

EIR Feature

Time to bury the rotten legacy of G.W.F. Hegel

by Frank Hahn¹

Let us begin with the frequently posed question of how a highly cultured population like the Germans could fall prey to the National Socialist dictatorship. Certainly, those versed in history are aware of the evidence confirming that Adolf Hitler's rise to power was managed by the British oligarchy, which on the eve of World War II betrayed and sabotaged the German resistance to Nazism.

Yet ultimately these considerations lead us to the *physics* of history, as Wilhelm von Humboldt defined it, dissecting the antecedents, consequences, and mechanisms of historical events in all their geographic, political, institutional, and military interconnections. Yet, Humboldt says, an explanation of the specific causes peculiar to a given event is incomplete; it has to begin with the *philosophy* of history—the dimension dominated by man's creative reason.

"Only from a point outside of it can the realm of phenomena be grasped," writes Humboldt. "The *ideas* existing outside the finite nevertheless hold sway throughout history." Ideas, or "intellectual singularities," are more real and lasting than mechanistic occurrences.

This point of departure opens up a sort of historical atlas of the world of ideas. The battle of ideas within European civilization has taken its course, up to the present, between the metaphysical humanism of a Plato, Nicolaus of Cusa, Johannes Kepler, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, et al. on the one hand, and an Aristotle, Paolo Sarpi, John Locke, David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, and the so-called Enlightenment up to the Romantics and nihilists, on the other. The latter proclaim man's exclusively instinct-driven nature, allegedly repressed by the

1. This article first appeared, in a two-part version, in the German weekly newspaper *Neue Solidarität* on Oct. 12 and 19, 1994. The editors are grateful to Susan Johnson for translating and editing this abridged version. The issues the study unfolds are of such universal importance, that we believe the non-German reader will greatly benefit by reading it "over the shoulders," so to speak, of the German audience for which it was originally written.



Without the sponsorship of the Anglo-Venetian oligarchy, Hegel "might well have labored in obscurity as a crankish, tedious junior professor. It is said that he wrenched out his abstruse lectures with agonizing hesitancy, the barely audible product constantly interrupted by a loud, repellent cough."

rationality of culture and science. The Anglo-Venetian oligarchic faction has wielded this radical empiricist doctrine in order to secure its power, because scientifically minded human beings will not tolerate slavish subjection to an aristocracy!

Over a span of 150 years, the German variant of British empiricism was very effective, unfortunately, in preparing the ground for the immediate instigators of Nazism. The branching point for the wrong turn in German intellectual life is found in the Anglo-Venetians' onslaught against their greatest enemy—Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. For obvious reasons, Leibniz's German opponents exploited the specific convolutions of the German mind; in order to reach their audience, they did not call on Voltaire or Locke or Hume, but Kant and Hegel!

Heine's warnings, then and now

Did you notice—I have already committed a sacrilege. Yes, indeed, Kant and Hegel belong before the bench of justice, for crimes against humanity, for incitement to violence and terrorism. As the prosecution's witness, I call Heinrich Heine.

"Just a minute," interposes a good German. "How can you make such accusations? These men were philosophers, they fought with ideas, not swords and cannons!"

Precisely. That's why this is such a serious case. Intellectual weapons can have far more devastating effects than military ones. But here is Herr Heine to clarify this

for you further.²

I shall now speak of a man whose very name has the power of an exorcism. I shall speak of Immanuel Kant. It is said that nocturnal spirits are terrified at the sight of the executioner's sword. How terrified they must then be when someone holds up to them Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason!* This book is the sword with which Deism was executed in Germany! . . .

If, however, Immanuel Kant, the arch-destroyer in the realm of ideas, far surpassed Maximilian Robespierre in terrorism, yet he possessed many similarities with the latter. . . . We find in both the same talent for suspicion, only that one directs his suspicion toward ideas and calls it criticism, while the other applies it to people and entitles it republican virtue. But both represented in the highest degree the type of the provincial bourgeois. Nature had destined them to weigh coffee and sugar, but Fate determined that they should weigh other things and placed on the scales of the one a king, on the scales of the other a God. . . .

The German revolution will not turn out to be any

2. Citations from Heinrich Heine are taken from "Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," in *Heinrich Heine: Selected Works*, translated and edited by Helen Mustard, pp. 368-69, 416-18. Vintage, New York: 1973.

milder or gentler because it was preceded by Kant's *Critique*. . . or even [Hegel's] nature philosophy. Because out of these doctrines revolutionary forces have developed which only await the day when they can break forth and fill the world with terror and astonishment. Kantians will appear who have no more use for piety in the physical world than in the world of ideas, who with sword and axe will mercilessly rummage in the soil of our European culture in order to eradicate the last roots of the past. . . .

But [the Hegelian] nature philosophers would be more terrifying than anyone else, since they would actively take part in a German revolution, and would identify themselves with the work of destruction. If the hand of the Kantian strikes a strong, unerring blow because his heart is not moved by any traditional reverence . . . the philosopher of Nature will be terrifying because he allies himself with the primitive powers of Nature, can conjure up the demonic forces of ancient Germanic pantheism, and there awakens in him that lust for battle which we find among the ancient Germans and which fights not in order to destroy, nor in order to win, but simply in order to fight. . . .

The thought precedes the deed as lightning precedes thunder. German thunder is of course truly German; it is not very nimble but rumbles along slowly. . . . There will be played in Germany a drama compared to which the French Revolution might seem merely an innocent idyll.

This expert testimony suffices for a guilty verdict. And what would Heine have to say today? Perhaps he would address us as follows:

"I was very severe in my *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, because I wanted to deliver a clear warning. I would not have believed that my poetic prophesies could have taken on such a ghastly reality in the twentieth century. Yet it is far worse that you, standing at the end of this blood-stained century, have failed to grasp my warning. You cheerfully persist in falling into raptures over Evil, because you claim you know too little to distinguish it from Good. This too is supposed to be typically German. Here is what I said at the time about the German public's response to Kant:"

Did Kant perhaps, just by destroying all the proofs for the existence of God, intend to show us clearly how perilous it is, not to be able to know anything about the existence of God? In this matter he acted almost as wisely as a Westphalian friend of mine who had smashed all the street lamps in Grohnder Street in Göttingen and then, standing in the dark, delivered a long lecture to us on the practical necessity of lamps, which he had broken in a theoretical frame of mind only in order to show us that we could see nothing

without them.

"And so," might Heine have continued in reference to our present-day dilemma, "I find you stumbling around in the dark, your mouths dropping open with astonishment every time you bump into something, displaying the same craven awe of the practical Good as the theoretical Evil! Hegel superseded God with man, then with the state. Today, his pupils, the preachers of the 'dialectic of enlightenment,' Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and their entire Frankfurt School, supersede man and state with *Nature* (of course, there can be no more talk of God). They will not rest until man has disappeared from this fair Earth, as the old Hegelians would find no peace until the realm of divinity lay in rubble—and the state came forth as the new god.

