

The Cambridge Companion to
**HEGEL AND
NINETEENTH-
CENTURY
PHILOSOPHY**

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Hegel's theory of natural law, we have very little understanding of the very foundation of his social and political thought.

There are many other areas of Hegel's philosophy that stand in need of much further research. But these examples should suffice to convince even the most jaded and tired Hegel scholar that there still remains much to do. However questionable Hegel's philosophy might be, it remains of great significance for its vast historical influence in the past two centuries. All modern schools of thought – existentialism, Marxism, pragmatism, analytic philosophy, neo-Kantianism – have either built on him or reacted against him. Self-conscious and self-critical philosophers are those who know their place in history, and in finding that place they will – eventually but inevitably – bump up against Hegel, grandfather of all virtues and vices. Like a stage of consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, we will understand ourselves only when we know the story of our becoming; and an essential part of that story will be about Hegel. It is not easy to appropriate Hegel; but that we must do to understand ourselves. Of Hegel, the old Goethean dictum is especially true: "*Was du von deinem Vätern hast, erwerb es, um es zu besitzen.*"

1 Hegel: A Life

Hegel's birthplace, Stuttgart, lay in the Duchy of Württemberg, the Swabian speaking area of south Germany.¹ In one sense, Württemberg looked like so many other *Länder* in Germany at the time. The use of the German term, *Land* and its plural, *Länder*, is here intentional; it was not a state, not a province, not a department, not even a political unity of elements that would be immediately recognizable today; instead, it was *sui generis*, a *Land*.² At the time of Hegel's birth in Württemberg, people did not speak of general "rights" (the common discourse of our contemporary politics); there were only *particular* rights, *particular* liberties, and the like, which were restricted to particular groups and almost none of which applied to the populace at large. (This or that guild had the right to use metal nails in its carpentry, this or that group had the right to be exempt from a certain tax that other groups had to pay, and so on.) All in all, Württemberg had virtually all the features of what the historian Mack Walker called the German "hometowns," the odd early modern entities kept alive by the singular oddness of the existence of the Holy Roman Empire: As a set of "hometowns," the Empire was governed by a mostly unwritten set of customs and mores that included a sense of various communities both having an obligation to take care of their own members and the right to police the mores of their members in fine grained ways (including the prohibition of marriage by a "hometownner" to an unseemly "foreign" spouse). It was, above all, structured by a strong sense of who did and did not belong to the local communities and by the nearly absolute right of the community to decide whom to admit and not to admit. The elaborate rituals and ceremonies of each "hometown" were centered on keeping that community intact; it was suspicious

¹ The material in this article is distilled from Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

² See James Sheehan, *German History: 1770–1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

of outsiders and quick to denounce those members who broke the rules.³

However, in another sense Württemberg was the odd duck among almost all the other German *Länder*. In terms of the Treaty of Augsburg of 1555, religious toleration was to be established in Germany under the doctrine that the local prince had the right to impose his own religion on the population he governed (impose, that is, the Catholic or Lutheran version of Christianity, with other Protestants, such as Anabaptists and Calvinists, being almost entirely excluded from such toleration). Yet for a long time, Württemberg, with its mostly Protestant population, had been governed by a set of Catholic dukes, who although certainly wanting to impose their religion on the population, had nonetheless at every stage been prevented from doing so by popular resistance, which included a reliance on what Württembergers called their constitution and the "good old law" that embodied their traditional rights and privileges. Moreover, because of the peculiarities of Württemberg's history, the nobility, instead of answering immediately to the duke himself, were almost all immediate to the emperor of the oxymoronically named Holy Roman Empire, and thus took no part in political life in Württemberg. Filling the vacuum, the Protestants had a estate called the *Ehrbarkeit*, the "non-noble notables," into which one had to be born (even though there were no titles that went that status, as was the case with the nobility), who mostly ran Württemberg affairs and who reserved certain key positions in the Württemberg government and in important institutions for themselves.

In 1770, the year of Hegel's birth, there was in fact a "constitutional settlement" in Württemberg between the Protestant estates and the Catholic duke that reaffirmed the traditional rights of those estates (and which was enforced against the Catholic duke by the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor in light of pressure from the Protestant Prussian ruler, against whom the Württemberg duke had earlier allied himself in a war). In 1770, that is, it seemed that Württemberg had settled forever its odd status as what it had always been. That was soon to change, and the indications of that change were already present in Hegel's childhood.

STUTTGART: 1770-1788

Hegel's own family was an up-and-coming middle class family in Württemberg, although they were not part of the *Ehrbarkeit*. Hegel's

³ Mack Walker, *German Hometowns: Community, State, and General Estate 1648-1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

father, who had taken a degree in law from Tübingen, was a minor official at the Royal Treasury, and his mother came from a distinguished background of Swabian Protestant reformers. They seem to have been Württembergers proud of their Protestant tradition (and probably shared the widely held Württemberg view of their land as that of heroic Protestants defending their traditions and true faith against the predations of an absolutizing Catholic monarch), but they were also modernizers, subscribing to the Enlightenment-oriented journals of their day. As outsiders to the *Ehrbarkeit*, but nonetheless up-and-coming members of the middle class, they based their claims to rank and promotion on learning and ability, not on family connections. This had no small part in forming Hegel's own conception of himself and his place in the world.

From what we can tell, Hegel's father put a good deal of emphasis on practical matters and social uprightness, whereas Hegel's mother stressed learning. When Hegel was thirteen, both he and his mother were gravely ill, and she died on September 20, 1783. Hegel survived and seemed to carry some of that survivor's guilt with him. About a year after his mother's death, Hegel's father decided that the young Hegel would follow his mother's wishes and pursue studies to become a theologian and a pastor. However, instead of sending him off to one of the seminary preparatory schools ("cloister schools," as they were called) as was usually the case for young men, he was sent to the local university preparatory school, the *Gymnasium Illustre* (a very short walk from the family's house), which, although not exactly a hotbed of Enlightenment ideas, was nonetheless a forward-oriented school, mixing new Enlightenment ideals with an older German renaissance tradition in learning. (It is most likely that Hegel's father actually wanted to send him to some kind of more vocationally oriented school, such as the *Karlsschule* in Stuttgart, but compromised with Hegel's mother's desire that he become a man of learning, a theologian.) At the *Gymnasium Illustre*, Hegel received a good background in literature, ancient and modern languages, mathematics, and the natural sciences (the latter being his favorite subjects at the time), and he came into contact with some accomplished teachers who recognized his native talents and gave him the encouragement he needed. Hegel reciprocated, became the star student, and graduated first in his class. (Hegel's only surviving brother, born in 1776, was in fact sent to the *Karlsschule*.)

Like many young men of his day, Hegel kept a kind of diary in which he dutifully noted what he was thinking about. Like all such diarists, he kept not so much a factual record of his thoughts but tried to present a picture of himself as he wanted to imagine himself to his imaginary "dear reader." The adolescent Hegel that emerges in the entries is a rather earnest young fellow, a kind of self-described young fogy, although

he is also a voracious reader, and someone dedicated to something like a noble career as an enlightened pastor and occasional writer, a "teacher of the people."

But despite his attempts at prescribing for himself a studiousness beyond his years, in those diaries, Hegel also gives himself away as a more typical adolescent, who succumbs to sentimentality, heaps praise on popular novels of no particular merit, and notes how he and friends like to pass the time looking at the pretty girls. He also reveals the alienation he surely felt at the time; for example, he notes how he likes to spend as much time as possible at the public library (which was quite rich in its holdings); this was obviously intended to show himself to "dear reader" as a budding young man of learning, but instead it more poignantly indicated how he took measures to get out of the house and out from under his father's discipline.

At the time, he was quite taken with the figure of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a writer and literary giant of the time, probably even daydreaming a bit about how his own career might follow that of Lessing's. (Lessing was also originally trained as a theologian.) The adolescent Hegel was particularly struck by Lessing's 1779 novel, *Nathan the Wise*, a tale of Enlightenment religious toleration, whose basic theme was that all people seek God in their own way and thus what makes Nathan a good Jew is what makes other characters good Christians: It is the character and commitment of a person that makes him worthy of admiration, not the doctrinal or cultural (or ethnic) background from which he comes. But most particularly, the character of Nathan seemed to show that one could combine a kind of Enlightenment commitment to universalism with an equally passionate commitment to one's own traditions. For a young Württemberger brought up to be proud of the traditions and the "good old law," just because it was the "Württemberg" tradition, and who was becoming equally caught up in the growing Enlightenment fever and commitment to a new, universalized vision of humanity, *Nathan the Wise* was heady stuff.

