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# The Young Hegel

Studies in the Relations between  
Dialectics and Economics

by

GEORG LUKÁCS

translated by Rodney Livingstone

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1975

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*by the same author*

THE MEANING OF CONTEMPORARY REALISM

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

ESSAYS ON THOMAS MANN

GOETHE AND HIS AGE

WRITER AND CRITIC

STUDIES IN EUROPEAN REALISM

HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

SOLZHENITSYN

SOUL AND FORM

THEORY OF THE NOVEL

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## Translator's Note

Lukács' terminology presupposes an audience familiar with the language of German idealist philosophy and of the Hegelian–Marxist tradition. To provide a key to that language would be a daunting and perhaps unrewarding task in the present context. At all events I have preferred simply to take over the vocabulary already developed by earlier translators, in the hope that Lukács' own text and a few additional footnotes would suffice to render his argument comprehensible. It is for this reason that I have, wherever possible, made use of existing translations of the works of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Engels and Lenin, rather than compound the confusion by developing my own new language.

It may be of assistance to the reader to list here some of the key terms which recur throughout the book and indicate where explanations may be found, either in Lukács' text, or in editorial footnotes. Other important concepts will be found listed in the Index under Hegel:

1. *Aufheben* = annul, preserve, supersede or sublate. See p. 99.
2. *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*: used by Hegel to mean 'civil society' as opposed to political society. As such it can refer to any post-classical society, in which the 'civil' and the 'political' became distinct. (See esp. p. 375.) However, Lukács tends to assimilate it to its modern meaning of 'bourgeois society'. I have tried to use the meaning that seemed right in the context.
3. *The categories* of Kantian philosophy, see p. 259.
4. *Entäußerung*: one of the words for 'alienation'. I have preferred to translate it as 'externalization', since in Hegel's usage it has a broader application than the current term. See pp. 532 ff.
5. *Erinnerung* = (1) memory & (2) internalization. See pp. 508, 515.
6. *Gestalten des Bewusstseins* = the forms or configurations of consciousness. See pp. 474–5.
7. *Infinite progress*: see pp. 223–4.
8. *Intellektuelle Anschauung* = intellectual intuition, see pp. 246–7.
9. *Reflexionsbestimmungen* = determinations of reflection. See p. 284.

Thanks are due to the following for permission to reprint material already translated: Lawrence & Wishart for quotations from the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin; George Allen & Unwin for quotations from J.B. Baillie's translation of *The Phenomenology of Mind*; The Clarendon Press for quotations from *Hegel's Political Writings*, edited by Z.A. Pelczynski and translated by T.M. Knox and from Hegel's *Philosophy of*

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*Right* also translated by T.M. Knox; to University of Chicago Press, for quotations from T.M. Knox's translations of the early theological writings in *Friedrich Hegel on Christianity*, Harper & Row Torchbooks, New York 1961. I have occasionally modified these translations to adapt them to Lukács' argument (and once or twice, where Lukács uses a different text).

I should also like to record a debt of gratitude to Professor Tony Manser and the other members of the Hegel Seminar at Southampton University whose discussions of the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic* over a period of two years greatly increased my understanding of Hegel. It is my hope that thanks to them I have become better able to avoid the numerous pitfalls that await the unwary translator of philosophical German texts.

Southampton, August 1974

R.S.L.

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*For Mikhail Alexandrovitch Lifschitz  
in devotion and friendship*



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## Preface to the new edition (1954)

THIS book was completed in late Autumn 1938. The imminent outbreak of war delayed its appearance for many years. In 1947/8, when publication became possible I thoroughly revised the text but because of the many other claims on my time I could only take account of a very small part of the literature on Hegel that had appeared since 1938. The present new edition for the German Democratic Republic has again been revised, but apart from stylistic improvements almost no changes have been made.

In the Introduction the reader will find a full account of the methodological considerations that have guided the author throughout the work. On this point too I see no reason to modify the positions adopted sixteen years ago. The attempts made in France to 'modernize' Hegel in an existential, irrationalist sense—above all in the well-known book by Jean Hyppolyte—have not given me any cause to emend my arguments or even to supplement them. The fundamental critique given here of the picture of Hegel current in the Age of Imperialism\* applies with equal force to these French efforts to provide a re-interpretation even though the conditions both internal and external for a 'Hegel Renaissance' in France must differ in many ways from those in Germany.