"When anyone espouses *Nature*, you Germans see nothing but good in him. And if the Devil himself comes clad in high office or a distinguished reputation, you say, 'Well, of course, it's the Devil, but he has his points, and he's accomplished something in life—so let's not condemn him just because he's the Devil.'

"The Pied Pipers of the Kant-Hegel tradition, however, couldn't play this particular tune more than once if they wanted to seduce you into a philosophical revolution. Therefore, the neo-Hegelians no longer say that it is the state which is all-important, but the individual who rejects the authority of the state. This rejection proceeds joyfully among Poles or Italians—they tend to sing while they sin—but the Germans undertake their extreme individualism in dead earnest: The lone individual individualizes himself to the point at which, strictly upholding the Hegelian dialectic, he dissolves and disappears! In the same deadly serious spirit, it is obvious that all the other individuals must disappear, too. Thus do the Germans endeavor to give philosophical justification for sin, and thus the philosophical Devil is rendered his posthumous due.

"Nietzsche, Heidegger, Hegel, even our worthy Friedrich Schiller, are all thrown into the same pot. And the Germans, after finally turning themselves into sophisticated gourmets, as soon as they enter the realm of the intellect they swill down a foul, watery mess, and announce, 'It's only ideas! When it comes to my behavior, mind you, I'm *wie eh und je* rational.—Excuse me, what was that about the lightning that comes before the thunder?'"

May we Germans become smarter than we were 150 years ago and truly take Heine's words to heart! Kant's influence on German intellectual life is a well-excavated topic. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel has exerted a still deadlier effect on the history and politics of the past 200 years. And so we wish to render satisfaction to Heine by tracking down the causal links in that Hegelian thunder and lightning.

Hegel and the 'Weltgeist'

The goal pervading Hegel's labors was the final annihilation of the influence of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. That is

why Hegel felt compelled to issue several dozen volumes of his own works and pass himself off as the greatest philosopher of all time. Talented minds have tormented themselves with this mammoth corpus and perished on the philosophical rack. We may bring his ideas together in a few fundamental theses.

One of Hegel's most glaringly abstruse theoretical edifices is his theory of history.

As a young pupil in Stuttgart and later as a university student at Tübingen, Hegel was already avidly studying the work of the Scottish empiricist David Hume, a major antagonist against Leibniz and a precursor of Kant. In Hume's philosophy of history, history is not made by individuals, but by *circumstances*. Hegel picked up these notions in his own early writings, and concluded that no actor on the historical stage can ever consciously guide his own actions: The individual is a mere pawn. That "message" is aimed against Leibniz's concept of the monad, which as a creative soul, is the formative agent of what we call history.

Thus Hegel soon delegated historical responsibility to the World Spirit—the *Weltgeist*. In Hegel's calculus of world history, antiquity was the realm of the Father, the Middle Ages the realm of the Son, the modern Protestant world the realm of the Holy Ghost—and what comes next? Germany, as the consummation of the *Weltgeist*!

The belief that Germany, or later Prussia, was destined to lead world history to its summit, formed itself in Hegel's mind through "practical observation." In 1806, looking out from his student pub in Jena, he saw the *Weltgeist*: It was the Emperor Napoleon on horseback! A warm, cozy tremor permeated Hegel's insides, and he cried out deliriously, "I have seen the *Weltgeist* ride by!" This claim, colored perhaps by wine as well as prior conviction, became the linchpin of Hegel's philosophical system. History is ultimately the unfolding of the *Weltgeist*, which in the course of its travels attains "consciousness of itself in freedom." Once it has reached this point, history is over, "things go no further."

The *Weltgeist* traverses every geographic region, from east to west. Its temporary habitation among a given populace endows them with world-historic significance, but when the *Weltgeist* departs, they decline forever, as witness India, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Within each chosen people, the *Weltgeist* slips into the mortal frame of a "world-historic individual," but eventually these individuals overstep themselves, like Napoleon. In his disappointment over Napoleon's downfall, Hegel discovered that at last the *Weltgeist* stood knocking with impatience at the door of Germany. It was in the German empire, which Prussia was assigned to unify, that the *Weltgeist* would attain its final rest. And that ultimate world-historic unity could only be secured by means of war.

Here we look down into the dark pit of a gnostic Manichaeism. Hegel's outlook is stamped by suffering and decay as the foundation for new life, and new life already bears the

seed of death within it. A mixture of Aristotle, Taoist yin-yang, and pre-Christian gnosticism marks Hegel's idea of history. What is evil is the material sphere, which strives, in a constant process of Becoming, against its inevitable decline and dissolution into Absolute Spirit.

World history as the "Golgotha of the Absolute Spirit" requires us to recognize that "objective morality is indifferent to the existence of the individual," as Hegel declares in his *Philosophy of Law*. Even more radically than Kant, Hegel breaks with the German tradition of philosophy based on natural law, whose foremost exponent was Leibniz. Law and jus-

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tice, in Hegel's view, are identical with power. Relations among nations can only be decided by war, in which, by definition, "the stronger" has justice on his side. Should it surprise us that Mao Zedong and Lenin were inspired by Hegel, along with such "leading intellects" as Bismarck and Hitler?

Hegel, Prussia, and the state

War opens the way for the raging *Weltgeist* to rush in. Hegel not only explains that a permanent state of war is natural, but accords it a moral justification. In his 1802 writing *The German Constitution*, Hegel had already made war-readiness the chief purpose of the state. After the military victories which succeeded in unifying Germany, Hegel thought its territory ought to be apportioned into military districts, with an emperor as supreme commander. Hegel emphasized the state as a juridical person, in opposition to the concept of the nation, in which the legal system is based on the individual's sovereignty as an active agent, creatively endowed because created in the image of God.

For Hegel, the state's rights are absolute, the individual's at best relative. The state becomes the locus of Reason, the manifestation of "objective morality"; the individual's free will dissolves into the Objective Spirit. It follows logically that the state must be revered as "the Divine as it exists on earth."

Let us first examine Hegel as ideologue of the doctrine that “might makes right.” As theoretical propaganda, Hegel’s academic exercises were of immediate service to the various ruling dynasties on the scene. Speaking from his professorial chair at Heidelberg University in 1817, Hegel defended the absolute rights of the Württemberg monarch Frederick II. That year he was called to Berlin, in order to exercise his talents in a larger arena. Under the Metternich-Castlereagh Holy Alliance, there was a need to buttress Prussia’s claim to dominate Germany. Hegel’s philosophical writings were barely comprehensible; however, his actual field of activity was to attack and denounce the political opponents of Metternich and the Prussian monarchy at the University of Berlin.

