

THE HEGEL MYTH AND ITS METHOD

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.

NIETZSCHE, *Ecce Homo*

HEGEL is known today, at least in the United States, less through his own works than through secondary sources and a few incriminating slogans and generalizations. The resulting myth has, however, long lacked any comprehensive statement. This situation was altered by the publication in 1945 of Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Now this work, which has already gone through three impressions in England, has been published in a revised edition in the United States.¹ The book has many virtues: it represents a passionate attack against totalitarianism, is written with superb clarity, contains many interesting quotations and — more important — a great number of extremely suggestive ideas. Yet the book also has grave faults. Even those, for example, who will welcome a forceful critique of the view that Plato was really a democrat are not likely to accept Popper's picture of him. For the *Republic* is still widely read, and even the *Laws* is easily within reach. It is therefore altogether less important to take issue with Popper's interpretation of Plato than with his method. And by the same token, it seems preferable to use his chapter on Hegel as an example rather than the ten on Plato; for far fewer readers are likely to recall crucial passages in the *Philosophy of Right* or to reach for a worn copy of this work to check Popper's accusations. Moreover, one can deal more thoroughly with one chapter than with ten.

Popper's Hegel chapter (fifty pages, plus nineteen pages of notes) demands detailed criticism for at least two reasons. First, it con-

¹ Princeton University Press, 1950, in one volume (the English edition has two). There are twenty-five chapters: ten each attacking Plato and Marx, two on Aristotle and Hegel, and three presenting some of the author's conclusions. The notes are gathered together at the end of the volume (pp. 467-726) and printed very readably (much better than in the English edition); and the publisher has made it exceedingly easy to match them up with the text.

tains more misconceptions about Hegel than have previously been gathered in so small a space. Secondly, if one agrees with Popper that "intellectual honesty is fundamental for everything we cherish,"² one should protest against his method; for although his hatred of totalitarianism is the inspiration and central motif of his work, his method is unfortunately similar to that of totalitarian "scholars" — and it appears to be spreading. I shall begin with some observations about this method, arranged under topical headings, and then proceed to specific interpretations.

1. *Scholarly Background.* Although the mere presence of nineteen pages of notes suggests that the attack on Hegel is based on careful scholarship, the author completely 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 the case of Plato there is often no outright evidence to the contrary: one can only say that Popper always credits his enemy with the worst possible intentions. In the case of Hegel, however, there is voluminous evidence which Popper simply ignores: beginning with Dilthey's *Jugendgeschichte Hegels* (1906) and Nohl's edition of *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften* (1907), the development of Hegel's ideas has been made the subject of several scholarly studies, culminating in Haering's monumental *Hegel*.³ And among the intervening works there is Rosenzweig's two-volume study, *Hegel und der Staat*, which traces the development of the very ideas with which Popper is concerned.

Furthermore, Popper has relied largely on Scribner's *Hegel Selections*: he takes over such a gross mistranslation as that "the State is the march of God through the world,"⁴ and he appears to be unaware

² *Open Society*, p. 253.

³ Hegel, *Sein Wollen und sein Werk: Eine chronologische Entwicklungsgeschichte der Gedanken und der Sprache Hegels* (2 vols. [pp. 785, 525]; 1929-38). This interpretation has been countered from a Marxist point of view by G. Lukacs, *Der junge Hegel* (pp. 718; 1948). In English, a brief account of Hegel's social philosophy against the background of his intellectual development may be found in Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (1937), ch. xxx. There is also an English version of Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* (1948) which contains well over half of Nohl's German edition. The titles of both editions are, however, misleading: "Early Antitheological Writings" would have been more accurate, although these writings are admittedly not antireligious.

⁴ P. 227. What Hegel is reported by Gans to have said is merely that it is the

of crucial passages (if not entire works) which are not included in these *Selections*, e.g., 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.⁵

2. *Composite Quotations.* This is a device which makes for exciting reading and, perhaps for that reason, has not received the criticism it deserves, regardless of the conclusions it is made to yield. Sentences are picked out of various contexts, often out of different books, and arranged so that they seem more or less continuous, i.e., enclosed by a single set of quotation marks, and separated only by three dots which are generally taken to indicate an omission and not a leap to a different book. Plainly, this device can be used to impute to an author views he never held. And even where the interpreter has no such desire whatever, some philosophers are almost bound to be misrepresented in this way. This is especially true of "dialectical" thinkers, such as Plato, Hegel, and Nietzsche; for many of their statements are admittedly one-sided, designed to formulate one point of view which is then shown to be inadequate and countered by another perspective. Hegel, for example, can be cited both in support of "equality" and against it. Thus one could concoct out of his collected works an impressive composite quotation, consisting of several sentences which criticize "equality." The correct understanding of Hegel would, however, be better served by the citation of only one of these sentences — *in its context*, as a step in an argument which is designed to lead the reader to a better comprehension of equality, and not to enlist his emotions for it or against it. In that sense, Popper's whole approach to Hegel is unsound, quite apart from his occasional use of composite quotations.