I will perhaps be permitted to make a few remarks for the benefit of the German readers of my other, often later, works. My account of the development of the young Hegel supplements in many respects the ideas I have attempted to formulate in my other studies of the history of German philosophy and literature. Above all the present work contains a positive vision to contrast with the 'classical' age of irrationalism as presented in my work *The Destruction of Reason*. In that book I examined the irrationalist tradition established by Schelling and his successors. Here I shall be concerned with the critique and overcoming of irrationalism as seen from Hegel's side, though this in its turn is just the negative, critical motif counterpointing the main theme: the foundation of the new idealist, dialectical method. The two books mutually complement each other in yet other ways. Only in the present studies of Hegel was it possible to provide a positive explanation of why it was above all his philosophy that became the great stumbling-block for the irrationalists of the period and why the latter rightly focused their attacks on him as the outstanding representative of the progressive bourgeois philosophy of the age. At the same time it becomes clear why the limitations and aberrations of

\* G.L. uses this phrase to refer to the period following the foundation of the German Empire in 1870, and more specifically, the era of William II and the First World War.—*Trans.*

Hegel's idealism could provide them with a real pretext for their critique of the dialectics of historicism and enable them to mount a relatively accurate attack upon it. Hence, from the examination and critique of Hegel's early development, we can understand why irrationalism still possessed the vestiges of philosophical substance in Schelling's early period, and why it lost even this slight justification later on in Nietzsche, once scientific socialism had appeared on the scene to oppose it. And if we are to understand not only the direct impact of Marx on the development of German thought but also his sometimes extremely indirect influence, an exact knowledge of Hegel, of both his greatness and his limitations, is absolutely indispensable.

The same issue is equally crucial to the understanding of the golden age of German literature. I have pointed to the connections here from the standpoint of German literature in my studies of Hölderlin and Heine, and above all in my discussions of Goethe's *Faust*. Since an analysis of *The Phenomenology of Mind* constitutes the core of the present work I have naturally attempted to demonstrate its profound intellectual and philosophical affinities with *Faust* so that the attentive reader will discover a perhaps not wholly idle complement to my earlier studies of Goethe's masterpiece from the opposite perspective. This applies with equal force to almost all the problems of a progressive German literature. One of the central tasks of German literary history is to settle accounts with the reactionary elements of Romanticism. The more reactionary the representatives of Romanticism were, the more they were glorified, and under the German Empire German literary historians either strove to blur the distinction between German Classicism and Romanticism or simply proclaimed their reactionary views openly and aggressively. Hence the intellectual reconstruction of the true situation is an important task for scholarship.

At the same time it is a task inseparable from general issues of cultural politics. At a time when the people of Germany are feeling their way, when significant sections of the German intelligentsia have not made up their minds whether to move forwards or backwards, a correct view of the intellectual conflicts of the past can also act as a compass for the future. In my philosophical and literary studies I have always endeavoured to subordinate other aims to the great challenge posed by this fact. I believe that the elucidation of Hegel's own philosophy as well as of its connections with the progressive and reactionary currents of his age can likewise help to clarify this urgent and important problem.

In all such ideological decisions the question of one's attitude to Marx is crucial. And this is not merely a matter of Marx's importance as thinker and politician, as philosopher, economist and historian: what counts is an understanding of what Marx has meant and still means in the

context of German culture. It is three decades since Thomas Mann wrote

'I said that the state of Germany will not give cause for satisfaction, Germany will not be able to find its true self until Karl Marx has read Friedrich Hölderlin—, an encounter which, by the way, is on the point of taking place. I forgot to add that if the acquaintance remains one-sided it will necessarily prove sterile.'

This is indeed a highly promising cultural programme, especially if the attempt is made to recover the authentic Hölderlin—as the present writer has done here and elsewhere. It would be a dangerous illusion, however, to conclude that this programme has been even minimally realized by the mass of the German nation, and the disappearance of Marx from the cultural horizon of broad sections of the German people remains a source of weakness which can be seen daily and hourly in every sphere of activity. The German people has objectively weaker revolutionary traditions than other nations and cannot afford the luxury of renouncing this crucial asset.

The task of revitalizing the German tradition can be approached in a number of ways. One of them is to demonstrate the roots of Marx's work in Germany so as to show the extent of Marx's involvement with the progressive German tradition from Lessing to Heine, from Leibniz to Hegel and Feuerbach, and to prove how profoundly German his works are from the structure of their thought down to his very style. A correct historical analysis of Hegel which sets out from Marxian perspectives can make a contribution to the solution of this problem.

Of course, the present work is primarily a scholarly exploration of facts and relations in philosophy and the history of philosophy. Its value is determined by the success with which it achieves a greater clarity in these matters than had existed previously. However, no knowledge can exist in isolation. A correct understanding of Hegel inevitably raises the questions we have just outlined and the book is designed to clarify them too. The author cannot pronounce on the success or failure of his enterprise but thinks it his duty to acquaint the reader frankly with his intentions.

BUDAPEST, January 1954

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## Introduction

THE history of the origins and development of classical German philosophy is an important and as yet unsolved problem in the Marxist history of philosophy. Even though the Marxist classics have repeatedly drawn attention to the extraordinary importance of the problem, even though Engels included Kant, Fichte and Hegel among the precursors of the philosophy of the revolutionary workers' movement, even though Marx and Lenin have brilliantly illuminated the central issues in a number of profound studies this story has not yet been fully explored.