Hegel’s patron there was von Altenstein, the Prussian minister of culture. The Hegel-Altenstein team fit together like a dagger in a sheath. Both were opportunistic chameleons who would not shrink from self-betrayal, had they a self to betray. Early on, Altenstein had profiled himself as an enemy of the pro-American reformers vom Stein and von Humboldt, and pressed for the absolute subordination of universities to the goals of the state—in opposition to Humboldt’s demand for freedom of research and pedagogy.

After the absolutist 1819 Karlsbad Resolutions, Hegel’s heyday began. It became a dangerous thing to be his adversary. When, for instance, a periodical published an unfavorable review of Hegel’s legal philosophy in 1822, Hegel, through his political godfather Altenstein, arranged for it to be drastically censored.

Increasingly, Hegel was able to thwart the appointment of professors and lecturers who failed to conform to his political outlook. He interfered in the physical sciences to impose his system of “speculative philosophy,” even publicizing his absurd “discovery” that a diamond is a self-realized piece of flint. Scientific research was ridiculed and blocked by the “nature philosophers” around Hegel, who obstructed the installation of equipment for physics and chemistry laboratories at Berlin University, insisting that “pure contemplation” would be compromised. We can only assent to the observation by the great chemist Justus von Liebig that Hegel was “the Black Plague of the nineteenth century.”

It cannot be overemphasized that Hegel and his school served as the Prussian monarchy’s most powerful weapons against the idea of natural law, against the constitutional outlook of the young American republic, and against the conceptions of freedom advanced by Schiller and the Humboldts. Prussia was assigned to *relinquish* its nation-building potential, as a mere subsystem of the British “balance of power” in Europe.

Without the protection of his thuggish patron in the Berlin government, Hegel might well have labored in obscurity as a crankish, tedious junior professor. It is said that he wrenched out his abstruse lectures with agonizing hesitancy, the barely audible product constantly interrupted by a loud, repellent cough.

Just as in the 1820s and 1830s, intellectual conformity—*Gleichschaltung*—was imposed from outside academic life, in 1966-68, “political correctness” began to appear in the West. The outside factor was the Frankfurt School, a joint project of the Comintern and the Anglo-American intelligence services against western civilization.

Hegel, the spiritual godfather of this tendency, proves to be an offshoot of the Anglo-Venetian school of Jeremy Bentham, which had set out to destroy “continental science”—the code-word in the great battle between Leibniz and Isaac Newton. The British Empire could not allow France and Germany to become strategic powers by means of accelerated progress in science, industry, and technology. Despite persecution, the scientific method of Leibniz was upheld by the great nineteenth-century scientists Riemann, Cantor, Gauss, and Weber. These circles were crucial to the century’s flowering of completely new technology and sectors of production; but the intellectual atmosphere in which they persevered was increasingly contaminated.

To the point is a comment by a close collaborator of Otto von Bismarck’s, the theologian and politician Constantin Rössler: “Never has the intellectual labor of an era been so dominated by the spirit of one man as the present age is dominated by the multifaceted efforts of Hegel.” What were the political consequences of Hegel’s intellectual dictatorship?

1848, 1866, 1933: Hegel and German politics

In the revolutionary year 1848, with the first great burst of political self-assertion in Germany, what quickly came to dominate the scene was the glorification of war and the ideology of the omnipotent state. The far more complex movement that emerged in 1848-49 included certain republican circles who looked to the spirit of the American Constitution. But the failure of the 1848 republicans must be examined in the light of precisely the “Greater Germany” ideology of the right-wing Hegelians, who proceeded to bounce off the left-wing Hegelians in a typical political set-up.

Within the Paulskirche (the Church of St. Paul in Frankfurt, where delegates deliberated on national unity), the “Greater Germany” ideology was detonated by two issues: Schleswig-Holstein, then under the Danish crown, and Posen, raising the Polish question. As early as June 1848, “No German State without Schleswig” was the slogan of the majority in the Paulskirche. For three months, war was in the air, as Russia, in the foreground, and Britain, in the background, upheld Denmark’s claim to Schleswig. Suddenly the right-wing faction, reveling in the German *Weltgeist*, received unexpected support from the “left,” which called for war against despotic, reactionary Russia. The left exploited the Polish nationalist movement in order to promote a military alliance against Russia; on this point, the “Greater German” faction naturally differed.

Hegelians like Ernst Moritz Arndt became the spokesmen

for the anti-Polish faction, which finally gained the upper hand within the Paulskirche. History, they said, demonstrated Poland's fatal weakness; Germany had the right of the stronger on its side, and therefore there was no reason to "throw this half-Prussian state back to the Polacks."

This chauvinistic mood soon suffocated legitimate debate, especially over the constitution of a unified Germany. Deliberations slid into manipulated cockfights over territorial issues. Soon a clamor was mounted for Germany to incorporate all of Austro-Hungary, in order to secure German domination over Central Europe. Heinrich von Gagern's plan envisioned a de facto annexation of Austria, whose territory would extend to the mouth of the Danube, cutting off southern Slavs from the Russians. But this, in the British view, would be going too far. Britain's aim was to incite the various national-liberation movements in Europe to common struggle against Russia and Austria-Hungary, without allowing new great-power competitors to emerge. The "Left Hegelians" seemed better suited for this purpose.

In his territorial demands, Bismarck was far less radical than the "greater Germans" at the Paulskirche; partly for this reason, he was chosen to carry out German reunification, which in any case the Anglo-Venetian geopoliticians could no longer forestall. Bismarck then became the eponym for an era of sheer unscrupulous power politics, exercised without hindrance thanks to the "Hegelianized" intellectual atmosphere.