Because the use of composite quotations is not restricted to Popper's book, it may be well to consider this device a little more closely. Popper relies far less on Hegel's own books than on his students' lecture notes, including Gans's additions to the posthumous edition of the *Philosophy of Right* — although Gans himself pointed out in his

way of God with the world that there should be the State. Cf. my *Nietzsche* (1950), p. 84. Popper's one major deviation from the *Selections* consists in his profuse capitalization of nouns, which makes the passages he quotes from Hegel look absurd. When quoting Popper, I have of course reproduced his translation, but all other translations from the German in this article are my own.

⁵ *Phänomenologie*, ed. Lasson (1907), pp. 294f. Cf. H. G. ten Bruggencate, "Hegel's Views on War," *The Philosophical Quarterly* (October, 1950), 58-60.

Preface that "the choice of words" was sometimes his rather than Hegel's. Just here, therefore, we should not attach too much significance to single phrases or sentences, but take special pains to understand them in terms of their context and over-all intentions. Yet Popper's first composite quotation⁶ consists of eight such bits of which not a single one was published by Hegel himself. In his notes at the end of the volume, Popper scrupulously marks references to Gans's additions with an "L"; and he invariably gives the sources of his composite quotations: "For the eight quotations in this paragraph, cp. *Selections*. . . ." Even so, the notes are introduced by these "General Remarks": "The text of the book . . . may be read without these Notes. . . . Readers who wish to consult the Notes . . . may find it convenient first to read without interruption through the text of a chapter, and then to turn to the Notes." How many readers, even among those who do read the notes, are likely to recall that "the eight quotations in this paragraph" are nothing else than a long composite quotation which, when "read without interruption," gave every appearance of being a single quotation?

The question here is not one of Popper's — no doubt, good — intentions. The question is where to draw the line. In 1941, Brinton used composite quotations in his *Nietzsche*, and in his *Ideas and Men* (1950) he no longer indicates that his Nietzsche quotations⁷ are of this composite nature — although his arrangement radically changes the original meaning of the sentences involved. Surely, it is ironical that a method so characteristic of totalitarian "scholarship" should be used in books devoted to attacks on totalitarianism. Indeed, it is often hard to distinguish between the arguments of the Nazi writers who claimed that they were the rightful heirs of Plato and Nietzsche, and the arguments of some of our most reputable scholars who so eagerly concede these claims.⁸

⁶ *Open Society*, p. 227.

⁷ P. 473.

⁸ Popper employs composite quotations on pp. 227, 252, 257, 259, and 266 (cf. notes 8, 64, 69, 71, and 84). To cite even one of these fully, and to analyze each of its components in terms of its original context, would take far too much space here. As it is a principle that concerns us here, rather than a particular author, it may be permissible to offer instead a brief observation on Brinton's second composite quotation from Nietzsche, on p. 473 of *Ideas and Men*. It is introduced, "In fact, Nietzsche wrote a whole platform for totalitarianism of the Right a generation before it came to power"; it begins with a line referring to Prussian officers; and it proceeds from there to four passages dealing with "war" and

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3. *The Notion of "Influence."* While Brinton half accepted the Nazis' own view of Nietzsche, Popper goes beyond most of their attempts to establish a respectable ancestry, when he alleges that they were influenced by Hegel. His notion of influence is altogether so unscientific that it seems scarcely credible that it should be employed by an authority on logic and scientific method. At best, it is reducible to *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Thus he speaks of "the Hegelian Bergson"⁹ and assumes, without giving the least evidence, that Bergson, Alexander, Smuts, and Whitehead were all interested in Hegel — simply because they were "evolutionists."¹⁰

Popper is of course much more concerned with Hegel's influence on the Nazis, and his chapter is studded with quotations from contemporary German writers — almost all from Kolnai's *The War against the West*. (Kolnai considers such men as, for example, Friedrich Gundolf, Werner Jaeger, and Max Scheler "representative of Naziism or at least its general trend and atmosphere."¹¹) Popper uses quotation after quotation from Kolnai to point out supposed similarities with Hegel but never stops to ask whether the men in question had read

"peace." The quotation as a whole leaves no doubt but that Nietzsche meant literally "war." I have tried to show in my *Nietzsche* (pp. 337ff.) that, when some of these remarks about war are considered in their context, it becomes clear that Nietzsche did not mean war in the literal sense of the word; and, in a very kind review of my book (*Saturday Review of Literature*, January 13, 1951), Brinton apparently accepts my demonstration and concludes: "So when Nazis like Haertle or Baeumler quote him on war they quote the words but distort the meaning." And what, for all their good intentions, of anti-Nazis like Brinton or Popper?

⁹ *Open Society*, p. 256 and n. 66; n. 25 reveals that Hegel held theories which are "unmistakably Bergsonian."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225 and n. 6. I am matching up n. 6 with a reference to the "evolutionists," although there is a 7 in the text, and assume that n. 7 refers to another 7, on p. 227. The note for the 6 on p. 225 was apparently omitted inadvertently.

¹¹ Kolnai also claims that the two men who contributed most "to the rise of National Socialism as a creed" were "Nietzsche, perhaps the greatest Satanist of all times, 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 H. S. "Chamberlain was a mellow Englishman tainted by noxious Germanic influences" (p. 455); and that Jaspers is a "follower" of Heidegger (p. 207). Under the circumstances, it would seem advisable to check the context of his quotations before using them. Whether Popper did this is far from clear, and it is not easy to understand his note: "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.)"