We have not even arrived at the point of concretely unravelling the historical points of departure, of a concrete analysis of the available facts and texts, of a radical critique of the most important, false and misleading bourgeois theories on the subject.

For a long time the bourgeois interpretation of the origins and growth of classical German philosophy was dominated by the brilliantly original though idealistically distorted and in many respects schematic view established by Hegel himself. Hegel's pioneering historical insight consisted in his discovery that the various philosophical systems were connected by inner dialectical bonds. He was the first man to conceive of the history of philosophy as something more than a mere collection of anecdotes and biographies, of metaphysical assertions about the validity or otherwise of particular views of particular philosophers and to elevate it to the status of an authentic historical science. Within the context of the history of classical German philosophy Hegel discerned the starting-point for the meteoric rise of the dialectical philosophy of idealism in the 'transcendental', 'critical' philosophy of Kant and he rightly regarded his own system as the consummation and conclusion of the movement Kant had initiated. With great penetration and with profound insight into the most vital problems of dialectics (the thing-in-itself and the dilemmas it posed, the antinomies and the theory of contradiction, etc.) he perceived how Fichte's central preoccupations sprang from the contradictions and inadequacies of the Kantian system, just as Fichte's own contradictions and faults led to Schelling and from there to himself.

There is much truth in all this and much of great importance for a Marxist history of philosophy. But since Hegel, as an objective idealist, sees philosophy in terms of the autonomous movement of the concept he gets everything upside-down here too. Engels shows repeatedly that the various philosophical systems do indeed begin with the problems left unsolved by their predecessors, but as a dialectical materialist he also

shows again and again that this purely philosophical analysis is peripheral to the real analysis and that the historian of philosophy must make the descent to the real, underlying objective foundations of the movement of philosophy. Whenever, as is the case with Hegel, the immediate manifestations of the history of philosophy are turned into idealist absolutes and treated 'immanently', i.e. as if the 'problems' of one philosophy lead smoothly to those of the next without the need to consider the realities underlying them, then even the grain of truth contained in such a history becomes exaggerated and distorted. In Hegel's own work the adoption of this procedure causes him to disregard the unevenness and complexity of the real development of philosophy even in this particular period. In consequence the highly complicated reflections of actual historical events no less than the systematic efforts to incorporate developments in the natural sciences into a total dialectic are reduced to the 'immanent' combinations of a few—admittedly very important—categories.

This circumvention of the real world resulted in a schematic view of the history of philosophy and when bourgeois philosophy went into a decline it led to wholly unscientific distortions and misrepresentations of history.

During the Second International this schematic 'immanent' view even infected Marxists like Plekhanov and Mehring. The views of Menshevik idealism on the history of philosophy were powerfully reinforced by the errors and defects of Hegel's own interpretation. We can only establish a consistent Marxist-Leninist line on these problems if we overcome these errors, and thoroughly assimilate the philosophical advances made during the Leninist-Stalinist period of Marxism. Above all it is essential for us to study Lenin's philosophical works in depth. In any such history of classical German philosophy, in any such critical account of its development, the newly discovered and published works of Marx and Engels must also play a decisive role.

In bourgeois philosophy itself Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy did not long survive the defeat of the bourgeois revolution of 1848. Even before this period many other views emerged, more primitive than Hegel's and hostile to the real tendencies of history. The most important of these unhistorical views, that of Arthur Schopenhauer, only became widely influential after 1848. Schopenhauer's approach to philosophy is rooted in his conviction that the efforts of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel to resolve Kant's contradictions were nothing but *aberrations*. According to Schopenhauer, philosophy should revert to the only correct method, that of Kant; anything else was deception, idle talk, a swindle. On the one hand, then, Schopenhauer simply repudiates the entire dialectical development of classical German philosophy and calls for a return to a metaphysical conception of reality. On the other hand, he

'purifies' Kant of his hesitant steps towards materialism; he brings Kant and Berkeley together under one umbrella. (In many respects Herbart has a not dissimilar effect, different though he is in other ways.)

This view, which amounts to the total annihilation of the history of classical German philosophy, reappears later in the neo-Kantians in an even more philistine form. This can be seen most clearly in the works of Otto Liebmann (*Kant and his successors*, 1865, etc.). With Liebmann we witness the philosophical triumph of that German neo-Kantianism which succeeded in transforming Kant into a thorough-going subjectivist and agnostic and which repudiated as 'unscientific metaphysics' every attempt to know objective reality as it is, independently of consciousness. This signifies the victory in neo-Kantianism of the Schopenhauerian line of the history of philosophy with its interpretation of post-Kantian philosophy as a single great aberration from the uniquely true subjectivism of Kant. The main difference is that here it is done more prosily, without Schopenhauer's genius for picturesque abuse. Hegel is treated as a 'dead dog'.