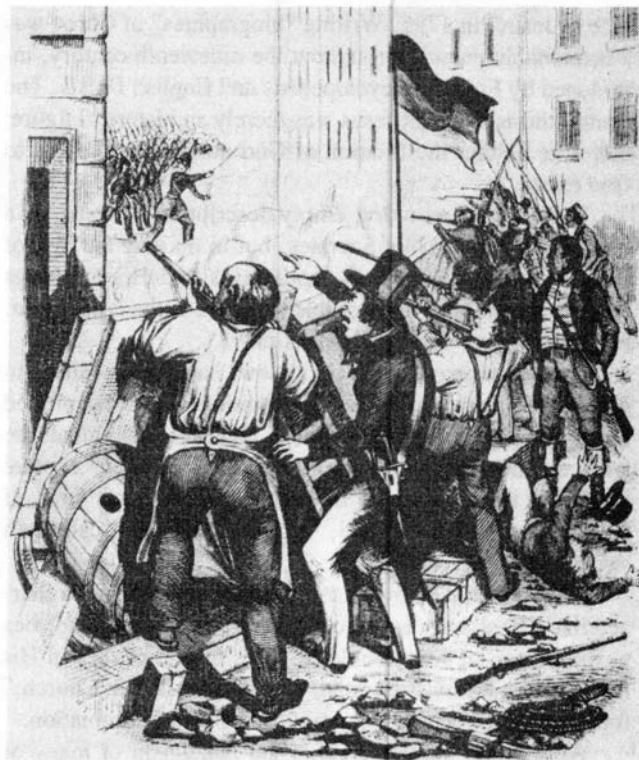
Echoing Hegel's formulation, the intoxicated Bismarck toady Rössler declared: "The state is the manifestation of the divine." In 1862, Rössler prophesied that Bismarck's liberal opposition would be chopped up as soon as it "can give momentum to a bold, sweeping intervention into the German question." The German nation was rallied to demand "a dictatorship for one man." And indeed, after the 1866 Prussian victory against Austria, the opposition to Bismarck abruptly fell into silence.

The year 1866 thus marked a decisive break in German history. The last remaining props of conscience were sacrificed to the "might makes right" principle of the state; Bismarck draped himself in the mantle of the *Weltgeist*; and Bismarck found success! Of minor significance at most was deemed the fact that German unity occurred through a breach of the constitution and three wars of aggression.

Here, in near-tragic dimensions, was the false morality and grotesque blindness which left most of the German intelligentsia sliding into impotent delusions of great-power grandeur. This was why the leading strata in Germany could easily be used to prepare the way for World War I, while the actual string-pullers were sitting in England.

After all this, it will not surprise us to find that the Hegelian doctrine of the state was reborn under the Nazi regime. In the 1930s, the leading academics in the humanities viewed themselves more or less as adherents to Hegel's tradition.

For example, in a 1937 document addressed to foreign



Battling on the barricades in Berlin in 1848. The failure of the 1848 republicans paved the way for the "Greater Germany" ideology of the right-wing Hegelians, who clashed with the left-wing Hegelians in a manipulated confrontation.

visitors by Nazi student leader A. Klemmt, we find the following remarkable jargon: "For a long time you have heard much about a Hegel renaissance within Germany, as well as elsewhere. Although we unswervably direct our gaze today toward the ultimate formative resolve upon a new, never previously existing future, there can be no doubt that in the all-encompassing rebirth which shall extend its broad and mighty dome above the Third Reich, the grand logic of Hegel will be incorporated." The National Socialist concept of an organic corporate state is finally laid at Hegel's door.

And how do the latter-day leftists, who also invoke Hegel, fit into this picture? Is the left not "left" at all, or has the "right" simply misunderstood the Left Hegelians? Or is it time to finally bury all these verbal shell games? Whether it is a "right-winger" who beats an African to death, or a "left-winger" who kills a policeman, murder is murder. The synthesis of "left" and "right" which so horribly disfigures our century has expressed itself in an intellectual and political terrorism whose matrix is the meaningless arbitrariness of individual existence. The philosophical basis for this outlook is found in Hegel's treatment of religion.

'Objective Spirit' replaces theology

Starting in 1793, Hegel worked as a tutor in Berne, Switzerland. It was there that he published his pamphlet "The

Life of Jesus" in 1795. Writing "biographies" of Christ was a fashionable pursuit throughout the nineteenth century, introduced by French Encyclopedists and English Deists. The central thesis was that Jesus was merely an historical figure; therefore neither the filiation of God nor man's likeness to God exists.

That was Hegel's dry, empty description of Jesus, as a "teacher of virtue" like Socrates, but in no way the Son of God. Yet, unlike Socrates, both Jesus and His teachings came to naught; the most visible evidence is the crucifixion. For Hegel, there was no resurrection.

The major error, in Hegel's view, had been a failure to understand that Jesus' teaching mission was concentrated merely on a few individuals. Since, however, individuals are weak and not immune to worldly corruption, Jesus' capture destroyed the community of His followers. Jesus Himself foresaw that when He said, "My teachings will call forth strife."

In "Belief and Knowledge," Hegel went so far as to characterize Christianity as a sect. The disciples' "coercive" ties to the person of Jesus could justify sins and crimes in His name. Then follows the usual attack against "the Church," for exploiting Christianity as an instrument of domination.

What dimly sputters here is the fanaticism of many of Hegel's German contemporaries, who threw out the baby of rational theology with the bathwater of "the Church." That "the Church" often played a dubious political role over the centuries is a truism. What draws Hegel and his students to the battlefield under their post-Enlightenment banner is, however, the concept of the *Filioque*, that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son.

What is the decisive message of Christianity, if not the person of Jesus Christ, who became at once God and man? This message, through which the mortal individual can *participate* in the divine, has endowed human beings with *freedom*—from the arbitrary laws and caprices of a perverse Roman oligarchy.

Law instead becomes implanted within men. We are free because *within us* we can recognize the image of God, if we consciously and increasingly use our creative powers. That entails responsibility, however: We cannot push aside the great questions of our age and delegate them to others. There are no longer any excuses; each person is individually obligated to intervene in the great apparatus of what we call history, the world, or the universe—not arbitrarily, but in accordance with the creative law dwelling within us.

Hegel, like Rousseau before him, finds this impossible. The mere weak mortal cannot aspire to be a son of God and therefore "something out of the ordinary." There is an exception: Hegel himself! He was to become Objective Spirit personified. In him the entire development of philosophy reached its consummation, no further progress could occur. Unfortunately, not only "the Master" embraced this immodest claim, but his epigones as well.

For Hegel, previous world history was characterized by pain over the death of God, and thus by ongoing suffering. In a "speculative Good Friday," suffering comes to rest, because the acknowledgment that God is dead leads to man's liberation. Christianity is dissolved into philosophy, man himself turns into God, as he accepts Objective Spirit into himself. Hegel carried out this enterprise, intoxicating himself with the personal experience of the *Logos*. In his very own self he beheld the distinction cancelled between God and man. And that is how he enumerates his four epochs of world history: God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit, and—Hegel, high point of world history, at which man finally becomes redeemed.

Hegel's dialectic: All is one

This exceedingly pathological variant of gnosticism was dressed up in Hegel's pretentious dialectic, which is a frontal attack on two of Europe's greatest thinkers, Plato and Leibniz. Hegel banalized Plato, especially the *Parmenides* dialogue. In his lectures on Plato, Hegel states:

"Plato's expression is: the Other is the Same, is the self-identical; the Other, which is not self-identical, is also the Same. . . . The result of the dialectic in *Parmenides* is now: the One is and is not, it is itself at the same time as it is the other Ideas. . . . In *Becoming* is *Being* and *Not-Being*, the reality of both is *Becoming*. . . ."