Hegel, or liked him, or where they actually got their ideas. An interesting quotation from Stapel, for example, would seem to have been influenced by Luther rather than Hegel;¹² but the following passage is even more characteristic: the idea of "fame is revived by Hegel,"¹³ for Hegel spoke of fame as a "reward" of the men whose deeds are recorded in our history books — "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 seems rather a different idea, and Popper himself goes on to admit that Stapel "is even more radical than Hegel." Under the circumstances, one may question the relevance of the whole section dealing with Stapel and with any number of other contemporary 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*.

Besides, Popper often lacks the knowledge of who influenced whom. Thus he speaks of Heidegger and "his master, Hegel"¹⁴ and asserts that Jaspers was originally a follower "of the essentialist philosophers Husserl and Scheler."¹⁵ More important, he contrasts the vicious Hegel with superior men "such as Schopenhauer or J. F. Fries"¹⁶ and 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 Hegel, *were* racists. Fries has often been considered a great liberal, and Hegel has as often been condemned for taking a strong stand against Fries, and 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.¹⁷

¹² *Open Society*, pp. 269f.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁷ *Über die Gefährdung des Wohlstandes und Charakters der Deutschen durch die Juden*, published simultaneously as a pamphlet and in *Heidelbergerische Jahrbücher der Litteratur* (1816), pp. 241–264, where it is printed as a review of a book by Friedrich Rühs and does not have this title. Fries's ideas are of interest here also because they supply a much needed background for an adequate appreciation of Hegel's whole position and *niveau*, for Fries had been his predecessor at Heidelberg. (The page references for the following quotations are to the *Jahrbücher*.) The Jews "were and are the bloodsuckers of the people" (p. 243). "Not against the Jews, our brothers, but against Jewry [*der Judenschaft*] we declare war.... Jewry is a remnant from an uneducated primeval

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Popper is also quite wrong when he says 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."¹⁸ Seeing that the context indicates a reference to Nazism, and that all the totalitarians cited in this chapter are fascists, not communists, Popper only shows his ignorance of this particular form of totalitarianism. Hegel is rarely cited in Nazi literature, and, when he is referred to, it is usually by way of disapproval. The Nazis' official "philosopher," Rosenberg, in *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, mentions, and denounces, Hegel twice.¹⁹ (Rosenberg admires Schopenhauer to whom he devotes the whole second chapter of Book II.) Of Plato, on the other hand, he writes: "What Plato was essentially — namely, an aristocrat, an Olympic fighter, a poet intoxicated with beauty, . . . one who wanted in the end to save his people [*Volk*] on a racial basis, through a forcible constitution, dictatorial in every detail — that was not Socratic, but the last great flower of the spirit-intoxicated Hellenic character [*Hellenentum*]." ²⁰ Plato, unlike Hegel, was widely read in German schools, and special editions were prepared for Greek classes, gathering together allegedly pro-Nazi pas-

past and should not be confined but totally exterminated. . . . Jewry is a disease of peoples [*Völkerkrankheit*]" (p. 248). "The Jewish religion. . . ought not to be tolerated. . ." (p. 251). "The Jews do not at all live and teach according to Mosaic doctrine, but according to the Talmud" (p. 251). The following comments on the Talmud, and not only these, are quite on the level of Streicher. "Thus the Jewish caste. . . should be exterminated completely [*mit Stumpf und Stiel ausgerottet*] because it is obviously of all secret and public 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 his Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel repudiated Fries's substitution of "the pap of 'heart, friendship, and enthusiasm'" for moral laws; and it would surely have been unwise of "the Jews, our brothers" 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 irrationalism is, stylistically, too, much closer to most Nazi literature.

¹⁸ *Open Society*, p. 226.

¹⁹ Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1940, pp. 525 and 527. The book was published originally in 1930; 878,000 copies had been printed by 1940.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 288. Rosenberg also emphasizes, and excoriates, the "Socratic" elements in Plato.

sages.²¹ And Dr. Hans F. K. Günther, from whom the Nazis admittedly received their racial theories, wrote a whole book on Plato — not Hegel.²²

Whether Hegel actually influenced the Nazis may not be particularly relevant to Popper's central theses — but then most of the book is not. A large mass of interesting ideas are amalgamated with a great deal of unsound intellectual history, and Section V (18 pages) of the Hegel chapter is representative of the latter.

4. *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,"²³ he writes about Hegel as if he were a prosecutor addressing a jury. He begins with an attempt to discredit the accused by citing some passages from Hegel's philosophy of nature; he says of Fichte and Hegel, "such clowns are taken seriously"²⁴; he demands, "I ask whether it is possible to outdo this despicable perversion of everything that is decent",²⁵ and he denounces "Hegel's hysterical historicism."²⁶ Hegel certainly has his faults, and his "historicism" (see below) may be one of them, and his unprepossessing style, dry and unemotional in the extreme, may be another.²⁷ If "hysterical" means (as Webster says) "wildly emotional," Popper deserves this epithet much more than Hegel. For all