This view dominates most of the histories of classical German philosophy dating from about the middle of the last century, above all in their treatment of Hegel. Undoubtedly, remnants of Hegelianism in a National Liberal and trivialized form still survive. This can be seen in the well-known histories of philosophy by Kuno Fischer and J. E. Erdmann. However, the most important book on Hegel in this period, the work of Rudolf Haym, is in the last analysis one long diatribe against Hegel's 'unscientific' treatment of objectivity and of dialectics.

The study of classical German philosophy was not resumed until the Age of Imperialism. By that time liberal neo-Kantianism was increasingly failing to satisfy the ideological needs of Germany's imperialist bourgeoisie. We see instead the emergence of doctrines which, while they leave the agnostic foundations of neo-Kantianism intact, nevertheless were searching for ways in which to bring about a reactionary revival of objective idealism. (Examples are the Romantic revival, '*Lebensphilosophie*', Husserl's 'phenomenology', Dilthey's 'realist psychology' etc.) Intimately bound up with these reactionary tendencies we find a revival of classical German philosophy, primarily of Hegel. At the same time there was a renewed interest in the problem of its origins and this attempted to advance beyond both the schematicism of the later Hegelians and the out-and-out rejection of Hegel by the orthodox neo-Kantians.

Evidently, the 'renaissance' of classical philosophy in the Age of Imperialism did not imply the renewal or extension of Hegelian dialectics, nor did it bring about the concretization of Hegel's historicism. Instead it represented the attempt to press Hegel's philosophy into the service of an imperialist, reactionary restructuring of neo-Kantianism. In line with

this the theoreticians and historians at the start of the neo-Hegelian revival aimed their polemics above all against those arguments which set up Kant and Hegel as mutually exclusive opposites. The neo-Hegelianism of Imperialism turned a blind eye to the profound and annihilating criticism which Hegel levelled at Kant's subjectivism and agnosticism. Its basic tenet was the *unity* of classical German philosophy, and of Kant and Hegel above all. All these philosophers (Windelband, J. Ebbinghaus, Brunstäd, etc.) endeavoured to prove that *all* the problems of Hegel's philosophy could already be found in Kant and that Hegel only made conscious and explicit what had been present unconsciously and implicitly in Kant. This gave rise to a view of history in which the Hegelian scheme of the development of classical German philosophy was reiterated and renovated only in appearance, and which therefore contained all its idealist and schematicizing errors in an intensified form. In reality this view was wholly incompatible with Hegel's own. Hegel had severely criticized the errors of his predecessors from the stand point of objective idealism and of dialectics while at the same time he singled out for particular praise and appreciation the historical significance of those incipient attempts to formulate and solve dialectical problems. The neo-Hegelians of Imperialism proceeded in the opposite direction. They deduced Hegel from Kant, i.e. they took notice only of those elements of Hegel that could readily be reconciled with Kantian agnosticism. They reduced the whole development of classical German philosophy to a Kantian level. This tendency can still be seen quite clearly in neo-Hegelianism after the (First) World War—when it is frequently accompanied by other and even more openly reactionary motifs. Hermann Glockner, the editor of the new edition of Hegel's works and one of the leaders of the post-war neo-Hegelians, put the matter clearly in his speech to the first Hegel Congress:

'In Germany today the problem of Hegel is primarily a problem of Kant.'

In this context we can only briefly refer to the general class foundations and political background to this changing picture of Hegel. A comparison will best put the new situation into perspective. When Haym in his day had attacked Hegel's objectivism and his dialectics he had done so in the service of liberalism, albeit a liberalism inclining towards National Liberalism. At any rate, while completely misunderstanding the dialectical character of Hegel's views he dismissed them as reactionary and believed that the growth of a liberal ideology would be greatly facilitated by the demise of Hegel's philosophy. By contrast, for Friedrich Meinecke, the well-known historian of the Age of Imperialism and the close associate of the neo-Kantians of south-west Germany

(Windelband and Rickert), Hegel's philosophy was essentially the precursor of Bismarck's politics and his view of the state. When Haym was writing, the resistance of the German bourgeoisie to the foundation of the Bismarckian Empire, to the pseudo-constitutional, reactionary character of the German state was still alive, even though enfeebled by liberal timidity and inconsequentiality. The later revival of Hegelianism can be seen to be closely connected with the fact that all traces of this resistance had now vanished. Neo-Hegelianism set out to propagate an ideology of concrete and positive, and in effect, total 'reconciliation' with the political form of Germany. It is obvious, therefore, that the reactionary elements of Hegel's philosophy necessarily receive the greatest prominence.

