness. In it, the nation would only be a shapeless wild blind force, like that of a stormy elemental sea, which however is not self-destructive, as the nation—a spiritual element—would be.

The Nazis concluded quite correctly that Hegel was unalterably opposed to their conception of the *Volk* and his idea of the State was its very antithesis.⁵

Popper, on the other hand, is so intent on opposing Hegel that he immediately seeks to enlist the reader's sympathies on the nationalist side when he finds Hegel criticizing it. Thus Popper is not content to point out, quite correctly, that Hegel is referring "to the liberal nationalists" but must add, "whom the king hated like the plague." Hegel's attitude, of course, cannot be understood or reasonably evaluated in terms of the emotional impact of such words as "liberal" and "king." What is wanted is a profile of the movement condemned by Hegel; and that may be found in Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (pp. 179 f.):

There was much talk of freedom and equality, but it was a freedom that would be the vested privilege of the Teutonic race alone. . . . Hatred of the French went along with hatred of the Jews, Catholics, and "nobles." The movement cried for a truly "German war," so that Germany might unfold "the abundant wealth of her nationality." It demanded a "savior" to achieve German unity, one to whom "the people will forgive all sins." It burned books and yelled woe to the Jews. It believed itself above the law and the constitution because "there is no law to the just cause." The state was to be built from "below," through the sheer enthusiasm of the masses, and the "natural" unity of the *Volk*

was to supersede the stratified order of state and society. It is not difficult to recognize in these "democratic" slogans the ideology of the Fascist *Volksgemeinschaft*. There is, in point of fact, a much closer relation between the historical role of the *Burschenschaften*, with their racism and antirationalism, and National Socialism, than there is between Hegel's position and the latter. Hegel wrote his *Philosophy of Right* as a defense of the state against this pseudo-democratic ideology.

The "liberal" Fries called for the extermination of Jewry (section 5 above), while Hegel denounced the nationalistic clamor against the extension of civil rights to the Jews, pointing out that this "clamor has overlooked that they are, above all, human beings" (§ 270 n.). Are we to condemn Hegel because he agreed with the king, or praise Fries because he called himself liberal?

Popper's most ridiculous claim—and the last one to be considered here—is that the Nazis got their racism from Hegel. In fact, the Nazis did not get their racism from Hegel, and Hegel was no racist (see section 5 above).

The Nazis did find some support for their racism in Schopenhauer, with whom Popper constantly makes common cause against Hegel, and in Richard Wagner, who Popper eccentrically insinuates was something of a Hegelian (p. 228) though he was, of course, a devoted disciple of Schopenhauer. Popper declares that one W. Schallmeyer, when he wrote a prize essay in 1900, "thus became the grandfather of racial biology" (p. 256). What, then, is the status of the rather better known and more influential Gobineau and Chamberlain and any number of other writers who publicized their views before 1900 and were widely read and constantly quoted by the Nazis?

Popper offers us the epigram: "Not 'Hegel + Plato,' but 'Hegel + Haeckel' is the formula of modern racialism" (p. 256). Why Haeckel rather than Bernhard Förster, Julius Langbehn, Hofprediger Stöcker, Chamberlain, Gobineau, or Wagner? Why not Plato, about whose reflections on breeding the Nazis' leading race authority, Dr. Hans F. K. Günther, wrote a

whole book—and Günther's tracts on race sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Germany and went through several editions even before 1933? (See section 5 above.) And why Hegel?

Decidedly, Hegel was no racialist; nor does Popper adduce any evidence to prove that he was one. Instead, Popper says: "The transubstantiation of Hegelianism into racialism or of Spirit into Blood does not greatly alter the main tendency of Hegelianism" (p. 256). Perhaps the transubstantiation of God into the *Führer* does not greatly alter Christianity?

One can sympathize with G. R. G. Mure when he says that the increasingly violent and ill-informed attacks on Hegel have reached a point in Popper's Hegel chapter where they become "almost meaninglessly silly."⁶ But familiarity with Hegel has waned to the point where reviewers of the original edition of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, while expressing reservations about the treatment of Plato and Aristotle, have not generally seen fit to protest against the treatment of Hegel; and on the jacket of the English edition Bertrand Russell actually hails the attack on Hegel as "deadly"—for Hegel. Since the publication of the American edition in 1950, John Wild and R. B. Levinson have each published a book to defend Plato against the attacks of Popper and other like-minded critics, and Levinson's *In Defense of Plato* goes a long way toward showing up Popper's methods. But Popper's ten chapters on Plato, although unsound, contain many excellent observations, and his book is so full of interesting discussions that no exposé will relegate it to the limbo of forgotten books. *The Open Society* will be around for a good long while, and that is one reason why its treatment of Hegel deserves a chapter.

What is ultimately important is not the failing of one author but the increasing popularity of the Hegel myth and of the methods on which it depends. To cite Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* once more: "I only avail myself of the person as a magnifying glass with which one can render visible a general but creeping calamity which it is otherwise hard to get hold of."

Popper should be allowed the last word. And any critic of his work could do worse than to cite in his own behalf what Popper says to justify his own critique of Toynbee:

I consider this a most remarkable and interesting book. . . . He has much to say that is most stimulating and challenging. . . . I also agree with many of the political tendencies expressed in his work, and most emphatically with his attack upon modern nationalism and the tribalist and "archaist," i.e., culturally reactionary tendencies, which are connected with it. The reason why, in spite of this, I single out . . . [this] work in order to charge it with irrationality, is that only when we see the effects of this poison in a work of such merit do we fully appreciate its danger (pp. 435 f.).

NOTES

1. *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. Lasson, p. 92; *Reason in History*, transl. Hartman, p. 51.
2. *Philosophy of Right*, § 347.
3. *Werke*, ed. Glockner, XIV, 354 f.
4. *Ibid.*, XI, 128 f.
5. Cf. e.g., Rosenberg's *Mythus*, (1940 ed.), p. 527.
6. *A Study of Hegel's Logic*, p. 360.