If you read the *Parmenides* carefully, you will find that Plato wanted to express precisely the opposite. The historical *Parmenides* was the founder of the Eleatic school, whose views Plato combatted. How can one attribute the words Plato puts in *Parmenides*' mouth to Plato himself? What occurs during the dialogue is that Plato subjects *Parmenides*' thinking to the most effective conceivable *reductio ad absurdum*. Hegel, however, takes at face value the ludicrous final inference by *Parmenides*, namely, that the One is and is not, that the All-Encompassing is the Many and both are the All-Encompassing, and so on and so forth. Hegel praised the *Parmenides* as a towering example of pre-modern skepticism, in order to make it the foundation of his own system. Yet in this very dialogue, Plato clearly works out the ontological distinction between *Being* and *Becoming*. Hegel fuzzes over precisely this fundamental distinction, and falls back below the level of the pre-Socratics. Indeed, Hegel's version of the dialectic eliminates more than 2,000 years of philosophical investigation—a deadly accomplishment, as we shall see.

This is how Hegel devised his peculiar concepts of *Being* and *Becoming*: Pure *Being* is fully abstract and indeterminate. Since, therefore, nothing can be said about *Being*, it is identical with Nothingness! Here the gate opens for Nietzsche and the nihilists. But this is clearly self-contradictory, and so Hegel introduces *Becoming* as the most important category of all. Now comes the real cruncher: "Being is incessant unrest," says Hegel, "which, sinking down, col-

lapses to a point of final stasis.” This “collapse” signifies that Being and Nothingness disappear, and then Becoming disappears, too.

Now we can drop the curtain—philosophical speculation has brought itself to the point of absurdity. Hegel invokes the Infinite, but this process of destruction amounts to a mere affirmation of entropy and finitude.

To overcome this dilemma, Hegel introduces “the negation of the negation”: Finitude negated yields infinity, which in turn negated, reverts to finitude—and so on and so forth. Whatever material or intellectual substance may actually exist, finds its identity only through being turned into its opposite—with a return ticket, naturally, since the fare includes an eventual switch back into the opposite of the opposite. Of course, all this remains a pure construct, providing no scientific elucidation of any phenomena. The devastating effects on science, political thought, and morality are evident.

Every pair of contradictions will be “driven beyond itself” by the dialectic into somehow becoming identical: death and life, hell and heaven, beast and man, evil and good. In the eternal, indifferent sameness which Hegel dubs the “Absolute Idea” or “Eternal Progression,” we reach a condition which Hegel himself ridiculed in his attack on Joseph Schelling, a night in which all cats are gray, a night which decomposes any principles of moral direction. At my next step I can do evil and call evil good: It makes no difference, because in any case the One will soon turn itself into the Other.

Recall that in the present-day debate over economic policy, the notion of “creative destruction” has haunted the world with the motto, “Be happy when we shut down half your production and lay off millions of people—all this is guaranteed to transform itself sooner or later into a recovery!” This school of thought was called “dialectical materialism” by Karl Marx; today the ideologues of the free-market economy call it “pragmatism”; and the instigator of this dialectic is called an “idealist.”

This idealism of infinite sameness leads directly to materialism—because matter can no longer be differentiated from mind or spirit. Hegelianism casts discredit on the actual idealists who conceived of a higher, infinite form of existence transcending the temporal. Their idea of the Infinite did not lead into the chaos of “pure Nothingness”; already in the thought of Plato, as we have indicated, infinite Becoming finds its limit in infinite Being. Cusa says that the Absolute, as the absolute Infinite, or God, envelops or limits the relative Infinite, the human species. And thus we have two distinct kinds of Infinite. “Limit” in this case does not impose a new finitude, but defines the absolute Infinite as an *ordering principle* with respect to the relative Infinite. Progress thus has a *direction*—instead of “the endless up and down,” there exists a *measurable development*.

In his *Monadology*, Leibniz had forcefully spelled this

out. Monads are the primary substance. They are “little” infinities. The *entire universe* reflects itself in each monad at any given time in an *individual way*. Human souls belong to the sphere of monads, they *receive* only from God and also *act upon* the outside world. Their creativity, through which they effect changes in the universe, finds its limit, and thus its ordering principle, in the highest monad, God. Through the relationship with God, the chain of creative acts has an “ordering,” and itself conduces to the higher ordering of the whole. Leibniz says very beautifully: “The scientist must first discover himself and God!” The law of creation is within us!

Hegel hated the philosophy of Leibniz: “God is like the sinkhole in which all the contradictions coagulate. Leibniz’s *Theodicy* is that sort of vulgar compendium. . . . Leibniz has the tiresome notion that God has selected the best of all the infinite possible worlds—*optimism*. That is a base, vulgar expression, a sort of babble about imaginary possibilities; Voltaire made good fun of him. . . . For us today, Leibniz’s *Theodicy* is really unbearable.”

The contrast could not be greater: In Leibniz, the individual actively shapes the Infinite and extends it, overcomes limits, and sets new ones. In Hegel, the individual is dissolved into the Infinite.

In Leibniz, the creative act is a being or substance which newly determines Becoming and leads to a higher state of being, i. e., produces tangible progress by means of dedicated effort. In Hegel, Being and Becoming devolve alike into Nothingness.

But, since in a consistent dialectic “something new” has to emerge, the “pure Negation” loses its terrifying quality. And here is where Left Hegelianism comes in: While Hegel still speaks of superseding and elevating, his left-wing epigones are already looking to annihilate.

Politically, the intent is to tear down the “bourgeois order”; epistemologically, to destroy metaphysics. The Left Hegelians deny man any relationship to a non-sensuous reality and seek to cast him back to the level of the raw, sensuous ego or “I.” The pathway for these efforts was paved by Hegel’s dissolution of the Christian religion and his essentially nihilistic dialectic.

Left Hegelians: from God-man to Antichrist

The “sensuous I” became the slogan of the Left Hegelian Ludwig Feuerbach. “Only a sensuous being is real. . . . The concept of existence stems only from sensuousness.” Feuerbach drives Hegel’s dialectic beyond itself, replacing the “Absolute Idea” as the highest element of his system with “sensuous instincts,” and thus even the “I” itself is ultimately subordinated to “instinct.” Feuerbach plainly has in mind what Nietzsche termed a “revaluation of all values”; what is necessary, he says, is to “overcome the I, the Self . . . to thoroughly negate the previous world-historical perspectives of time, death, this-sidedness, other-sidedness, the I, the

individual, the person.”