²¹ *Platon, Auslese und Bildung der Führer und Wehrmänner: Eine Auswahl aus dem "Staat"* von Dr. H. Holtorf ("Eclogae Graecolatinae," Fasc. 73, 2d ed.; Teubner, 1936), and *Platon, Über die Grundsätze artgemässer Staatsführung: Eine Auswahl aus den "Gesetzen"* von Dr. H. Holtorf ("E. G.," Fasc. 74). In his Preface to the first work, the editor also recommends some of his articles which are relevant: "Platon im Kampf gegen die Entartung der nordischen Rasse," *D. Phil.-Blatt*, XLII (1934), 269ff., and "Der Schicksalsweg des griechischen Volkes und der letzte Sinn des platonischen Denkens," *Völk. Beob.* (Hitler's own paper), No. 67, March 8, 1935, p. 5. Holtorf also refers to an essay, "Das Beamtenideal bei Plato und seine Bedeutung für die Gegenwart," in *Theodor von der Pforten an die deutsche Nation*, five essays with an introduction by Staatsminister Dr. Hans Frank (J. Schweitzer Verlag, 1933).

²² *Platon als Hüter des Lebens: Platons Zucht- und Erziehungsgedanken und deren Bedeutung für die Gegenwart* (1928; 2nd ed., 1935). For Günther, cf. also my *Nietzsche*, p. 256.

²³ *Open Society*, p. 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 253; cf. p. 269.

²⁷ A detailed account of Hegel's almost incredibly unemotional style as a lecturer has been given by one of his students, H. G. Hotho, and is quoted in Glockner's *Hegel*, I (1929), 440ff., and also in Kuno Fischer's two-volume *Hegel*.

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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."²⁸ And "the critical and rational methods of science" could hardly establish the contention that the philosophy of Jaspers is a "gangster" philosophy.²⁹ Nor is this proved by a note on "the gangster philosophy" which furnishes us with a composite quotation (see above) from E. von Salomon's *The Outlaws*, which bears no perceivable relation to 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,"³⁰ 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";³¹ and it is hinted that Hegel misused philosophy as a means of financial gain,³² but Popper ignores the literature on this question.³³

Hegel, we are told, "wants to stop rational argument, and with it, scientific and intellectual progress,"³⁴ and his dialectics "are very largely designed to pervert the ideas of 1789."³⁵ And when Hegel explicitly comes out in favor of the things which, according to Popper, he opposed, this is "lip service."³⁶ Thus the allegation of motives reaches the point where our interpreter (exactly like Bäumler in his Nazistic version of Nietzsche) claims that the man he writes about did not mean what he clearly said. Composite quotations are used to establish a philosopher's views, and his express 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 arguments as that Heidegger's philosophy must be wrong because he became a Nazi,³⁷ or that "Haecckel can hardly be taken seriously as a philosopher or scientist. He called himself a free thinker, but his thinking was not sufficiently independent to prevent him from demanding in 1914 'the following fruits

²⁸ *Open Society*, p. 227.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

³¹ Besides the works already cited, cf. T. M. Knox, "Hegel and Prussianism" in *Philosophy*, January, 1940, and the Discussion (with Carritt), April and July, 1940.

³² *Open Society*, p. 235.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 227 and 228.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 11 and 43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

of victory. . . .'³⁸ By the same token, one might seek to discredit Einstein's scientific theories by a reference to his political views.

Popper's occasional references to "the doctrine of the chosen people" (which he associates with totalitarianism) and to Christianity are also quite emotional. Popper is "for" Christianity, but he means by it something which is in express contrast to the 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"³⁹ — as if no crimes had ever been committed in the name of the New Testament. Indeed, one of the most important criticisms of Popper's approach could be expressed in terms of Maritain's epigram: "If books were judged by the bad uses man can put them to, what book has been more misused than the Bible?"⁴⁰

5. *Hegel's Metaphysics.* Let us now turn to Hegel's philosophy. His metaphysics is of less interest here than his social philosophy, but it is noteworthy how completely Popper fails to understand the framework of Hegel's thinking. Thus he claims that Hegel taught that "self-evidence is the same as truth,"⁴¹ although Hegel's first book begins with the denial of this view, and Hegel never changed his mind about this. Popper further claims: "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."⁴² Yet one need not look farther than Royce's article on Hegel's terminology in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* to find that "actual" is, with Hegel, a technical term (as its equivalent was with Plato and Aristotle) and that the statement that "everything actual is an Idea" does not mean that the Ideas "are identical with the things in flux."

How did Hegel arrive at the doctrine that "what is rational, is actual; and what is actual, is rational"? According to Popper, "merely by a series of equivocations." We are told that Hegel adopted Plato's equation of the Ideal and the Real, and Kant's conception that the Ideal is mental, which can be expressed in terms of an equation of Idea and

³⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 65.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴¹ *Open Society*, p. 237.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴⁰ *Scholasticism and Politics* (1940), p. 147.

Reason. "Combined, these two equations, or rather equivocations, yield *Real = Reason*."⁴³ This derivation, of course, is not documented from Hegel's writings. And that there might be a connection with Leibniz' conception of the best of all possible worlds or with a sincere belief in God is not mentioned. Nor is there any reference to the immediate context of the dictum in the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, or to Hegel's own later comment in his *Encyclopaedia*:

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; for I have, after all, 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 [*Dasein*], existence, and other concepts.⁴⁴

It will be noted that all such distinctions are overlooked when Popper says that Hegel maintained that "everything that is real must be reasonable, and . . . 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." Hegel's term *wirklich* should be translated as "actual," not as "real"; and it should be kept in mind that he opposed it to "potential" rather than "unreal" in the sense of nonexistent. An acorn, though certainly "real" enough in the usual sense of the word, is not, as Hegel uses the term, *wirklich*.