TÜBINGEN: 1788–1793

In 1788, Hegel was sent off to the Protestant Seminary attached to the university in Tübingen (just a few kilometers south of Stuttgart). The university at Tübingen had for some time been in a steep decline from its earlier glory years, and, by the time Hegel arrived, it was more of an appendage to the rather distinguished Protestant Seminary than the other way around. The students at the Seminary were required to wear long black coats resembling cassocks bordered with white cuffs and collars; in effect they were expected to live like Protestant monks. Most

of the seminarians came from one of the cloister schools in Württemberg where similar restrictions had been in place; Hegel, who had lived with his family, who had experienced a fair amount of independence, and who was intent on following out his mother's image of himself as a man of learning, found the environment completely stifling. The star scholar and dutiful son quickly became a sullen and rebellious student. On his entry into the Seminary, he had been ranked the first in his class. In a relatively short period of time, Hegel combined some assiduous drinking with constant violations of all kinds of petty rules, and, together with his generally ignoring what he was supposed to be studying (and instead reading voraciously about other things), he managed to lower his class ranking rather steeply and rather rapidly.

Hegel seems to have decided almost immediately on arriving at Tübingen that he was not going to be a pastor. In his first year there, he managed to make some very good friends who were just as alienated from the requirements of the seminary as he was and felt just as passionately as he did about the big ideas circulating in Germany at the time. Among them was Friedrich Hölderlin, born the same year as Hegel, with whom Hegel shared a room. In 1789, the French Revolution brought to a boiling point what those young alienated seminarians found unacceptable. The influence of Pietism led many young Germans at the time to see the Revolution as the next step in that process, heralding a new spiritual reform of the world. (Pietism was a Protestant religious movement in Germany that stressed an immediate, emotional connection to God coupled with both a deep skepticism about the need for theologians to interpret that word for believers and an equally strong belief that although the Reformation had reformed the Church, the world remained as corrupt as ever and in even more need of reform.)

Some lands in Alsace belonged to the Württemberg duke, and that meant that in the conduit provided by the French students at the Seminary, news of the Revolution swept into the Seminary with even more speed and regularity than it did elsewhere. In 1790, Hegel and Hölderlin came to share a room with a newly admitted seminarian who was five years younger than them but who came with a reputation for being a young genius: Friedrich Schelling. The three shared a room at the Seminary, and they became the best of friends – reading, arguing, and discussing among themselves the new works in philosophy (particularly, Rousseau and Kant, although Hegel seemed not to have been so enamored of Kant as the other two were), with each reinforcing the other's antipathy to the staid ways of seminary life and with each sharing their joint enthusiasm for the Revolution and its progress. (Schelling even translated the *Marseillaise* at this time.) Hegel's own love of the local taverns during this period seems to have gained momentum, and he was

not infrequently cited for disciplinary infractions during this period. His young-fogy personality, however, did not entirely desert him, and even with his rather jovial, pub-crawling personality, he acquired the nickname, "the old man," from his fellow students.

Amidst all the intellectual revelry (and the hijinks that have always been a part of student life), there was, however, a fundamental anxiety plaguing Hegel and his friends: All the students at the Seminary had their costs subsidized by a kind of "fellowship" from the Consistory in Stuttgart, and they were thus legally required to serve as pastors if a position for them opened up. The silver lining in that cloud was that there were far too many applicants for such positions than there were actual positions, so neither Hegel, nor Hölderlin, nor Schelling really had to worry too much about suddenly finding themselves assigned to minister to a small conservative congregation in Swabian Germany. Still, the threat was there, and it also meant that they had to receive permission from the Württemberg consistory to do anything else other than serve as a pastor (or to leave Württemberg to go someplace else for any employment). The path of studies at the Seminary required the students to study philosophy for the first two years (which was just fine with Hegel, even if he did find the quality of instruction to be a bit below the mark), followed by three years of theology and biblical instruction. (Philosophy was considered to be only a propaedeutic to the real object of study, theology.) However, to avoid even the chance of succumbing to the fate of being a pastor, Hegel tried to switch to the law faculty after his first two years, but his father refused to let him do it. (The decision probably had to do with his father's sense that Hegel had promised to study theology, he had to keep his word, and the fear that if Hegel switched, he might have to repay the full stipend his son had received from the Consistory.)

However, the next three years at the Seminary proved to be crucial for Hegel's development. The continued friendship and joint development of ideas among Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling were transformative for the three of them. Together they came under the influence of Carl Immanuel Diez, an older student at the Seminary who was responsible for assisting in the instruction of the younger students. Diez had been a theologian who had turned into something like an antireligious agnostic under the influence of Kant's writings; and, combining a commanding intellect with a personal charisma, Diez mixed together a heady sense of philosophical mission by using Kantian ideas to think through how to put an end to the dogmas and conformism strangling German life. Diez's inspiring use of Kant, and the way in which Kantian doctrines of autonomy (seen under Diez's light) seemed to merge cleanly into the calls for liberty, equality and fraternity emanating from France clearly captured

the imagination of the three young Seminarian friends.⁴ Nonetheless, Hegel himself at first had some trouble accepting Diez's radicalized Kantianism; ever the good Württemberger, he thought that the Kantian appeals to "pure practical reason" left no room for the "hometown" appeal to tradition and to the impulses coming not from reason but from the kind of embodied wisdom caught in tradition and the "good old law." That particular problem stayed with him the rest of his life.

The three friends also were deeply interested in what had been the very public dispute between F. H. Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn over the status of Spinoza in contemporary thought. Spinoza's arguments to the effect that there could only be one substance of which both the mental and the physical were merely different attributes struck them as exactly the right doctrine to combine with the Kantian idea of a sharp separation between the deterministic world of experience and the freedom we had to practically presuppose for ourselves (which Kant located in the "noumenal" world, that is, the world conceived apart from the conditions under which we could experience it). Their tendency in this direction was augmented by their negative reaction to what they were being taught by one of the leading theologians at the Seminary, Gottlob Storr, who argued, more or less, that Kant's arguments really pointed the way to a supernaturalist doctrine of the bible as the revelation of a truth that reason could not establish.

Their joint and growing interest in all things "ancient Greek" helped to flesh out this evolving common position. Together, they formed a rough idea of a new nondoctrinal form of religion that would resemble what they took to be the ancient Greek religion. In their imaginations, they saw it as a religion of beauty, just like their idealized Greek religion, and as resting on a kind of insight into the one substance of the world – that is, as expressing the Spinozistic God. Moreover, it would be, as Kant was to put it in the 1790 *Critique of Judgment*, the supersensible basis of both nature and freedom which oriented aesthetic judgments in the experience of the beautiful. In Hegel's yearbook in 1791, in fact, Hölderlin entered the Greek phrase, "Hen kai pan," the "one and all" to indicate their emerging view of a kind of synthesis of Kantianism,

⁴ Among the seminarians, Diez was known as a Kantian *enragé*, a kind of Kantian who also a Jacobin at heart. Diez ultimately left theology, studied medicine, had an important impact on the philosophical development of some of the post-Kantian philosophers at Jena, and died in 1796 in Vienna where he had been treating typhus victims. See Dieter Henrich, *Konstellationen: Probleme und Debatten am Ursprung der idealistischen Philosophie (1789–1795)* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991). See also Dieter Henrich, *Grundlegung aus dem Ich* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004), vols. 1–2. (Henrich makes an especially strong case for Diez's influence in the latter book.)

Spinozism, and an (idealized) Greek view of the world. They began to throw about Kant's special use of the term "the invisible church" as a kind of code among themselves to indicate their joint commitment to a revolutionary new world based on virtue, not dogma, and understood by them to be part of a modern process of moral and spiritual renewal – a revival of the Greek democratic and religious ideals.