But how did it happen that the philosopher of the Restoration, as revolutionary circles deemed Hegel throughout his career, became at all acceptable on the left? As of 1840, the “reactionaries” themselves characterized Hegel as a revolutionary. The new Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, declared Hegel *persona non grata* because he had replaced Christianity with speculative philosophy and thereby fostered revolutionary agitation. And thus the so-called left, the “Young Germany” movement, could invoke Hegel without reservations, exercise his form of critique against him, or in some other way pander to his dialectic.

In the interim, David Friedrich Strauss’s *Life of Jesus* had been published in 1835. Strauss took up the Hegelian notion of the God-man, viewing Jesus as merely a first transitional incarnation of the *Logos*, and himself 1,800 years later in the role of Christ: Man, in this case Strauss, was destined to become the *Redeemer in this world*. Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*, thanks to a lively discussion in the popular press of the day, had an explosive effect, calling the left’s attention for the first time to Strauss’s preceptor Hegel.

Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Arnold Ruge, and finally Karl Marx, transformed speculative philosophy into a philosophy of the deed. The theologian Bauer began by raging against Christianity with Marx in Berlin’s Doktor Club, and came to view himself in the role of the Antichrist. Marx latched onto Feuerbach’s notion of sensuous man: “Man is a corporeal, elemental, real, sensuous, concrete being, a force of Nature.” Labor for Marx signified man’s dialectical coming-into-oneness with Nature. Products of technology are not results of the human spirit of discovery, but expressions of alienation, because through them we only distance ourselves further from Nature and from our own “corporeality.” Marx characterized himself as a pupil of “the great thinker” Hegel, whose dialectic merely failed to go far enough. Instead of superseding human alienation in the Absolute Idea, alienation must be overcome in the real world by means of a materialized World-Spirit: the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Marx brims with praise for “the greatness in the Hegelian phenomenology and its end result—the *dialectic of negativity*.”

Like Hegel, Marx launched his career as a partisan of British liberalism—known in the domain of economic policy as “free trade.” Marx’s definition of man as a creature of Nature or “ensemble of social forces” suited the British oligarchy’s stratagems. If scientific and technological progress could be demonized as “capitalist exploitation” under cover of a humane socialism, an ingenious tool would be available for undermining the superiority of the continental European economies—with the help of a “sensuously unchained” labor movement. And so Marx’s fame thrived in London, under the controlling influence of David Urquhart, an agent of the geopolitical arch-manipulator Lord Palmerston.

After his break with Marx, another Left Hegelian landed in Lord Palmerston’s net, Arnold Ruge. He typified the 1840s German weathercocks: initially a great admirer of Prussia, he became embittered after a professorship was denied him. Imprisoned for radical activity, Ruge immersed himself in Hegel’s work. He then launched a Left Hegelian publication, working with Marx on this project until 1844, when their paths parted.

Ruge flopped toward Right Hegelianism, demanding the dissolution of the individual into an “absolute state.” In 1849, after the collapse of the German revolution, Ruge went to London and reported that English public sentiment now foresaw the downfall of the Russian, Ottoman, and Hapsburg empires. Of course, this was somewhat less a mood than a plan by Palmerston and his agent Giuseppe Mazzini. Ruge came in contact with Mazzini, and in 1851 the two founded the “European Central Committee for Democracy,” a network mobilizing the “young European peoples” against reactionary Russia. And thus did the Left Hegelians become tools of the British Empire, which could only uphold its claim to global domination if the three rival European empires were destroyed. Sixty-five years later, this strategy detonated the bloodbath of World War I. At its end, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire were dissolved, and Russia had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Hegel’s more recent heirs

In the twentieth century, the theme developed by Feuerbach and Marx—sensuousness and reconciliation with Nature—was taken up again by the Frankfurt School, founded by the Left Hegelian Georg Lukacs.

The grand pair of opposites in this neo-Hegelian Dialectic of Enlightenment were Nature and Reason. Critical theory now required “permanent denunciation of Reason,” and rationality as such was declared a tool of domination. It followed logically that irrationality and “naturalness” were acts of self-liberation. History is symbolized by the advance from the slingshot to the megabomb; scientific and technological progress becomes the number-one enemy image. Those unwilling to become terrorists are offered a flight into personal debauchery, in order to anaesthetize the oppression and anxiety creeping over them as a result of the meaninglessness of history. This form of “individualism” aimed not at the *development* of the individual, but at his annihilation.

And here the circle closes between left and right. Martin Heidegger, who had been in the periphery of the Frankfurt School at times, became the court philosopher of the Nazi regime. A faithful party member throughout the war, his desire was to give theoretical refinement to National Socialism.

In Heidegger’s view, metaphysics must be conquered and demolished, starting with Plato. Heidegger rejoiced with Nietzsche that “God is dead.” For Heidegger, that means the death as well of “the authority of conscience, the authority of

Reason, and all the permutations of Christian ecclesiastical and theological interpretations of the world.” Now man finds himself in the “sacred night of nihilism.” If he endures it fearlessly, he finds his way back to primordial Being.

Heidegger, returning like Hegel to the pre-Socratic philosophers, turns their concept of struggle into the cornerstone of the fascist corporate state. For Heidegger, struggle and *Logos* become identical:

“What I mean here by struggle is primitive, spontaneous struggle; . . . this struggle will be borne by the ones who create, the poets, thinkers, statesmen. . . . The Being-in-process will now be in process for the first time. . . . [The struggle] allows them to appear as gods, the others as men, the latter expose themselves as bondsmen, but the others as free. But those who do not grasp the *Logos* are not in a position to hear, nor to say. . . . Because Being is . . . the *Logos*, it does not show itself arbitrarily. The True is not for everyone, but only for the strong.”

Today the fascist Heidegger remains as unvanquished as his intellectual ancestor Hegel. Indeed, in this light Heinrich Heine’s prophecy must seem a stroke of genius: the philosophers of Nature struggle simply for the sake of struggle. The connecting thread extends from Hegel down to Heidegger and the Nazis, under whom the age-old “pantheistic German lust for battle” was brought to life once more.