6. *The State*. Again, we encounter the most elementary and fundamental mistake imaginable. Popper overlooks the fact that Hegel speaks of "bad states" and thus does not mean every state encountered in experience when he speaks of "the State." To return to Hegel's dictum about the actual and the rational, his own explanation of it in the immediately following paragraph is most relevant here:

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 then does philosophical thinking [*der Begriff*] 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.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁴⁴ Sec. 6.

Thus Hegel distinguishes between the Idea of the State, which he has in mind when he speaks of "the State," and the states around us; but the Idea, he claims, does not reside in a Platonic heaven, but is present, distorted more or less, in these states. The philosopher, undeterred by the distortions, should disentangle the rational core from the web of appearance. And Hegel is not, as Popper claims,⁴⁵ driven to "juridical positivism" and the approbation of every state with which he might be confronted: he can pass judgment. Hegel makes a sharp distinction between such philosophic judgment and the arbitrary criticisms which reflect idiosyncrasies and emotions. He believes in a rational world order and in his ability to understand it. Sound criticism must rise to a comprehension of this world order. This notion was, in Hegel's mind, rooted in religion (many other deeply religious people share it) and so interpreted as to hold a subtle balance between quietism and revolution, both of which he rejected. Marx severed this notion from its religious context and gave it a revolutionary interpretation. Theoretically, one could uphold an interpretation which would be both religious and revolutionary, or neither.

A few quotations from the *Philosophy of Right* may furnish some concrete illustrations. "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 [*an und für sich*] illegitimate and irrational."⁴⁶ Later, Hegel speaks of the "unalienable" rights of the person and condemns, 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."⁴⁷ According to Gans's addition, Hegel further remarked that "the slave has an absolute right to liberate himself."⁴⁸

When Hegel asserts, nevertheless, that "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

⁴⁵ *Open Society*, p. 252.

⁴⁶ Sec. 3.

⁴⁷ Sec. 66.

⁴⁸ Cf. also sec. 77.

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the appeal to subjective opinion have no validity,"⁴⁹ he is not at all inconsistent. Conscience, as Hegel insists, 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 he was a Russian spy and deserved death.

We are bound to misunderstand Hegel when we construe his remarks about conscience in terms of the Nazi state. It would be better to think of the German democratic state before 1933 and of the conscience of Hitler. For by "the State" Hegel means one which realizes the freedom of its citizens, recognizing that "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."⁵⁰ On the other hand, Hegel is not opposed to conscience as such and might well consider rational the conscience of many an opponent of Hitler — say, of one who recognized his own absolute right to make himself free and to reclaim his unalienable rights — but not that 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 which was 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."⁵¹ 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 Marcuse (whose valuable book Popper ignores): "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."⁵²

To summarize: Popper is mistaken when he says that according to

⁴⁹ Sec. 137.

⁵⁰ Sec. 209; cf. sec. 270 n.

⁵¹ Sec. 258 n.

⁵² *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941), pp. 180f.

Hegel, "the only possible standard of judgment upon the state is the world historical *success* of its actions."⁵³ Popper constantly confuses "the State" and particular states;⁵⁴ he does not see that "success" is not the standard invoked in the *Philosophy of Right* when Hegel speaks of "bad states"; and he fails to recognize that "the State" is a normative conception and refers not to one of "the things in flux," but to an Idea and standard of judgment, to what states would be like if they lived up fully to their *raison d'être*. This *raison d'être*, however, is to be found, in part, "in a higher sphere"⁵⁵ for which Hegel himself refers the reader to his system as outlined in the *Encyclopaedia*. The whole realm of Objective Spirit and human institutions which culminates in the State is but the foundation of a higher realm of Absolute Spirit, i.e., art, religion, and philosophy. And in his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel opens his discussion of "the State" with the pronouncement: "The State is the actuality of the ethical idea" which is freedom. By "freedom," however, Hegel does not mean that freedom from all restraints which, at its worst, culminates in anarchy, license, and bestiality, but rather man's freedom to develop and cultivate such distinctively human capacities of the spirit as art, religion, and philosophy. While Hegel considers "the State" supreme among human institutions, he does so precisely because he would subordinate the whole realm of institutions to the highest spiritual pursuits, and because he believes that these are possible only in "the State."

This last belief is certainly questionable, but it does not imply (as Popper claims) 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.'"⁵⁶ The quotation from Hegel means — and the context from which it is torn (in the Preface to the *Philosophy of History*) makes this quite clear — that the State alone makes possible the development of art, law, morals, religion, and science; and, if Hegel had said "society" instead of "the State," his view would be plausible. He was, however, under the spell not only of Plato, but also of Periclean

⁵³ *Open Society*, p. 260.

⁵⁴ Hegel's distinction, of course, raises grave difficulties; but no interpreter can afford simply to ignore it.

⁵⁵ *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 270.

⁵⁶ *Open Society*, p. 258.