During his Seminary years, Hegel apparently had bouts of bad health, and he used one of them to finagle an extended return to Stuttgart for his last semester in order to "recover." Most likely by the end of his seminary studies, he had decided on some kind of vague career as a "man of letters"; the issue was only how to find the right format and theme to make his mark on the world. (At that point he had virtually no interest in becoming a professor; the universities, so it seemed, were about the last place in Germany at the time to try out new ideas.) He used his time in Stuttgart to write a long manuscript on the nature of religion (posthumously called, oddly enough, the "Tübingen Essay"), in which he divided religion into "subjective" and "objective" religion, the distinction roughly amounting to that between religion that meshes with the whole of human existence, which motivates people by appeal to their heart as much as head, and the "objective" religion taught in classes in Dogmatics that spells out the institutionalized conditions under which one can count as a Christian (or as Catholic or Protestant). The issue lying just below the surface of this youthful manuscript was the unsettling one as to whether Christianity had already played out its role on the historical stage and could no longer serve as a "modern" religion that could effectively play a role in the new world emerging out of the shock of the Revolution – this was an issue that continued to ferment in Hegel's mind for a good part of his adult life.

BERNE: 1793–1796

On taking his final exam (while still in Stuttgart) from the Consistory in 1793, Hegel managed to land a job as a house-tutor to a family in Berne (the von Steiger family). He was required to get permission from the Württemberg Consistory to take the job and to leave Württemberg, but the permission was quickly granted. The life of house-tutors was notoriously difficult, and it proved to be no less so for Hegel. However, the stay in Berne was intellectually fruitful even though his personal life suffered there. Berne, at the time, was an outmoded oligarchy run by a small set of patrician families, of which the von Steiger's were one. Captain von Steiger, the head of the family, was vehemently opposed to the French Revolution and advocated an alliance with Prussia and Austria that would go to war against France. Not unsurprisingly, Hegel

and Captain von Steiger quickly had a falling out, and the rest of his time there was filled with tension. However, the family had one of the best private libraries in Europe, and that, together with the massive Bernese public library, gave Hegel his introductions to Scottish Enlightenment thought, in particular to the writings of Adam Smith. During this period, Hegel had become a kind of "applied Kantian" who wanted to work out the practical implications of Kantian moral and political philosophy; as he emphatically put it in one of his letters to Schelling: "From the Kantian philosophy and its highest completion I expect a revolution in Germany. It will proceed from principles that are present and that only need to be elaborated generally and applied to all hitherto existing knowledge."⁵ If anything else, Hegel's Berne experience turned him forever against all so-called "aristocratic" constitutions.

Although in retrospect Hegel's sojourn in Berne turned out to be immensely intellectually fruitful, for him at the time it was simply depressing. As was the case with all house-tutors, he did not have much free time for himself, and he lamented in letters to Schelling how little time he had to work out his own ideas, how isolated he felt, and how little progress he was making. Even worse, he had Schelling's own example staring him in the face. After Schelling had left the Seminary, he had staged a meteoric rise in the German philosophical world, becoming an "Extraordinarius" professor – an "extra" professor on the faculty beyond what the normal funding allowed – at Jena in his early twenties and publishing tract after tract on his own ideas about the new post-Kantian idealism emerging at the time in Jena. The contrast between the absence of any published work by him and the spectacular career his old friend Schelling was carving out for himself could not have been starker. Nonetheless, it was during his stay in Berne that he consolidated his Kantianism, strengthened his distaste for ecclesiastical orthodoxy, was opened up to the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment (particularly, Adam Smith's work), and he probably read Gibbon for the first time while there.

Hegel's own personal disdain for the Bernese aristocracy and for the von Steiger family in particular, did, however, lead to his first published book, even though it was years later that anybody really knew about it. He translated a revolutionary tract from French into German about the oppression of the French-speaking Vaud by the German-speaking Bernese; he also provided a commentary on the tract, drawing out the

⁵ *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969), vol. I, no. 11; *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. by Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984), p. 35. (hereafter cited as *Briefe*, volume number; and *Letters*, page number.)

themes of the absolute value of freedom versus economic gain. (Hegel praised the Americans for putting liberty before such prosaic economic matters.) He published it anonymously in 1798, after he had left Berne; at his death, even his own family did not know that it was his own book and thought it was only a youthful souvenir of his time in Berne.

Hegel's letters to Schelling bemoaning how little progress he was making only show how high Hegel had set the bar for what counted as progress. While in Berne, Hegel was also busy drafting some fragments for a proposed philosophical "system" and even wrote two book-length manuscripts that he never published. One was the "Life of Jesus," an insightful redescription of Jesus' life and teachings fairly much in line with Kant's views on "religion as morality." He also wrote out a long manuscript titled, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" that both reprised his 1793 Tübingen essay about whether Christianity was the appropriate religion for modern life (especially in light of the Revolution) and extended Hegel's own attempt to mesh Kantianism with his admiration for Greek political and religious life. In it, Jesus is portrayed as a Kantian prophet striving to get his followers to be free and to achieve virtue by their own efforts; but the corruption of the time meant that instead of founding the religion of freedom that he sought to found, Jesus was instead taken by his followers to be a divine personality laying down something like positive law backed up divine authority (hence the title of the essay), and with that, Jesus' nonauthoritarian religion of freedom inevitably turned into an authoritarian religion of dogma. In the manuscript, clearly discernible Hegelian themes and problems began to appear, particularly the idea that it is the "spirit of the times" that moves great world revolutions, not failures of will or self-imposed tutelage, and the issue of whether a religion's beauty is incompatible with its truth. In the end, however, the manuscript was not sent off for publication because it did not answer the crucial question Hegel put to Christianity in it: Can Christianity become a free, modern religion? It failed to answer that question because, at that point, Hegel had simply not made up his mind.

Fortunately, his friend, Hölderlin, who at that time was living in Frankfurt as a house tutor, sensing his friend's depression and feelings of isolation, managed to maneuver an offer to Hegel for a position as a house-tutor for a wealthy wine merchant in Frankfurt. Hölderlin's letters to Hegel at this point give testament to just how much he valued their friendship, and Hegel even replied with a long poem written (sort of) in Hölderlin's own style. The idea of rejoining a center of intellectual life and of being together again with his best friend from Seminary days made Hegel's final days in Berne passable. For his part, Hölderlin told Hegel: "I would still have much to tell you, but your coming here must

be the preface to a long, long, interesting, *un-highbrow* book by you and me."⁶

FRANKFURT: 1797-1800

In 1797, Hegel moved to Frankfurt, elated at his chance to escape Berne and the von Steiger's. (As always, he had to get permission from the Württemberg Consistory to make this move; but Hegel was so sure of receiving it that he began work in Frankfurt before he actually had received permission to do so.) On the way to Frankfurt, Hegel stopped off in Stuttgart to visit his family. While there, he had a brief flirtation with a young woman boarding with the Hegel family, Nanette Endel, who was living with them while she did her studies to become a milliner. Nanette Endel teased him endlessly about his seriousness (so out of place for a young man), even suggesting that he was choosing an ascetic life for himself, while he teased her about her devotion to Catholicism and its rigorous morality. (Nanette Endel had also become good friends with Hegel's sister, Christiane, who was not pleased with the attention the two were paying to each other.) While he was pursuing these erotic interests, though, the "old man" found himself increasingly preoccupied with the rather rapidly unfolding set of political events in Württemberg. After the Revolution had both fallen into the Jacobin Terror and then extricated itself from it, the French had begun to take more and more incursions into Germany to protect the new republic. Württemberg itself was invaded by French forces in 1796. In the tumult, Württemberg began to be more and more ungovernable, and the *Ehrbarkeit* saw their chance to finally wrest large parts of political power from the duke. (The struggle for supremacy between the duke and the estates was in fact to last many years; it ended when by virtue of Napoleon's power, the duke became a king and was thereby able to emaciate what remaining rights under the "good old law" the *Ehrbarkeit* had – but none of that was foreseeable at the time Hegel was there.) An explosion of political pamphlets on various subjects filled Stuttgart, and Hegel tried his best to get one of his own into the fray. His friends dissuaded him from this, claiming that his invocation of the French Revolution in his own projected pamphlet would only alienate the people of Württemberg, who, he was assured, had long since turned against the Revolution. Dismayed by this, Hegel published his translation of the pamphlet against the Bernese aristocracy instead.