Such reactionary elements, however, are not confined to political history. The neo-Hegelians we have been discussing were striving to extend and modernize neo-Kantianism to the point where it encompasses the entire history of classical German philosophy. But this was far from being enough to satisfy the reactionary ideological requirements of the Age of Imperialism. We have already mentioned the growing influence of irrationalist '*Lebensphilosophie*'. The great popularity enjoyed by Dilthey's contribution to the revival of Hegel can be traced back to the fact that here Hegel's dialectics are distorted so as to harmonize with the emergence of philosophical irrationalism. In this sense Dilthey's monograph of 1906 on the young Hegel betokens a turning-point in the history of Hegel-studies. The crux of the matter is that Dilthey meets the imperialist and reactionary revival of Romanticism halfway when—by ignoring or distorting the most vital historical facts—he brings Hegel within the orbit of philosophical Romanticism.

In the post-war period neo-Hegelianism proceeded along the paths laid down by Dilthey while also drawing on the philosophical results of the other neo-Hegelian trends. Richard Kroner in his *From Kant to Hegel*, a book of decisive importance for the later development of neo-Hegelianism, argues that 'Dialectics is irrationalism made rational, made into a method'. The general aim of neo-Hegelianism—clearly reflected in the speeches of Glockner, Kroner, etc.,—is to make apparent use of Hegel's approach to the philosophy of history, to exploit his concept of 'reconciliation', in order to achieve a 'synthesis' of all contemporary philosophical movements (including Fascism).

It is no accident that Dilthey's monograph which focuses its attention on Hegel's *youth* should stand at the beginning of this whole development. Dilthey believed that he had discovered certain motifs in Hegel's transitional phase, and especially in the moments of crisis during that phase, which were susceptible to exploitation by an irrationalist, mystical interpretation of Hegel. Much earlier he had similarly falsified Hölderlin, the friend and companion of Hegel in his youth. (I have



provided a detailed critique of this reactionary falsification of Hölderlin in my essay on his *Hyperion*—See *Goethe and His Age*, London 1968, pp. 136–57.) Dilthey's irrationalist view of Hegel's philosophy reintroduced into it certain tendencies derived from the German dissolution of Hegelianism. Thus late in life the famous Hegelian aesthetician, Friedrich Theodor Vischer, turned away from his own Hegelian beginnings and erected an irrationalist theory of myth to oppose Hegel's dialectics. Dilthey now injected this theory into the interpretation of Hegel himself. (On this subject see my essay *Karl Marx and Friedrich Theodor Vischer in Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik*, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin 1953.)

As we have seen, Dilthey's interpretation of Hegel played a decisive role in the later development of neo-Hegelianism. With his book the figure of the young Hegel, who had been peripheral for Kuno Fischer or Haym, now moved steadily into the forefront of attention. Increasing use was made of Hegel's sketches and notes, most of them not intended for publication, and they were interpreted in such a way as to give birth to a 'true German' philosopher, i.e. a mythical, irrationalist figure palatable to Fascism. This development reaches its pinnacle in Theodor Haering's monograph of which the first volume appeared in 1929.

Although the perversion of the history of philosophy in Germany reaches a climax here, at least as far as Hegel is concerned, the whole movement has had the positive effect of having made possible the publication of the scattered, concealed or forgotten manuscripts of Hegel's youth. We are now at a point where we can begin to chart Hegel's early development.

I append a list of the most important of these publications as constant reference to them will be necessary in the course of our concrete analysis of his youthful development.

1. *Hegel's Early Theological Writings*, ed. Hermann Nohl, Tübingen 1907 (cited here as 'Nohl').
2. *The German Constitution and the System of Ethics*, both published in *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie Hegels* by G. Lasson, Leipzig 1923 (cited here as 'Lasson').
3. *Hegel's Jena Logic, Metaphysics and Philosophy of Nature*, ed. G. Lasson, Leipzig 1923 (cited here as the *Jena Logic*).
4. Hegel's lectures from the period immediately prior to *The Phenomenology of Mind*, published under the title *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, Vols. I and II by J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig 1931 (cited here as *Realphilosophie*).
5. *Documents on Hegel's Development*, ed. J. Hoffmeister, Stuttgart 1936 (cited here as 'Hoffmeister').

Taken together, all these publications amount to a fairly sizable and as yet barely tapped mine of information about the emergence of the

Hegelian dialectic. In part, work on this topic has been rendered easier by the philological research that accompanied the publication and interpretation of these texts. With the aid of the letters and manuscripts that can be dated with certainty, Nohl, Hoffmeister, Haering, Rosenzweig and others have carried out a detailed investigation into the chronology of Hegel's manuscripts. They have established with precision the changes in Hegel's handwriting and with the help of such information they have managed to provide the individual manuscripts with exact or approximate dates. As we have been unable to test their results we shall have to accept their chronology except where the philosophical content forces us to deviate from it.