Athens in which art and religion were indeed so closely integrated with the political life of the people that one might have called the city-state their "basis and center." This, of course, is quite different from saying that the State's "might must permeate and control" art and religion. Hegel's position is open to many objections, but to confound it with totalitarianism is a mixture of misunderstanding and name-calling. Far more just is Ernst Cassirer's conclusion, in *The Myth of the State* (1946), a book dealing with much the same theme as Popper's, but much more judiciously, and unfortunately ignored by Popper. Cassirer's 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."

7. *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 himself says that his own book could be "described as a collection of marginal notes on the development of certain historicist philosophies";⁵⁷ and, as we have seen, he accuses Hegel of "hysterical historicism." Yet in Popper's sense of the term, 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" — and this addiction to predictions is what Popper means by historicism.⁵⁸

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."⁵⁹ Hegel, of course, excelled in his appreciation of the significance of tradition: he always

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

took for granted its essential rationality, and he condemned as arbitrary any criticism of the past or present which 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," failed to see the truth. And "what was true yesterday . . . may be false tomorrow" is, in a sense, a commonplace — as when we take the statement "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 would likely spread the ideals of the French Revolution, without endangering the future of civilization." And the same consideration applies to many a generalization about a nation or about war.

Hegel did not believe that such propositions as "two plus two equals four" were true at one time but not at another; but he thought that the truth comes to light gradually and tried to show this in his lectures on the history of philosophy — lectures from which one might almost date the history of philosophy as a separate discipline. German historians of philosophy in the nineteenth century, such as Zeller, Erdmann, and Fischer, were consciously following Hegel's example and building on his foundations. Hegel emphasized, not how utterly wrong his predecessors had been, but how much truth they had seen; yet Plato's truths were not "all of the truth," but were in need of subsequent qualification and amendment. Hegel's approach permits many profound insights which contrast favorably with the often superficial strictures of the crusading critics of the Enlightenment and their epigoni against whom Hegel reacted.

Hegel's approach is not amoral. Although he finds the aim of history in its "result"⁶⁰ and considers the history of the world the world's court of justice,⁶¹ he does not idolize success. His attitude depends on his religious faith that freedom will and must triumph: *that* is Hegel's "historicism." 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 Section 258 of the *Rechtsphilosophie*. Throughout, he tries to avoid the Scylla of that revolutionary lawlessness which he associates with

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233 and n. 11.

Fries and the Wartburg festival and the Charybdis of conservative lawlessness which he finds in Von Haller's *Restauration der Staatswissenschaft*. He cites Von Haller (I, 342ff.): "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."

"A people can only die a violent death when it has become naturally dead in itself,"⁶² Popper quotes Hegel as saying; and Hegel continues, "as e.g. the German Imperial Cities, the German Imperial Constitution."⁶³ However true this analysis may be when applied to the events of 1806, the bold generalization invites criticisms; but one should take into account that Hegel is in agreement with a religious tradition which extends from Isaiah to Toynbee.

Popper, intent on dissociating Hegel from the Western religious tradition and associating him with the Nazis, fastens on Hegel's conception of world historical peoples. According to Hegel, we are told, history records the fights of nations, "and the object of the fight is world domination,"⁶⁴ "History is the contest of the various national spirits for world domination."⁶⁵ And Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*⁶⁶ is quoted: "the Spirit of the Time⁶⁷ invests its Will" in "the self-consciousness of a particular Nation" which "dominates the World."⁶⁸ 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

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, n. 77.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁶⁷ Hegel says: "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 *Selections* this becomes "...in which that spirit for a time invests its will." And in Popper it becomes "the Spirit of the Time."

⁶⁸ *Open Society*, p. 258.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁶⁶ Sec. 550.

this revelation are represented by different peoples, but by only one people at any one time.⁶⁹ "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."⁷⁰

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 which 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 aware, moreover, of a number of ambiguities and dangers in such conceptions as that of a *Volk* or nation; we would hesitate to apply such terms to the carriers of Greek or Roman civilization; and we would be hard put to construct a line of "world historical" peoples from, say, the end of the Western Roman Empire to our own time. We understand the flowering of medieval philosophy in terms of the co-operation of Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, against a Greek background, and would not care to say who, in that epoch, was the representative of the world spirit.

All this, however, does not imply that Hegel's views are wicked or that his errors are due to his alleged nationalism or tribalism. Very similar objections can be urged against modern philosophers of history who, like Toynbee, repudiate nationalism. Toynbee, to be sure, recognizes many contemporary civilizations all of which "count" in world history. Yet his polemics against the nation as a unit of history and his preference for civilizations rest on the claim that nations cannot be studied without reference to other nations, while civilizations can be studied without reference to other civilizations. Again, one could hardly understand scholastic philosophy without reference to Mohammedans,

⁶⁹ This 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 *Kreis*: "In jeder ewe / Ist nur ein gott und einer nur sein knder" (In every epoch / There is but one god, and but one his prophet). This seems even more obviously false than Hegel's view — and doubly ironical because, even in the relatively narrow field of German poetry, George was no solitary giant and was probably inferior to Rilke.

⁷⁰ *Philosophy of Right*, sec. 347.

Jews, and Greeks.⁷¹ Surely, with the exception of entirely isolated communities, no unit can be understood completely without reference to others; and any unit whatever, whether it be Western Civilization, Germany, 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.