⁶ *Briefe*, I, 19; *Letters*, pp. 48–49 ("un-highbrow" translates "ungelehrten").

Hegel's arrival in Frankfurt lifted him from his Bernese depression, and his letters to Nanette Endel (while full of the mutual teasing they both indulged in) showed him to be greatly enjoying the urban life of balls and concerts, and to have finally thrown off his rather youthful moralistic tone of wanting to reform the world. Hegel even told her (hoping, no doubt, for a little frisson on her part) that he didn't even go to church anymore. (It seems likely that Hegel's sons, who turned out to be much more moralistic than their father, destroyed Nanette Endel's letters to Hegel, along with the letters from some others; only his letters to her survive.)

Hegel entered into a rather intense philosophical circle of friends in Frankfurt and, true to his character, he continued to work on various manuscripts, although none of them were ever published. (There is no record of Hegel actually trying to get any of them published; he did not think any of them met the high standards for publication that he imposed on them.) His conversations, however, with Hölderlin, Isak von Sinclair, Jacob Zwilling, and a set of others, who formed a rather intense "Frankfurt intellectual circle," brought Hegel into contact with Fichte's writings and forced him to see that his own idea of being an "applied Kantian" depended on taking too many deeper issues for granted. The internal problems of Kant's own theory and the possibilities of working out a genuine version of Kantianism (or "idealism") began to seem more and more to the point, and this led Hegel to alter his program for his life considerably.

In 1799, another event intervened in Hegel's life that had just as much an impact. Hegel's father died, and, like all people suffering the loss of parent, Hegel was moved to think about his own life and his own future prospects. It had to be clear to him that he was almost thirty and had nothing really to show for himself. In 1799, Schelling, by contrast, had become, after Fichte's dismissal from Jena University on spurious charges of atheism, Fichte's successor as professor there. When Hegel arrived in Frankfurt, Hölderlin was entering one of his most productive periods, being on the verge of establishing himself as one of Europe's great poets, and at the same time was beginning a passionate and ultimately tragic affair with the beautiful, gifted wife (Susette Gontard) of the rather philistine banker for whose family he was the house-tutor. By 1799, however, Hölderlin's affair with Susette Gontard had become truly tragic, and Hölderlin was beginning to show the signs of the madness that would eventually overtake him by around 1803; the closeness of the two friends was now under great strain, and it was clear that they, who had once been inseparable, were now going in different directions. After his father's estate was divided, Hegel came into a small inheritance on which he could (if he were frugal) live for a few years, and

so, after a trip to Mainz in 1800 (which earlier had even briefly joined the French Republic), Hegel swallowed his pride and wrote to Schelling (with whom he had not been in contact for a while), asking him for recommendations on where he might go to get his philosophical affairs in order. Mentioning that he sincerely hoped they could be friends again, Hegel in effect confessed to Schelling that he (Hegel) had been wrong and Schelling been right all along about what was at stake in all the intellectual, literary, and political upheavals going on around them. He informed Schelling that "in my scientific development, which started from more subordinate needs of man, I was inevitably driven toward science, and the ideal of youth had to take the form of reflection and thus at once of a system."⁷ Hegel's tone of seeking an invitation to Jena in the letter is not hard to miss, and, as he hoped, Schelling replied with just that, inviting Hegel to stay with him until he found his own place.

JENA: 1801-1807

In 1801, Hegel arrived in Jena. Jena was at that time a small town of about 4,500 people, whose only real claim to fame up until 1785 had been its university of no particular distinction. In the 1780s and 1790s, that changed. For a variety of contingent reasons – important among which was the appointment of Goethe as the minister to the prince in Weimar who had *de facto* oversight over the university – the university suddenly became famous. At the time, universities had a particularly low standing in Europe, being seen by many as outmoded institutions staffed by tenured professors teaching outmoded knowledge and populated by students who cared only about getting as drunk as they could. Better, it was thought, to abolish these medieval holdovers altogether and replace them both with more vocationally minded institutes to teach the students useful knowledge and to set up the equivalent of research institutes (like the various royal societies) for people to pursue new theoretical knowledge. The university at Jena changed all that. Offering intellectual freedom (although not much money) to intellectuals in Germany, it had by 1785 gathered a stellar crowd around itself. It became the center for the propagation of the Kantian philosophy, and the *Jena General Literary Newspaper* (*Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung*), a *de facto* organ of the Kantian movement, became one of the most successful and widely read journals in Germany. Fichte took Kantianism a step further in his lectures there, and the entire movement of early Romanticism formed around and in reaction to Fichte at that time in

⁷ *Briefe* I, 29; *Letters*, p. 64.

Jena. The university's success changed the picture of the university and had a far-reaching influence on the development of other universities in the nineteenth century. It brought a new idea into the discussion of university education, that of the union of teaching and research, that is, of bringing the best young minds to study with the leading intellectual figures of the day, who would in turn teach them about the cutting edge developments in their fields. It also brought to preeminence the faculty of philosophy (which in American universities eventually split up into something like the contemporary form of the College of Arts and Sciences) vis-à-vis other faculties (such as theology, law, and medicine).

By the time Hegel arrived in 1801, however, the university's new flame was flickering out. The fallout from the nasty dustup over Fichte's alleged atheism, which had led to Fichte's resignation and dismissal from the university, had soured many of the faculty and led many of them to pack up and go elsewhere. Even the prestigious *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* departed from Jena. Nonetheless, Hegel assiduously set himself to work, having managed to get his *Magister* from Tübingen counted as a doctorate, and by the end of August, he had "habilitated" (the German requirement of something like a second dissertation, which officially gives one the right to teach at the university). By the next Winter Semester, he was offering courses in philosophy. As such a lecturer, Hegel was given no salary by the university, although he was allowed to charge admissions to his lectures (all professors did this) and to charge students for examining them (for their degree, as all professors did). This, of course, amounted to little more than pocket change, and Hegel was thus forced to live on his inheritance. Schelling suggested that he and Hegel found and edit a journal (*The Critical Journal of Philosophy*) more or less to propagate the emerging Schellingian turn in post-Kantian philosophy and to bring in some extra cash; in 1801, Hegel also published his first real book, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy*, a defense of Schelling against Fichte but in which something more resembling the mature Hegelian set of ideas first made their appearance, even if only in the background.

There were obvious stresses in the relationship between Hegel and Schelling by this point; Schelling was famous, Hegel was at best known as Schelling's friend and defender, and Schelling seemed to have had no problem treating Hegel as a kind of hired hand to further the Schellingian cause (while still officially posing as making a common project with Hegel). Schelling scandalized Jena society when he first had an affair with an older and highly intellectual woman (Caroline Michaelis Böhmer Schlegel), who at the time was married to the great critic, aesthete, and translator, August Schlegel, which led to her divorce and to her marriage to Schelling. (Caroline herself was an

independent, free-thinking woman who caused controversy by simply terrifying some of the men around Jena with her wit, intellect, and independence; Schiller, for example, referred to her as "Dame Lucifer"; but others adored her.) Part of the scandal had to do with Schelling having been first engaged to Caroline's daughter by her first marriage; after the daughter had died of a mysterious illness, rumors immediately began to circulate that Caroline had killed her own daughter to win Schelling for herself. When the possibility arose for a position at the newly reformed university of Würzburg in 1803, Schelling departed, as did several other Jena luminaries. Hegel was left behind, the journal folded, he did not have a job, and the university was falling apart around him. Moreover, his reputation in German intellectual life at that point was that of being Schelling's spear carrier, so it was virtually impossible for him to get a job elsewhere.