This should not be taken to mean that we now possess all the documents pertaining to Hegel's early development or that all those we do have are in a satisfactory state from the point of view of scholarship. The original editors of Hegel's literary remains dealt with the material entrusted to them in an amazingly high-handed and irresponsible manner. It appears that a number of the most important manuscripts have been irretrievably lost. Examples of this are the first economic manuscript from his period in Frankfurt and above all the extended commentary on Stuart's works. We shall see very clearly in Part II just what the loss of this particular manuscript has meant for any attempt to reconstruct the development of Hegel's views on economics. Rosenkranz, who still had it in his possession, had not the slightest idea of the part played by economics in Hegel's overall views. From his remarks alone we cannot come to any conclusion about them. This means that at a decisive turning point in Hegel's development we are reduced to hypotheses, constructions based on scattered comments, deductions from later writings, etc.

Moreover, even in the case of manuscripts published entirely or in part by Rosenkranz there is much to be desired from a scholarly point of view. For example, in his account of Hegel's life he has printed extracts from Hegel's historical notes from his period in Berne and philosophical comments from his time in Jena, but without stating when precisely in these periods the notes, etc., were made. As he possessed the manuscripts himself this would not have been too difficult a task. Today, however, with the manuscripts long since lost, we must again have recourse to ingenious guesswork. The importance of the published notes for our understanding of Hegel's development is very great, and sometimes even crucial. The Berne notes, for instance, contain a number of comments on the French Revolution. It would be of very great value if we could establish an exact chronology here, if we could determine the various phases of Hegel's attitude on this issue, and learn, for example, which events in the French Revolution provoked immediate reactions from him. In the case of the Jena philosophical notes an exact chronology would be even

more desirable. It is well known that in Jena Hegel at first sided with Schelling against Kant and Fichte and it was only with the introduction to *The Phenomenology of Mind* that he turned against Schelling too. Now the Jena notes contain critical comments on Schelling's students and on Schelling himself. It is evident that if we knew exactly when Hegel turned against Schelling, undoubtedly some time before he published anything overtly critical of him, we would be able to establish a much more concrete view of Hegel's development than is possible today. Thus in making use of this material we can only establish the changes in Hegel's views in a very general way.

Nevertheless, despite all these defects and lacunae we still possess a relatively substantial body of material on Hegel's early development. And since Fascistoid neo-Hegelianism has settled on precisely this period as suitable for turning Hegel into an irrationalist consonant with their own views, the task of confronting their falsifications with the historical facts is by no means unimportant. All the more since the spirit of the 'new science' has now infected even Marxist writings, availing itself of the circumstance that Marxists have hitherto scarcely concerned themselves at all with Hegel's youth. Thus during the Hegel Centenary of 1931 the pseudo-Marxists simply took over and disseminated word for word Dilthey's interpretation of his early development.

However, our interest in Hegel's early development goes beyond the polemical demolition of Fascist lies. Considered from a Marxist point of view it is obvious that we are faced with a very important stage in the growth of dialectics in Germany. A correct Marxist interpretation even of Hegel's later works cannot remain indifferent to the road which led Hegel to his later positions. We thus acquire a much more concrete knowledge of his point of view *vis-à-vis* his predecessors Kant, Fichte and Schelling. The legend of his connections with Romanticism is revealed to be wholly untenable. In a word—and as is self-evident to a Marxist—we can gain an incomparably better insight into Hegel if we follow the story of its genesis than if, following the method adopted by Hegel himself, we were to compare and contrast e.g. the mature works of Schelling with the mature works of Hegel without taking genetic questions into account.

The development of Hegel's philosophy also poses all the great historical questions concerning the general foundations of classical German philosophy and the development of the dialectical method into the Hegelian form of dialectics. The present work makes no claim to deal with this extraordinarily large problem in the context of Hegel's own personal development. It prefers to confine itself to *one of its strands*, viz. its socio-historical roots.

For the growth of dialectics in classical German philosophy was also influenced to a decisive extent by the contemporary crisis in the natural

sciences, by the extremely important discoveries which upset the foundations of previous scientific thought, by the rise of the new science of chemistry and the emergence of genetic problems in the most disparate sciences. In his book on Feuerbach Engels gives a very detailed account of the impact of these revolutions in the natural sciences upon the crisis in metaphysics and the sudden surge of philosophy towards a dialectical approach to reality.

This extremely important process has never been thoroughly investigated. Bourgeois historians of philosophy have for a long time looked down their noses at the 'speculations into the philosophy of nature' (*Naturphilosophie*) indulged in by the classical German philosophers. In the middle and end of the nineteenth century Marx and Engels were the only thinkers who were able to see clearly and to appreciate the real problems of this period notwithstanding the idealist and even absurdly mystical form in which they became manifest. On this point Engels writes in the Preface to the *Anti-Dühring* as follows:

'It is much easier, along with the unthinking mob *à la* Karl Vogt, to assail the old natural philosophy than to appreciate its historical significance. It contains a great deal of nonsense and fantasy, but not more than the unphilosophical theories of the empirical natural scientists contemporary with that philosophy, and that there was also in it much that was sensible and rational began to be perceived after the theory of evolution became widespread . . . The natural philosophers stand in the same relation to consciously dialectical natural science as the utopians to modern communism.'