In this sense, Hegel's conception of "world history" is arbitrary and amounts to an attempt to study the development of his own civilization. Moreover, he was not impeded by the recognition that some of the ancestors of this civilization 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 even as Christianity developed out of Judaism. What is called for is a more pluralistic perspective and more respect for individual units. There is no one plan to which all of these can be fitted, and Hegel was certainly something of a Procrustes. Popper's attempt to use the conception of "world domination" in an exclusively political, or even military, sense in order to link Hegel with Hitler is, however, quite illegitimate; and it is doubly misleading when one does not emphasize that Hegel was not making predictions or offering suggestions for the future, but scrupulously limiting himself to an understanding of the past. (See also Section 9 below.)

8. *Great Men and Equality.* Hegel's conception of world historical peoples goes together with his belief in 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 antiequalitarianism — 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

⁷¹ At the outset of his *Study of History*, Toynbee seeks to show that England is no intelligible field of study, while Western Civilization is. Had he taken Spain as his example, he could scarcely have arrived at the latter conclusion.

against freedom, or as Hegel calls it, the idea of the World Historical Personality."⁷² Not only the word "religion," which occurs twice in this quotation, but also Popper's use of the conception of equalitarianism are propagandistic. 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, it is surely untenable. Equalitarianism in any sense in which it is worthwhile is not at all incompatible with belief in great men.

Here one may also note that, 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."⁷³

The omissions in the Hegel quotation are Popper's, and he himself 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)." Can Popper's omissions in this quotation really be accounted for in terms of (Hegel's) pathology? Consider *Encyclopaedia*, Section 539. 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 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 and should

⁷² *Open Society*, pp. 266f.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

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, taken as a whole, is very 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, let us say, draft boards; talents and aptitudes are relevant qualifications for public service; etc. Or should we have equal punishment for all, regardless of whether they have committed equal crimes? Should we induct women and children into the armed forces and exact equal taxes from the poor and the rich? Is it Hegel who 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 this age.”⁷⁴ And the 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 (see below), 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 alleges⁷⁵ — 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 (in actuality as well as in science)”; 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

⁷⁴ Popper’s version of this passage (*ibid.*, p. 267) makes nonsense of it: “In public opinion all is false and true....”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

also Lincoln's great speeches, e.g., "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free" 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 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 while 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*,"⁷⁶ he himself evidently believes that Napoleon (whose motivation was hardly quite 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 super-national empire."⁷⁷

9. *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 in "the furthering of civilization" than is Popper,⁷⁸ but finds that our civilization was furthered by any number of wars in the past; e.g., the Greeks' war against the Persians, Alexander's wars of conquest, the innumerable wars waged by the Romans, and Charlemagne's conquest of the Saxons. Believing that it is the philosopher's task to comprehend "that which is"⁷⁹ — and not to construct utopias — Hegel speaks of war as one of the factors which have actually furthered civilization.

Second, we should not confuse Hegel's estimate of the wars which had occurred up to his own time with a celebration of war as we know

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷⁹ *Philosophy of Right*, Preface.

it today. Third, Hegel's attitude is not fully comprehensible when considered apart from its religious roots. He considered all that is finite ephemeral. In Gans's addition to Section 324,⁸⁰ he says: "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"; and the change, though slight, affects the tone of the passage.)

These three points suffice 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."⁸¹ 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,"⁸² 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. Popper overlooks the fact that 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 impatient with anyone who as much as mentions any good aspects; but, in a concrete predicament, the majority still considers that the good outweighs the evil, even if the point be made in terms of "the lesser evil."

The one passage, finally, in which Hegel does consider the question of future wars is not well known and is worth quoting here. It is found in the lectures on aesthetics which he offered as a Berlin professor:

Suppose that, after having considered the great epics of the past, 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 exist 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.⁸³

⁸⁰ Quoted by Popper, *Open Society*, p. 269.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁸² Sec. 324.

⁸³ *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Glockner, XIV, 354f. The epics of the past referred to are the *Iliad* and the *Cid*, and Tasso's, Ariosto's, and Camoëns' poems.

In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel also hailed the United States as "the land of the future."⁸⁴ Plainly, he did not believe that world history would culminate in Prussia; and one may recall that these lectures culminate, not in a prediction, but in 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 which, 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, while trusting that Prussia would develop further, did not believe that it 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."

10. *Nationalism*. On this point Popper's account is particularly inadequate. "When nationalism was revived a hundred years ago [about 1850?], it was in one of the most mixed of all the thoroughly mixed regions of Europe, in Germany, and especially in Prussia. . . ."⁸⁵ A page later we hear of "the invasion of German lands by the first national army, the French army under Napoleon." Another three pages and we are told that Fichte's "windbagery" gave "rise to modern nationalism." (Fichte died in 1814.) Again, we are informed that Wilson's insistence on the self-determination of nations was due to the fact that "he fell a victim to his upbringing in the metaphysical political theories of Plato and of Hegel."⁸⁶ 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."⁸⁷ Why, then, have the Swiss not united with one of their democratic neighbors? Popper's opposition to many features of modern nationalism is well taken; but those who are interested in its background and development, or wish to understand it, will do better to turn to Hans Kohn's *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944) and to his chapter "Nationalism and the Open Society" in *The Twentieth Century* (1949).