With his inheritance dwindling (and being progressively devalued by the rising inflation all around him), Hegel became quite depressed. Still, in that period from 1803–1806, he managed to write several different drafts of several different "systems" of philosophy (each similar to the previous one but differing in many details), and by 1805, he began work on his epochal, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, finishing it in 1806.⁸

That Hegel was able to write so much and to refuse to submit it for publication (because in his mind it just was not good enough) is a testament both to Hegel's own self-confidence (which many of his detractors, not without some justification, always saw as arrogance) and to his stubbornness. (Hegel's philosophical development in Jena was in fact so startling and the amount he wrote and did not publish in that period so large that it has managed to sustain a kind of cottage industry in Hegel studies for almost one-hundred years.) As he was finishing up his *Phenomenology* in 1806, Napoleon (now the "Emperor of the French") took on the vaunted Prussian army in Jena and within thirty minutes had them in a full rout, a victory that put the final nail in the coffin of the old Holy Roman Empire. After the battle, Hegel's own apartment was ransacked by French soldiers. Even worse, for Hegel, his landlady, married to a man who had abandoned her, was then pregnant by Hegel. His illegitimate son, Ludwig, was born February 5, 1807.

⁸ For the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, see this volume. I have given a lengthy commentary on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and reprised it in shorter form (with some small changes of emphasis) in the relevant sections of *Hegel: A Biography*, and *German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism*.

BAMBERG: 1807-1808

The battle of Jena made what had been a very bad situation in Jena into something approaching a collapse. Needless to say, the students had all fled, and few of them returned for the next semester. Finances for the university continued to dry up, and Hegel was writing to just about everybody he knew in his last couple of years at Jena pleading for some kind of employment, especially university employment. (He even proposed to the officials in Jena that he would be an excellent professor of Botany and caretaker of the Botanical Garden.) Out of the blue, one of his old Swabian friends, Immanuel Niethammer (older than Hegel but a fellow graduate of the Seminary, who had also been at Jena but had since moved to Würzburg) found him a job editing a newspaper in Bamberg. With no other options, Hegel reluctantly accepted the offer (writing to Schelling that his new position was, although "not even completely respectable . . . at least not dishonest"⁹).

At this point, Hegel's conscience was still bothered by the fact of his new son, and he arranged to borrow money to help support the boy. However, he made the move to Bamberg with apparently few regrets as far as Ludwig and his mother were concerned, and there never seems to have been any intention to bring the two with him. The newspaper Hegel edited, the *Bamberger Zeitung*, was pro-Napoleonic in orientation, in part because Bavaria (where Bamberg was located) was officially allied with Napoleon and in part because that was the newspaper's short tradition. That orientation fit Hegel just fine. Hegel relished the idea of being a public personage, and he took to his duties with more fervor than could have been expected. He pledged to maintain a certain impartiality (and to a good extent, he succeeded), but he also made sure that the reportage included accounts of French victories, covered the establishment of the kingdom of Westphalia (with Napoleon's brother on the throne), and so forth. He also became a bit of the man about town, attending various balls and great events and consorting with society all around him. (He even attended a costume ball dressed as a valet, an ironic gesture from someone who had claimed in his *Phenomenology* that no man is a hero to his valet because the valet is, after all, only a valet, somebody focused on the here and now instead of on the greater meaning of the events surrounding him; the passage was well known.) As always, he also continued to write to anybody he knew about landing a post at a university so he could further his chosen career as a philosopher.

Hegel's stay in Bamberg was, however, more than a mere interlude for him. He was able to see up close how the reformers in Bavaria

were handling things (reform having been foisted on many German *Länder* as a result of the Napoleonic threat around them.) It became more and more clear that reform could not simply be mandated from above but required a corresponding institutional reform. The "Kantian" ideal of simply setting up laws of justice that abstracted away from the real, empirical interests that people had begun to show itself more and more as ineffective; and Hegel's ideas about the necessity for a type of institutionalized mores to give a kind of substantiality to what would otherwise be merely generalized and ineffective morality began to be worked out in Hegel's thought more and more during this period. (This came to fruition in his reworking a few years later of the ancient Greek ideal of a harmonious *Sittlichkeit*, or such institutionalized mores, into a modern form of *Sittlichkeit*.)

Journalism, however, was not the place where Hegel wanted to be, even if it had been one of his youthful ideals. When in 1808, he found himself being investigated by the authorities for publishing information about French troop movements that had already been published in other newspapers, he was outraged. Not only did this throw his livelihood into question, it also threw the livelihood of the people who worked for him into danger. He began hammering away at Niethammer with his standard plea: Get me out of here and help me find a university post. In October, 1808, Niethammer wrote him to officially offer him part of what he wanted: He had found a post for Hegel in Nuremberg running and teaching at a university preparatory school (a *Gymnasium*, as the Germans call it), and he was to be in charge of philosophical examinations for the kingdom of Bavaria. Disappointed by not having managed to land a professorship at a university, Hegel nonetheless was delighted to be getting out of journalism, and he set off to assume his *Gymnasial* professorship in Nuremberg at the end of 1808.

NUREMBERG: 1808-1816

Niethammer was able to do this favor for Hegel because by 1808, he had become the commissioner in charge of educational reform in Bavaria. Niethammer also wanted an ally in his efforts to reform Bavarian education. He belonged to the "neohumanist" camp in Germany, which aimed at producing through education a certain ideal of a self-directing, learned individual possessing good taste and a sense of the "deeper" things in life. Their opponents fell into two camps: Those (misleadingly called "utilitarians" at the time) who wanted to focus on vocational skills in education; and conservatives, who wanted to use education to produce the types of individuals who would stay within their traditional roles and class boundaries. Hegel and Niethammer were on

⁹ *Briefe*, I, 90; *Letters*, pp. 75-78.

the same side of the issue, and their shared, curious Württemberg past gave them a leg up in the debate. Württemberg education had long had more unity to it than did other systems in Germany, and the persistence of the Protestant *Ehrbarkeit* allied against the Catholic duke had meant that a certain tradition of Renaissance humanism had never disappeared from the Württemberg curriculum; the neohumanists in turn had fused all of that with a sense of the superiority of ancient Greek culture. As former students of theology, both Hegel and Niethammer were schooled in ancient Greek, not a language one would normally learn at the university, and this too gave them a leg up in the debate.

Hegel was, however, stepping into a political minefield in Nuremberg. The city itself, which had been self-ruling for centuries, had recently lost its independence in the Napoleonic wars and had suffered under various occupations by different armies. It was given by the French to Bavaria in 1806 (with no input from the Nurembergers themselves), and the formerly free city, Protestant in population, now found itself subject to a Catholic king. Moreover, the particular *Gymnasium* to which Hegel was going had formerly been a prestigious, forward looking center of education but, like many such institutions in Germany, it had failed to keep up and had become yet one more pool of mediocrity. Niethammer was determined to use this Protestant institution as the centerpiece and showpiece of his educational reforms, and he thus put a lot of responsibility on Hegel's shoulders.

The beginning was not auspicious. The reformers in Bavaria, like many modern reformers, were more or less having to make up modern economic finance as they went along. Thus, at first and for quite a while, they actually had no real idea how much things cost and how the costs of many different things impacted on each other. As a result, they were forever issuing decrees that they failed to back up with monetary resources, leaving people like Hegel to pick up the pieces. Hegel's own salary would go for months without being paid, he found himself having to take out loans until he was paid, he had to pay school expenses out of his pocket, and the various promises about reconstructing the physical infrastructure went unfulfilled for long periods of time. When Hegel learned that after some rebuilding, the relevant authorities had then failed to put in toilets in a building housing all-day preteen to teenage boys, Hegel ruefully remarked to Niethammer that "this is a new dimension of public education, the importance of which I have just now discovered – so to speak, its hind side."¹⁰

¹⁰ *Briefe*, I, 145; *Letters*, p. 190.