A Marxist approach to these problems would presuppose a broad and thorough acquaintance with the detailed histories of all the natural sciences. The present writer does not feel competent even to broach these issues. The intention of these remarks is only to emphasize to the reader that the present study is necessarily one-sided and stands in need of further research from other quarters.

This additional research is necessary and urgent and not merely for the reasons given above. We must add that contemporary reactionary philosophies of the Age of Imperialism have a much more positive attitude to natural philosophy than their predecessors. But this only complicates and distorts the issue even further. For in their search for weapons to use against scientific interpretations of nature the modern students of natural philosophy have fixed upon the nonsense, the mysticism, the elements that are scientifically reactionary. Hence an investigation of the true relations between the developments in science and the origins of the dialectical method implies at the same time taking up arms against the anti-scientific theories of Fascism and its precursors.

Our present study will concern itself with another, no less important

complex of problems relating to the emergence of dialectics in classical German philosophy, namely with the effects of the great socio-political events of the period, and in particular with the French Revolution and its impact on the growth of dialectical modes of thought in Germany.

The impact of the French Revolution on Germany is another theme which stands in need of further study. Bourgeois historiography, above all after 1848, strove constantly to obliterate the memory of all democratic and revolutionary aspirations in Germany. Today we know extraordinarily little of the many Germans who directly supported the French Revolution. Georg Forster is the only one who has not sunk into total oblivion, doubtless because he already had a wide reputation as a scientist and journalist, although even in his case a genuine Marxist analysis of his works and his activity does not yet exist. But Forster is only one among many, and an overall view of the impact of the French Revolution would only be possible if all the facts were considered in their breadth and depth. A further important but neglected problem is that of assessing the opinions of the broad masses of the people, since it is clear from Goethe's various memoirs, for all his extreme caution in describing such matters, that public opinion was profoundly disturbed by the events in France.

Any such study would be forced to give due weight to the backwardness, both political and socio-economic, of Germany at that time. The individual utterances and attitudes of Germans on the subject of the French Revolution must constantly be judged with this in mind. Hence the categories which in France emerged and developed as the necessary consequence of actual class struggles cannot be applied mechanically to the ideological reflections of these struggles in a retrograde Germany. It should not be forgotten, for example, that in France even the Girondins took part in the meetings at the Jacobin Club for a long time and that clear differences between the parties only emerged as the class struggles became more acute. It would therefore be mechanical and mistaken to attach the political labels of the French Revolution to individual German attitudes and positions when comparable social differences only arose much later in Germany.

This brings us to yet another problem of enormous importance, the central problem of the bourgeois revolution in Germany. It is well known that Lenin singled out the creation of national unity in Germany as the crucial issue confronting that revolution. Now the enthusiasm for the French Revolution necessarily released a powerful wave of patriotism in Germany, a powerful desire to sweep away the atomized mass of petty feudal absolutist states, to put an end to the impotence of the nation as a whole. There was a profound longing for a free and united Germany. But the foundations of these tendencies in world history conceal an insoluble contradiction. Writing on the Spanish war of liberation

against Napoleon, Marx states that as in every comparable liberation movement of the time 'reaction goes hand in hand with regeneration'. This profound observation fully applies to Germany as it was then. On the one hand, the revolutionary wars of the French Republic necessarily turned into wars of conquest. And if Napoleon's victories did away with the vestiges of feudalism, particularly in the Rhineland, thus satisfying the objective requirements of the bourgeois revolution, such conquests inevitably increased the fragmentation and impotence of the German people. On the other hand, as a consequence of Germany's backward social structure the national movements became permeated by reactionary mysticism. They were not strong enough to throw off the yoke of the petty princes by revolution and so they were unable to organize resistance to the Napoleonic invasion on a national and democratic footing. Indeed, they were so weak that they were unable even to see the problem in these terms and they attempted instead to organize resistance in league with, or rather under the leadership of, the reactionary monarchies of Prussia, Austria, etc. With historical inevitability they became the objective pillars of the reaction that dominated Germany after the fall of Napoleon.

These contradictions can be seen in the life, the thought and the deeds of all outstanding Germans of this period. Whether we look at generals and statesmen such as Baron vom Stein, Gneisenau or Scharnhorst, at poets like Goethe and Schiller, or at philosophers like Fichte and Hegel—in every case we find their lives dominated by these contradictions and the impossibility of resolving them.