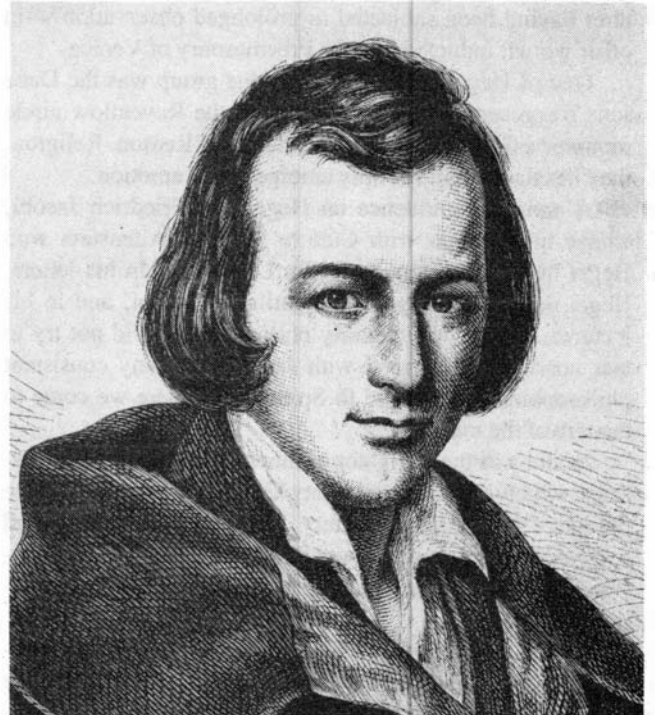
After Germany’s subjection to three variants of Hegelianism—Nazism, the communist dictatorship in East Germany, and the Frankfurt School’s cultural domination of the Federal Republic of Germany since 1968—it is not always easy to untangle the convolutions in German history. Yet one knot can immediately be severed in light of what we have already learned: Plato was in truth the first milestone in the history of western civilization, precisely because he overcame the pre-Socratics’ dialectic. If we want to extricate ourselves from the intellectual inheritance that extends from Hegel to Heidegger, Plato stands at the beginning of our path.

Hegel, Jacobi, and Adam Smith

Let us now turn to the “physics of history.” As we have said, Hegel was part of a project launched through Conti, Bentham, Voltaire, and others, to destroy the influence of Leibniz (and later of Schiller and the Humboldts). How did Hegel land in the orbit of this Anglo-Venetian faction?

The starting point is the year 1793, when Hegel left his theological studies at Tübingen University in order to take a position as household tutor in Berne. Immediately after the French Revolution, Switzerland had become a cult center for followers of Rousseau. While that year saw Schiller horrified by the slaughter at the Jacobin guillotines, Hegel and other Rousseau enthusiasts barely blinked. Hegel himself made a pilgrimage to St. Peter’s Island near Berne, where it is claimed that Rousseau bid farewell to the world.

Hegel took up his tutorial post in the home of the Steiger



Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), one of Germany’s greatest republican poets, indicted Hegel as an even worse terrorist than Immanuel Kant.

family, wealthy upper-class Berne merchants with close ties to the British aristocracy. Their private library in Berne was a compendium of British philosophers and historians; here Hegel resumed his Tübingen studies of Hume, immersed himself in the works of Locke and Edward Gibbon, and avidly studied English history.

It was also in Berne that Hegel established ties with a north German and Danish network best viewed as an extension of Anglo-Dutch-Venetian interests. At its core was a grouping around Princess Galitzin, which included Count von Reventlow of Holstein, the former Danish ambassador to London; Holland’s Foreign Minister Hemsterhuis; and its political spokesman, Count Haugwitz, as well as the “poet-philosophers” Friedrich Jacobi and Matthias Claudius.

The Reventlow family included a certain Baron von Schimmellmann, considered the wealthiest man in northern Europe, who like many others exported weapons to Africa, whence slaves were sent to the Caribbean, earning sugar to be exported to rum manufactories in Flensburg. In its agitation for the prerogatives of the nobility (whose else?), the illustrious Reventlow-Galitzin circle made use of Theosophy, in the garb of a mystical Catholicism, and this mysticism was wielded against the rational theology of Leibniz and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

Count Haugwitz, who later served in the Prussian cabinet, was, according to his contemporary J. H. Voss, “consecrated to higher knowledge by Venetian spiritual authorities,

after having been subjected to prolonged observation”—in other words, inducted into the Freemasonry of Venice.

One of Hegel's direct links to this group was the Dane Jens Baggesen, who with the rest of the Reventlow circle mounted a fight against the Christianity of Reason. Religion, they insisted, should simply emerge out of emotion.

A weightier influence on Hegel was Friedrich Jacobi, whose intercession with Culture Minister Altenstein won Hegel his appointment to Berlin University. In his letters, Hegel describes his great obligation to Jacobi, and in his lectures, Jacobi was the only philosopher he did not try to tear apart. Hegel agreed with Jacobi that “any consistent philosophizing must lead to Spinozism.” Here we come to the nub of the matter!

Jacobi was the instigator of the so-called Spinoza renaissance which had captured many German intellectuals since the end of the eighteenth century. This project was supervised by Princess Galitzin and Count Reventlow, who had commissioned Jacobi to portray Lessing as a Spinozist, i.e., a pantheist or atheist.

Jacobi, a labile youth seeking recognition, went to Geneva at the age of 16 and met with Voltaire, whose influence was manifest above all in Jacobi's lifelong animosity to Leibniz. Jacobi's entanglement in Anglo-Venetian circles included his membership in the Düsseldorf freemasonic lodge. Espousing Spinoza's “all is one” doctrine on the one hand while shrinking in terror from the resultant denial of God, he was an opportune tool for the Venetian party.

By 1755, Leibniz's influence had suffered a conspiracy of silence. But Lessing began to bring Leibniz to the public again. Then the effort was to distort Lessing's rational theology, in order to strike as well at Leibniz.

Jacobi met Lessing for the first time in July 1780, seven months before Lessing's death. Jacobi produced a transcript of this discussion whose veracity was strongly doubted by Lessing's friends, including Moses Mendelssohn. Just before and after this meeting, Jacobi met with Princess Galitzin, Claudius, and Reventlow's friend Countess Rantzau.

The strategists burst into public combat against Lessing for the first time in 1783, two years after Lessing had died. At that point, Mendelssohn, Lessing's closest collaborator, sought to begin publishing the collected works of Lessing, along with a biography. Mendelssohn was already a thorn in the side of the anti-Leibniz faction: He adhered to Plato and the ontological proof of God's existence, put forward an economic policy of fostering population growth, and, as a Jew, worked toward ecumenical dialogue with Christians and Muslims.

Jacobi threatened to publicly discredit the biography if it did not proclaim Lessing's Spinozism. The controversy became so intense that periodicals of the day attributed Mendelssohn's sudden death in 1786 to Jacobi's harassment. The Spinoza renaissance proceeded, and Leibniz's philosophy became more grossly misrepresented.

Hegel and Bentham: Needs are everything

Far less light has been cast on Hegel's intellectual ties to Jeremy Bentham, the head of the Anglo-Venetian party after 1763, director of the secret intelligence service of the British Empire under Lord Shelburne, and the most famous spokesman for utilitarianism.