But he put himself to the task and brought order to the school. He managed to reorganize a demoralized teaching staff, shifting unproductive professors into other areas where they could do little harm (such as moving unproductive mathematics teachers into teaching religion), and he did this not only without antagonizing the faculty but in a way that earned him applause. (Anyone who has spent even a little time around educational institutions knows how improbable that is.) He instilled order and discipline in the school and earned both the respect and the affection of the students. In addition to teaching philosophy for sixteen hours a week, writing his *Science of Logic*, carrying out all his other administrative duties (without a copyist – the equivalent these days of having no secretary or wordprocessor), he also reviewed once a year all of the work of the students (including their homework), had a personal chat with each of them about their studies, what books they were reading outside of class, what their future plans were, giving them advice on how to do better, and the like.¹¹

It was clear that Hegel was both dedicated to and more than up to the task, and the people of Nuremberg responded warmly. Hegel saw himself and his philosophy as part of the process of the emerging modern world, and he was firmly dedicated to the neo-humanist ideals of education; he quite clearly saw himself as an educator trying to instill the modern ideals of freedom into his students, and saw his philosophical works as part and parcel of that project. One of his most fervently held beliefs was his belief in the idea of "careers open to talent" (a slogan of the French Revolution); his Württemberg background and his family (who were not members of the *Ehrbarkeit* but were better educated) played more than just a small role. Hegel made it a point in his yearly addresses to the public as the rector that one of the key issues in such a program had to do with providing poor but gifted students the means to procure an education for themselves. It had been part of his program at Jena, and in Nuremberg, he had a chance to put it into practice; he continued to harp on this theme, even making it a point of pride when he became several years later the Rector of the Berlin University. (In Hegel's day, in fact, professors received some of their income by the fees students paid to attend lectures and to be examined for degrees; from his days in Jena to Berlin, Hegel always waived such fees for those students.)

It also seemed clear to Hegel by the time he reached Nuremberg that his predilection for the French Revolution and for Napoleon's modernizing tendencies had put him on the right side of history. The French

¹¹ For the *Science of Logic*, see this volume. I have given a short account of the *Science of Logic* in the relevant sections of *Hegel: A Biography and German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism*.

seemed unstoppable, and Napoleonic Germany (those parts allied with and under the influence of the French regime) was in a process of modernizing itself in a way that the anti-Napoleonic part of Germany seemed to be lacking.

However, there continued to be strains within the Bavarian government among the devotees of the older order and the reformers. Since many of the opponents of the reforms were Catholic, the series of events they initiated (including almost shutting down the *Gymnasium* on a fabricated legal pretext to seize its money) reinforced within Hegel a view that modern freedom was possible only in Protestant regimes and that Catholicism, as a religion of authority and dogma, was incompatible with modern freedom. He never again abandoned that view, and it got him into trouble off and on in Berlin, where his anti-Catholic outbursts were not taken kindly. Frustrated with the prevarications of the Catholics in the Bavarian government, Hegel confided to Niethammer that he had come to see the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism as being crystallized in their attitudes to education: For Protestants, it is universities and all centers of instruction that are important, and "all Protestants look upon these institutions as their Rome and council of bishops The sole authority [for Protestants] is the intellectual and moral *Bildung* [education and cultural formation] of all, and the guarantors of such *Bildung* are these institutions To Catholics, however, it [*Bildung*] is something optional, since what is sacred is in the church, which is separated off in a clergy."¹²

Hegel's newly elevated status in Nuremberg life even led to his marriage to a daughter of one of the oldest aristocratic patrician families in Nuremberg: the von Tucher family. The courtship leading up to the marriage was not itself without all the usual ups and downs and twists and turns that always seemed to accompany Hegel's life, Marie was in fact twenty years younger than Hegel, and there was the fact that Hegel, a commoner with no "von" in his name, was marrying into a family much above his social estate. There was, of course, one hitch in Hegel's background that might have derailed this part of his social ascension: His illegitimate son back in Jena, about which Hegel seems not to have thought much about during his initial years in Nuremberg. (In fact, there is some, but not very trustworthy evidence, that the mother of the boy made a bit of a fuss about the wedding, claiming that Hegel had earlier promised to marry her when he got a settled position.) In any event, the matter was settled, and the marriage went forward. On September 15, 1811, he and Marie Helena Susanna von Tucher were married.

¹² *Briefe*, II, 309; *Letters*, p. 328.

The new arrangements were also not without their own bit of family romance. Marie's father died shortly thereafter, and her mother, who was only one year older than Hegel, took an obvious liking to him, making him in effect into the titular head of the family and expending lots of energy on projects to please her illustrious son-in-law (including a large yearly production of *Lebküchen* for Hegel's enjoyment). Hegel and Marie, moreover, had to deal not only with Marie's father's early death, they also had to deal with the tragedy of the death of their first child, a daughter, after only a few months; moreover, Hegel's only surviving brother was part of the Napoleonic army that invaded Russia, and he died during that campaign. (The Hegels did manage to have two more sons who both lived to ripe old ages.)

In 1814, Hegel did what was expected of a person in his position and invited his sister, Christiane, to come stay with them. Christiane, gifted and strong willed, who received no higher education (but might well have been as naturally gifted as her celebrated brother) had never married (although she had turned down some proposals of marriage), and had instead elected to stay home and care for her father. Since the great fear of any middle class woman was having to become a servant in somebody else's house, the mores of the time held that the only decent thing to do was to invite her to come to live with one's own family (after one had married), usually on the pretext of "helping out" around the house as the children arrived. Christiane also had a strong attachment to her brother, and when Hegel was away on a trip, he came back to find that his wife and Christiane were more or less at each other's throats. Christiane was "required" to leave, and she expressed intense feelings of hatred for Marie to one of her cousins after she left. The estrangement between Hegel and his sister was never really overcome; they never saw each other again, although they continued to correspond intermittently. (Her letters to him are another missing part of Hegel's letters and were probably among the stack of documents that one of Hegel's sons later destroyed.)

In addition to these personal difficulties, Hegel also had to deal with the shock of Napoleon's sudden fall after the disaster of the Russian campaign. It threw into question whether the Napoleonic reforms would continue, and Hegel watched with more than a little nervousness as the Congress of Vienna met. He was, of course, greatly relieved to see that virtually none of Napoleonic Germany was going to be changed (the newly established kings of Württemberg and Bavaria, although conservative, certainly did not want to turn the clock back and return all the lands they had received for earlier allying with Napoleon.)

Hegel continued to flourish as Rector. He in fact took on additional duties as the school inspector for Bavaria (with a substantial raise), and

he managed not only to get a teacher's college established in Nuremberg, he also managed to get permission for the establishment of an educational schools for girls that functioned until 1831, when it was absorbed into the larger Nuremberg school system.

HEIDELBERG: 1816–1818

In 1816, Hegel's long held wish finally came true: The university at Heidelberg offered him a position as professor of philosophy. Berlin expressed interest too, but there were complications with the offer, and Hegel's wife made it clear that she did not want to move so far away from her family. Hegel accepted the offer from Heidelberg, and about six months after moving there, the family took Hegel's illegitimate son, Ludwig Fischer, into the family. (Why they had not done so earlier is a bit unclear, but it is clear that it had something to do with the standing of the von Tucher's in that city, and some evidence points to it being more of a matter of reluctance on Marie's part than reluctance on her family's part.) Ludwig had many problems fitting into the Hegel family. He had after all been abandoned by his mother, effectively abandoned by his father, and he clearly had some issues he needed to work out. It also seems clear that the Hegel family was not entirely sympathetic to the obvious stresses in his condition, and Hegel's two sons (Karl and Immanuel) also did not make much of a secret of seeing Ludwig as an interloper on their territory. On Ludwig's own account, Marie Hegel was less than kind toward him, and Ludwig seems to have been regarded more or less as a "foster child" by the Hegel family.

For Hegel, though, none of those stresses counted as much as finally settling down as a professor at a prestigious institution, happily married and with a family. It had taken Hegel until the age of forty-six to finally achieve his goal, and he settled down rapidly into a productive professional life and, more or less, a happy family life. He and Marie traveled in the area, entertained quite a bit, and Hegel made any number of new personal and professional friends, among them, the great legal theorist, A. F. J. Thibaut; he participated in "musical evenings" at Thibaut's house and often volunteered his own house for the occasion. (Thibaut was also an accomplished musicologist and was interested in early polyphonic music.) That and the acquaintance he made with the Boisserée brothers (and their vaunted collection of "old German" paintings and prints, which included many Dutch paintings) helped to form Hegel's aesthetic taste, which was to find fruition in his extremely popular and epochal lectures on aesthetics in his Berlin period. Hegel was able to renew his acquaintance with Goethe, this time more as an equal than as a poor supplicant begging for a position at Jena, and he made the acquaintance

of other literary celebrities, such as Jean Paul. In all of that tumult, he also managed to finish and publish the first edition of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817), and he worked out in lectures the details of what was become his final book, the *Philosophy of Right*, published in Berlin in 1820.