One of the major themes of Popper's Hegel chapter is that "Hegelian-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, XI, 128f.

⁸⁵ *Open Society*, p. 245.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

ism is the renaissance of tribalism.”⁸⁸ Popper’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.”⁸⁹ 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 the 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 that his idea of the State was its very antithesis.⁹⁰

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 alluding “to the liberal nationalists,” but he adds, “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:

There was much talk of freedom and of equality, but it was a freedom that would be the vested privilege of the Teutonic race alone, and an equality that meant general poverty and privation. Culture was looked upon as the holding of the rich and of the alien, made to corrupt and soften the people. 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 *Volks-gemeinschaft*. There is, in point of fact, a much closer relation between the historical role of the *Burschenschaften*, with their racism and anti-rationalism, 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. . . .⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁹⁰ Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 527.

⁹¹ Marcuse, *op. cit.*, p. 179f.

It has already been mentioned that the "liberal" Fries, whom Popper so definitely prefers to Hegel, called for the extermination of Jewry, while Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right*, denounces the nationalistic clamor against the extension of civil rights to the Jews, pointing out that all such "clamor has overlooked that they are, above all, human beings."⁹² Are we to condemn Hegel because he agreed with the king, or praise Fries because he did not?

Finally, Popper claims that "Hegel introduced the *historical theory of the nation*."⁹³ Surely, there is truth in this, although the suggestion lacks all precision. Hegel conceived of history in terms of nations and spirits of nations; but he also construed history as the story of freedom and believed that nations made their contributions only when they formed states which made possible the growth of art, religion, and philosophy. Even the best of nations is not an end in itself, and its aggrandizement or glory as such means nothing to Hegel; what matters to him is the way in which some nations have advanced the cause of humanity and civilization.

Hegel was not — as Popper would have us believe — a nationalist who for reasons of expediency, to please the king, occasionally denounced nationalism. He was sincerely and strongly opposed to contemporary jingoism, and he was a nationalist only in so far as he considered nations the steppingstones toward a supranational end.

11. *Racism*. The last claim we shall consider, and in some respects Popper's most preposterous one, is that the Nazis got their racism from Hegel. We shall make two points. First, the Nazis did not get their racism from Hegel. Second, Hegel was not a racist. (See also Section 3 above.)

Under the first heading, one may remark that the Nazis did find some support for their racism in Schopenhauer and Fries (whom Popper juxtaposes with Hegel on pages 223, 272, and in note 58) and Wagner (who, Popper insinuates, was something of a Hegelian,⁹⁴ though he was of course a devoted disciple of Schopenhauer). And when Popper declares that W. Schallmeyer, when he wrote a prize essay in 1900, "thus became the grandfather of racial biology,"⁹⁵ one wonders about such non-Germans as, e.g., Gobineau and Chamberlain, and any number of other writers who publicized their views before

⁹² Sec. 270 n.

⁹³ *Open Society*, p. 252.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

1900 and tremendously influenced the Nazis' racism. We have already had occasion to refer to Popper's curious view that the Nazis were unaware of their debt to Plato but knew Hegel; and one may now add that Popper offers us the epigram: "Not 'Hegel + Plato,' but 'Hegel + Haeckel' is the formula of modern racialism."⁹⁶ Why Haeckel rather than Bernhard Förster, Julius Langbehn, Hofprediger Stöcker, Chamberlain, Gobineau, or Wagner? Why not Plato, about whose reflections on breeding the Nazis' greatest 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? And why Hegel?

Decidedly, Hegel was not a racist; nor does Popper adduce any evidence to prove that he was one. Yet Popper says, "The transubstantiation of Hegelianism into racialism or of Spirit into Blood does not greatly alter the main tendency of Hegelianism."⁹⁷ Perhaps the transubstantiation of God into the *Führer* does not greatly alter Christianity? One can indeed 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."⁹⁸ Familiarity with Hegel has, however, waned to the point where Bertrand Russell can hail Popper's attack on Hegel as "deadly"⁹⁹ (for Hegel) and where reviewers, while expressing reservations about the treatment of Plato and Aristotle, have not generally seen fit to protest against the treatment of Hegel. Hence we can no longer dismiss Popper's attack as "silly." Nor is it merely a matter of defending Hegel against irresponsible vituperation. The increasingly popular methods encountered in this latest version of the Hegel myth must for once be shown in their true light.

One recalls Kant's critique of Herder which Popper, who quotes it, would apply to Hegel and his modern followers, though it would seem to fit Popper himself quite well: "A sagacity quick in picking up analogies, and an imagination audacious in the use it makes of them are combined with a capability for enlisting emotions and passions.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁹⁸ *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (1950), p. 360.

⁹⁹ On the jacket of the English edition of 1949. The book has received many other encomia, and I am not implying that the attack on Hegel is representative of the caliber of the whole work.

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..."¹⁰⁰ What is important, however, is not the failing of one particular author but rather — to refer back to the motto of this article — the general calamity. Hence I shall conclude by citing in my own behalf what Popper says to justify his 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 all 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.¹⁰¹

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¹⁰⁰ *Open Society*, p. 247.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 435f.