Hence the historian of this period is faced by the complex, two-fold task of surveying both the great, world-historical event and also its distorted reflection in a retrograde Germany. Marx has described this situation in his remarks on Kant in *The German Ideology*. In Kant's thought he finds echoes of 'French liberalism with its basis in real class interests'. And he immediately adds that the problems become gravely distorted by the backward condition of Germany.

'Therefore, Kant [he continues] separated this theoretical expression from the interests it expressed, made the materially inspired determinations of the will of the French bourgeoisie into *pure* self-determination of the "free will", of will in and for itself, of human will as such, and so he transformed the will into a set of purely ideological concepts and moral postulates.'

Here Marx has discovered and brilliantly formulated one of the chief reasons why philosophy had to develop in the direction of idealism in Germany. And with this Marx points with equal precision to the inevitable deformation of philosophical problems necessarily arising from idealism.

However, the historical problems of this epoch in the history of philosophy are by no means all solved by pointing to the origins of idealism and energetically criticizing its failings. Marx himself, in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, underlines the positive contribution of classical idealism. After criticizing the merely contemplative character of the old materialism he goes on:

'Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism—but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such.'

With these words Marx provides the essential lever with which to initiate a precise, profitable and genuinely historical critique of Hegelianism, the sort of critique that Lenin was to give many decades later in the brilliant commentaries on Hegel in his own early writings.

The task facing the historian of classical German philosophy can be defined as the need to provide a concrete account of the fruitful effects of this 'active side' for dialectics. He must show how the reflection of great, world-historical events in a backward Germany produces this idealist abstraction from real human activity and at the same time he must demonstrate that this abstract and partly distorted reflection of reality leads philosophers to their original insights into specific general principles of activity, movement, etc. The task of the historian would be all too simple if he could rest content with a demonstration of the negative consequences of Germany's backwardness. The world-historical role of classical German philosophy in the history of human thought is a fact that must itself be explained in Marxist terms from the concrete state of society at the time.

Thus Marx and Engels have provided us with a key to the critique of classical German philosophy. But here too the tradition they initiated evaporated during the Second International. The theme launched by Marx was dropped and not resumed and taken a step further until Lenin. Concerning his contemporaries' criticism of Kant he writes:

'1. Plekhanov criticises Kantianism (and agnosticism in general) more from a vulgar materialist than from a dialectical-materialist standpoint: he tends only to *reject* their arguments *a limine*, instead of *correcting* them (as Hegel corrected Kant) by deepening, expanding and universalizing them and by showing the *connections* and *transitions* between all the different concepts. 2. The Marxists criticised the Kantians and the supporters of Hume (early in the twentieth century) more after the manner of Feuerbach or Ludwig Büchner than of Hegel.'

It is evident that these important remarks of Lenin's apply with equal force to the methodology of the historical and critical treatment of

Hegel's philosophy.

Engels has finely and convincingly shown in a letter how hegemony in philosophy passed in succession from England to France and from France to Germany and that the leading philosophical nation is not always the nation that is most advanced economically and socially; maturity in economic development does not always coincide with philosophical maturity and here too the law of unequal development applies.

The seminal and original insights of classical German philosophy are intimately bound up with the way in which they reflect the great political events of the period. In the same way the darker sides both of the method of idealism and of its elaboration of particular points are the mirror images of Germany's backwardness. Our task is to unravel the complicated workings of this process of interaction and to reveal the living dialectical core of the development of classical German philosophy.

We repeat: the central historical events whose intellectual reflections we have to investigate are the French Revolution and the resulting class struggles in France with their consequent impact on internal German problems. And in general it can be said that the greatness of the ideological representatives of this period stands in direct proportion to the strength of their interest in events of world-historical, international moment. Fichte's philosophy reached a dead-end because he could not resolve the contradictions of a national democratic revolution in Germany. By contrast, in Goethe's works and in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind* and the *Logic* we have books which have exerted a decisive influence on the whole ideological development ever since.

However, there is a special feature of Hegel's position and of his preoccupation with the significant world-historical events of the day which sets him apart from all his contemporaries in philosophy. It is not only the case that he made the greatest and fairest German assessment of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. In addition, he is the only German thinker to have made a serious attempt to come to grips with the *industrial revolution* in England. He is the only man to have forged a link between the problems of classical English economics and those of philosophy and dialectics. Marx has shown in *The German Ideology* how the French materialists clothed economic ideas in an abstract philosophical form which corresponded to the needs of a bourgeoisie preparing itself for revolution. He shows further how these ideas returned to England to receive a more concrete economic form which, given the ideology of what was already a dominant bourgeoisie, inevitably led to a total philosophical trivialization (cf. Marx on Bentham). On the other hand, the multi-faceted opposition to the social and economic effects of the rise of capitalism constitutes one of the most important sources of Romanticism. In his dialectical grasp of these problems Hegel



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