The background to Hegel's lectures on political philosophy had to do with several disputes that were erupting in post-Napoleonic Germany, one of them being the dispute between Thibaut and Karl Friedrich von Savigny over the codification of German law. In effect, Thibaut argued that for such a codified law to be normatively binding, it had to be rational in a sense Kant would have recognized; Savigny, on the other hand, argued that whatever it is that *de facto* binds a people together is really binding for it. (Hegel took Thibaut's side.) Savigny's point about a norms being binding simply because they were the established norms of a people found expression in the growing movement of German nationalism and the appeal to being authentically German. Hegel would have none of it; as he was fond of saying, the appeal to *Deutschtum* (German-dom) is just being *Deutschtumm* (German-dumb).¹³

Hegel's own intense interest in shaping the modern world also led him to throw his hat into the ring around a bitter political dispute in Württemberg in 1817. In effect, the Württemberg King and the estates found themselves at odds over a proposed new constitution that would have effectively taken power away from the old *Ehrbarkeit* and the nobility (who, after the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, had no emperor to whom they were "immediate"). Part of the dispute had to do with power grabs on both sides, and part of the dispute had to do with the forces of tradition versus a kind of rationalizing modernity. (The king's proposed constitution granted liberty of the press and full rights to Jews but kept the power and purse strings in his own hands.) In an article published while the dispute was still in full force, Hegel sided with the king, arguing that the views put forth by the proponents of the "good old law" were antiquated, too much like "social contract" views of state power (except that the contract was not between individuals but distinct social estates and classes), and that the so-called golden age to which the defenders of tradition appealed was a myth. He concluded that the *Ehrbarkeit* and their allies were like the deposed French aristocrats after the Revolution, for "they have forgotten nothing and learnt nothing. [The Württemberg estates] seem to have slept through the last twenty-five years, possibly the richest that world history has had, and for us the most instructive, because it is to them that our world and our

¹³ *Briefe*, II, 241; *Letters*, p. 312.

ideas belong."¹⁴ (Almost all of Hegel's friends took umbrage at his essay, since it seemed to them that he was siding with the rather autocratic inclinations of the king rather than taking a more nuanced view of the need for checks against the king, and it cost him certain long-standing friendships.)

In 1817, Berlin came through with a very attractive offer for Hegel to take over Fichte's long absent chair in philosophy. Marie's reluctance to move was overcome by her mother's intervention on Hegel's side of the argument, and on October 5, 1818, the Hegel family arrived in Berlin.

BERLIN: 1818–1831

Prussia, which had been in danger of vanishing as a great power (or perhaps vanishing altogether) during the Napoleonic period, had emerged as stronger than ever and substantially larger than it had been prior to that period. Pushed to reform by necessity and not any kind of forward thinking, the Prussian king had instituted a couple of different reform movements that had tried to put in place a more rational, "universalist" government and society (with "careers open to talent") to replace the antiquated "particularist" structures of the early modern Germany. However, the bureaucratically installed reformers were trying to put into place an enlightened system of bureaucratic government without having virtually any popular support for their cause. (Their constituency consisted of a handful of ministers and the king himself.)

By the time Hegel arrived in Berlin, the reform movement had slowed to a crawl, although many, including Hegel, thought that this was at best a temporary loss of momentum in what would be an inevitable coming to terms with the modern world. It was, in fact, during this period of reform that the new Berlin university was founded (in 1809), including within itself many of the ideals of the short-lived Jena experiment. Berlin's own version was, of course, destined to set the model for virtually all universities around the world as it established an institution oriented toward the unity of teaching and research, with its goal being to turn out the well-educated young men who would be necessary to staff the newly emerging professions within the institutions of the modern world.

¹⁴ Hegel, "Proceedings of the Estates Assembly in the Kingdom of Württemberg 1815–1816," in *Hegel's Political Writings*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 282; also in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), vol. 4, p. 507.

Hegel's arrival in Berlin was accompanied by the curiosity among the educated elite as to how he would fare. By that time, Hegel had established himself as the leading voice of the new post-Kantian movement in philosophy, with his only real competitors to that title being Schelling and J. F. Fries.¹⁵ Hegel was invited to join one of the exclusive clubs in Berlin, and he and Marie made the rounds at various social events and at the opera. That easy-going life, however, was quickly clouded over by more distressing events. The assassination of a conservative literary figure in August, 1819 fueled the overactive imaginations of the Prussian king and many of the conservative figures around him, all of whom began to see Jacobin plots everywhere. This in turn led them into a hunt for these supposed "demagogues" (or "subversives"), and by the end of August in 1820, the "Karlsbad decrees" had been promulgated for the German Confederation which codified the hunt for demagogues and made it impossible, for example, for any professor dismissed as a demagogue from a teaching post in one university to attain a teaching post at another university in the German confederation of states.

Hegel found himself quickly embroiled in these disputes when one of his Heidelberg students, Gustav Asverus (who was the son of Hegel's lawyer in Jena and who handled Hegel's negotiations with Ludwig Fischer's mother about his marriage to Marie von Tucher) was arrested and held incommunicado as a "demagogue." Hegel intervened, wrote to the ministry without avail, and ended up hiring a lawyer to intervene for Asverus; as a condition of Asverus's release, Hegel was required to purchase a state bond (costing roughly one-third of his annual salary).

The persecution of the "demagogues" picked up its pace, and soon a Berlin professor, Wilhelm de Wette (a theologian), lost his position because of it. (J. F. Fries, who was a friend of the Berlin theologian and who detested Hegel and whom Hegel detested in return, also lost his position in Jena – an event in which Hegel took with no small measure of *Schadenfreude*). At this time, Hegel tried to have one of his gifted students, Friedrich Wilhelm Carové, accepted as his teaching assistant, but Carové lacked the *Habilitation*, and the faculty denied the request. As Carové was working on the *Habilitation*, he was brought under suspicion of being a "demagogue" and investigated. Although Carové

¹⁵ I examine Kant and the post-Kantian movement up to and beyond Hegel in Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The movement from Kant up to but not including Hegel is admirably treated in Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism 1781–1801* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). For the complement to that volume, see also Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2005).

was initially cleared of the charges, he remained under suspicion. By 1820, however, the die was cast, and Carové was officially banned as a demagogue from all teaching in the German confederation.

Hegel confided to friends that although he still believed in progress, one had to admit that things seemed only to be getting worse, and he expressed great anxiety about the current trends. His second choice for his assistant, an aristocrat who had fought in the wars against Napoleon, L. D. von Henning, also came under suspicion, as did some other students of Hegel's. Henning was arrested and put into jail in a cell facing the Spree River. Hegel and some other students went out at midnight in a skiff on the river and facing the window of his cell, they spoke with him and tried to cheer him up; from the skiff, Hegel conducted a conversation with von Henning in Latin (so that if the guards overheard, they could not understand). After seven weeks, von Henning was released, but the authorities required him to take the assistantship for one year at no pay in order to prove his worthiness.

In 1820, in the midst of all of this, with Hegel's students being arrested all around him, he met with some students in Dresden, and at dinner on July 14, he turned down the local wine, purchasing instead for himself and students a bottle of the most expensive champagne in Europe. On filling their glasses and downing the champagne with them (and with the students rather astounded that the old fellow was doing this for them and having no idea why he was doing this), he explained the reason for his generosity: Hegel turned to them in mock astonishment and with raised voice declared, "This glass is for the 14th of July, 1789 – to the storming of the Bastille."¹⁶

The tensions in the worsening political situation in fact brought out many of the competing qualities in Hegel's personality. On the one hand, he had an angry public argument with Schleiermacher over the propriety of the government's banning professors from teaching in 1819, in which Hegel defended the principle, provided that the government continued to pay the professor's salary; he and Schleiermacher became thereafter somewhat bitter antagonists. Hegel nonetheless paid into the secret fund to support the banned theologian (whose ideas he found close to nonsense) when no such salary was forthcoming. As previously mentioned, he risked going out in a skiff at night to talk with an imprisoned student; but he also led a rather unpretentious, Biedermeier life; yet, he also did things like attend *Fasching* balls in a Venetian cape and mask (looking no doubt like some figure out of the musical, *Amadeus*). Hegel had been brought up as a proud Stuttgarter who was not a member of

¹⁶ Günther Nicolin, ed., *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1970), no. 323, p. 214.

the *Ehrbarkeit*, and, like the rest of his family, he remained a bit prickly about alleged affronts to his status. Many contemporaries described him as simple, unpretentious, and gregarious; many others described him as arrogant, wooden, and stuffy. In fact, he was all those things at once. He loved playing cards with nonacademic types (such as the royal stablemaster), and he maintained friendships with both the artistic and the more bohemian elements of Berlin society. One of his best friends was the head of the Berlin musical choral academy (the *Singakademie*), K. F. Zelter, who was the son of a mason; together he and Hegel had a clear sense that they were both the products of the idea of a "career open to talent," and both enjoyed each other's rather down to earth ways.