As of 1802, Hegel was devoted to two British newspapers, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Morning Chronicle*, outlets of the British East India Company's Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. He consistently interpreted current history from the standpoint of the British Empire, and in 1830-31 he drew on *Chronicle* articles to intervene in the continental debate over the English Reform Bill, agreeing with Bentham that parliamentary reform was required to prevent upheavals in England, but that franchising the lower classes would unleash anarchy. In his *Encyclopedia*, Hegel explicitly used Bentham's categories when he defined the basis of abstract rights as men's “natural feelings and impulses,” which direct their actions according to pure utilitarian considerations.

This hedonistic outlook had already made Hegel a dedicated adherent of the British school of economics since his days in Jena. According to his biographer Rosenkranz, Hegel viewed the teachings of Adam Smith as the greatest intellectual revolution of the modern age. Karl Marx agreed with him.

Adam Smith was no scientist, but an ideologue of the British Empire and an official of the British East India Company. His whole clumsy *Wealth of Nations* was a call to battle by the opium-shipping free traders against any effort toward industrial development in North America and Europe—especially against the economic independence of the American colonies.

Hegel termed economics the science of “needs” and their satisfaction, thus, like Smith and Bentham, degrading humanity to the level of intelligent animals. In fact, for Smith and Hegel, the difference between man and beast reduces itself to a few platitudes. According to Hegel, the needs of animals are limited, those of men insatiable through “multiplication.” Secondly, man can subordinate his immediate needs to the principle of “refinement.” Thus a dog gobbles up a rabbit at once, while a human being can wait for the refined interposition of the cooking pot. Smith put forth as a great insight his formula that “all other animals are content with their food, when they come upon it, as a product of Nature. . . . But man applies the power of fire to prepare his food.”

Likewise in Hegel's “System of Needs,” one banality follows another. Human labor is defined as “dialectical meditation between needs and the means of satisfying them.” But where do the “needs” themselves come from? From the wish for “uniformity and imitation on the one hand, and individuality on the other”—the needs persist, one is not satisfied with what one has, and so on *ad infinitum*. Here we have the entire dialectic: incessant instinctual appetite—Marx and

Freud synthesized! It is appetite which leads to the division of labor, which in turn leads to alienation, according to Hegel:

"In the machine, man elevates his formal activity and makes it work wholly for him. But the betrayal he perpetrates against Nature soon avenges itself against him; the more he may gain from her, and the more he subjugates her, the lowlier does he himself become."

Thus Hegel reveals himself as the connecting link between Adam Smith and Karl Marx, passing along the central categories of Marxian political economy such as "need," "division of labor," and "alienation." All three remain hobbled to the stale utilitarian theory of instincts, and, given their false image of man, necessarily arrive at a false economic theory.

The 'best of all possible worlds'

If man's great accomplishment is supposed to be the application of thermal energy to meat, we can admire this breakthrough in Stone Age tribes. If, however, we consider the linked succession of all scientific revolutions, and the resulting technological leaps which have expanded human population potential by several orders of magnitude, then explanations in terms of "appetite" or "instinct" are worse than inadequate. Leonardo da Vinci did not endeavor to build a helicopter in order to satisfy his "flight instinct." Leibniz and Denis Papin did not feel a sudden impulse to run off by rail and thus happen to invent the steam engine. Clearly the great discoveries and inventions are inseparable from the exertions and sacrifices which scientists gladly took upon themselves in order to expand our knowledge of Nature and the universe. The scientific investigator's thirst for truth is natural to him, he has a "need" for truth—a need which can in no way be compared with satisfying a sensuous appetite for a fixed object.

The revolutions in existing knowledge have always begun with the creative acts of individuals, acts which expand the ability of all mankind to reproduce itself at a higher level. An individual creative act thus becomes the most powerful *physical* force in the universe. The person who undertakes this creative effort acts for the entire species. Therefore a mechanical invention cannot be reduced to a technical affair; it is the product of the highest intellectual exertion, as much as a beautiful song or poem. The science of physical economy, as Leibniz developed it and as it has been revolutionized by Lyndon LaRouche, addresses precisely this subject.

We find ourselves at the end of an era in which the economic systems of Karl Marx and Adam Smith—and thus of Hegel, too—have broken down in practice. This is our great chance for a new beginning. En route to a just economic system, we will once more find it a matter of course to engage ourselves with Plato, Leibniz, Cusa, and their heirs, and to prize the intellectual advantages which spring from that engagement.

When the fog and vapor of the past 250 years of the

history of philosophy has thus been dissipated, what do we see?

Hegel and all his epigones in no way represent "the German mind." Hegel was a mere implement in an ideological crusade against science and natural law, a crusade instigated by the Anglo-Venetian oligarchy.

Their system has reached its end—and all the decadent empiricist philosophies from skepticism to pantheism and nihilism lose their influence, too. The accusing finger will point at them—as, in Schiller's "The Cranes of Ibykus," the vast multitude, hearing the cry, "Look, look there, Timotheus!" discovers the murderers of Ibykus and brings them to justice.

It will then be mankind's ability to build new worlds, to create in the living image of God, which will give direction to our culture and accordingly to our economic and political decisions.

Heinrich Heine would be among the first to rejoice!

Further reading

"The New Dark Age: The Frankfurt School and 'Political Correctness,'" by Michael J. Minnicino, *Fidelio*, Vol. I, No. 1.

"The Solution to the Paradox of Current History," *EIR Feature*, April 15, 1994, including:

"Palmerston's London during the 1850s: A Tour of the Human, Multicultural Zoo"; "The Venetian Takeover of England: a 200-Year Project"; "How the Venetian Virus Infected and Took Over England"; "The Bestial British Intelligence of Shelburne and Bentham"; "America's 'Young America' Movement: Slaveholders and the B'nai B'rith"; "Palmerston Launches Young Turks to Permanently Control Middle East"; "Freud and the Frankfurt School"; "Jim Crow, A Cultural Weapon in the Hands of the Confederacy."

"How the Dead Souls of Venice Corrupted Science," by Webster G. Tarpley, *EIR*, Sept. 23, 1994.

Among other works, major features by Lyndon LaRouche that should be read are: "On the Subject of Metaphor," *Fidelio*, Vol. I, No. 3;

"On the Subject of God," *Fidelio*, Vol. II, No. 1;

"History as Science, America 2000," *Fidelio*, Vol. II, No. 3;

"The Truth about Temporal Eternity," *Fidelio*, Vol. III, No. 2;

"How Bertrand Russell Became an Evil Man," *Fidelio*, Vol. III, No. 3;

"The Fraud of Algebraic Causality," *Fidelio*, Vol. III, No. 4.