In fact, the kind of supreme self-confidence that had taken him through the years of depression and bleakness in Jena and had led to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* often tended to get played out in Berlin as a kind of arrogance. Hegel had a fearsome anger when he thought some kind of line had been crossed (particularly when it concerned his status as a professor), and his irony and sarcasm (usually more of the latter) expressed itself not always in the most flattering ways. That same self-confidence, however, also allowed him to maintain a kind of equanimity and light-heartedness in many of his dealings with people, and to be a jovial and witty companion on many social occasions.

Hegel finally published his *Philosophy of Right* in 1820.¹⁷ Although the book reconstructed and defended what Hegel took to be the rational underpinnings of the kind of social and political order sought by the reformers, along with ideas of his own that incorporated other ideals arising out of the British and French models, it was virtually immediately taken by reviewers to be an apology for the existing, repressive Prussian regime. Hegel had only himself to blame: He included in the preface a bitter attack on J. F. Fries, which was taken by many as an uncalled for piece of aggression against a leading thinker who had just lost his job because he was declared to be a demagogue; he also inserted an indirect attack on de Wette, the Berlin theologian who had also lost his position for being convicted of being a demagogue, and he concluded with the infamous Hegelian "double proposition" that what is rational is actual, and what is actual is rational, which many reviewers took at face value to be saying that what is, is right, and what is right is what happens to be the case; or in other words, the Prussian regime is in power, and that makes it right and rational. Hegel was taken aback at this interpretation, and he even played a role in having a later "Brockhaus Encyclopedia" entry about him specifically deny that he ever meant such a thing at

¹⁷ For the *Philosophy of Right*, see my own account in *German Philosophy 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism*.

all; under Hegel's guidance, the writer of the entry on Hegel even went so far as to say "to the extent that Hegel's view on the state are known to us through his writings, [that phrase] was in no way employed *later on* for the benefit of the ruling classes but arose out of the foundations of his philosophy, which everywhere combats *empty* ideals and seeks to reconcile thoughts and actuality in the absolute Idea through, as it were, the Idea itself."¹⁸ Hegel's own ongoing disputes with the liberal reformer, Schleiermacher, and his friendship with some of the few remaining reformers in the government gave him the undeserved reputation that he was a lackey of the existing regime (despite the fact that leading members of the government found him suspicious and actually advised students against going to his now famous lectures).

By 1821-1822, Hegel had come under a lot of stress. The arrest of his students, his wife's on again, off again state of health - Marie suffered from several miscarriages during their marriage - his workload (he had taken on some extra duties), together with his normal activities (researching for his lectures and trying to write more for publication while doing his part in university service) put a strain on his health and his mood. Moreover, a membership in the Berlin Academy of the Sciences was consistently denied him, almost entirely due to the bad blood between him and Schleiermacher, who blackballed Hegel every time his name was proposed for inclusion; his exclusion from the group was not only a wound to his pride, it also meant a not inconsiderable loss of income for him. The attacks on the *Philosophy of Right* accusing him of obsequiousness vis-à-vis the ruling powers did not help things. Hegel was stung by Schleiermacher's antipathy to him, and in 1822 in a preface to a book on the philosophy of religion by one of his former students, Hegel inserted a phrase to the effect that if the views of some theologians (Schleiermacher, although not specifically named) were taken seriously, namely, that "if religion grounds itself in a person only on the basis of feeling, then such a feeling would have no other determination than that of a *feeling of his dependence*, and so a dog would be the best Christian, for it carries this feeling most intensely within itself and lives principally in this feeling. A dog even has feelings of salvation when its hunger is satisfied by a bone."¹⁹

For Schleiermacher and his allies, this was the last straw; the attacks on Hegel increased. However, it did nothing to stop his growing

¹⁸ Cited and discussed by Friedhelm Nicolin, "Der erste Lexicon-Artikel über Hegel (1824)," in Friedhelm Nicolin, *Auf Hegels Spuren: Beiträge zur Hegel-Forschung*, p. 212.

¹⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, "Vorrede zu Hinrichs Religionsphilosophie," *Werke*, vol. 11, pp. 43, 58.

celebrity. By the mid-1820s, he had become perhaps *the* dominant intellectual figure in Berlin. One participant in the Berlin scene put it this way: "Whether a new and famous picture emerged from the workplaces of a famous painter or whether a new, very promising invention had directed the attention of the industrialists to it, whether some thought of genius in the sciences made its way into the learned world, or Miss Sontag sang in a concert, in all cases Berlin asked: What does Hegel think about it?"²⁰

Some of the reform-minded figures in the government managed to get Hegel an extra stipend to compensate partially for his exclusion from the Academy of the Sciences. Hegel used some of the money to take three major trips. Hegel's travels were always for self-improvement; as a middle class Württemberger who prized *Bildung* above all and as someone who had never had the opportunity to travel much, Hegel valued seeing the various museums, architectural features, and daily life of the places he visited. In 1822, he went to Holland, a rich and "modernizing" country. On the way to Holland, he managed to stop off in Magdeburg to visit with one of his youthful heroes, the French mathematician-engineer-politician, Carnot, who had played such a big role in the Revolution and the Napoleonic period and who had been living under house arrest in Magdeburg after the fall of Napoleon. Holland itself proved to be a real eye opener for Hegel; cosmopolitan, tolerant, and rich, it gave him an idea of what Germany could and should turn out to be.

In 1824, he took another trip to Vienna. It is safe to say that he simply loved the place; he attended opera after opera, visited picture gallery after picture gallery, took in the wonderful Viennese cuisine, took in even more Viennese wine, and, in general, reflected on the differences between the two great German powers: Protestant Prussia and Catholic Austria. Hegel clearly valued the cultural richness of Vienna over the more staid and less vibrant Berlin; but he also saw Austria as a land of the past; the future belonged, he thought, to the great Protestant powers, Britain and Prussia.

When Hegel arrived back home from the Vienna trip, he found out that an old friend (and a former student of sorts), Victor Cousin, had been arrested by the Prussians for being a "demagogue." Cousin was a liberal reformer in France and a friend of Hegel since his Heidelberg days; the charges were also clearly fraudulent. (It later turned out the Prussian government was in effect doing a favor for the restoration French police.) Even worse, Cousin's alleged coconspirators included a friend of Ludwig Fischer Hegel and Julius Niethammer (the son of Hegel's

²⁰ Hegel in *Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen*, no. 558, p. 378.

friend, Immanuel Niethammer). Hegel courageously wrote a letter to the Prussian interior ministry testifying to Cousin's innocence and requesting an audience with Cousin (which was denied). Hegel was joined in the protest by people like Schleiermacher (for once they were on the same side), and Hegel's celebrity and continuing pressure for Cousin's release was instrumental in obtaining his release some months afterward. Cousin was forever grateful to Hegel afterward.

This raised Hegel's celebrity, but it did not tamp down the attacks on him; and, if nothing else, it raised Hegel's own somewhat aggressive and sarcastic attacks against his opponents up another notch. (He managed to get himself into trouble again when he repeated in his lectures an old Protestant canard about Catholic beliefs in the Eucharist requiring Catholics to worship a mouse who had eaten a consecrated wafer; the Catholic community was, simply put, outraged over that remark.)

It was at this time that Hegel also became very good friends with the very gifted young Jewish jurist, Eduard Gans, who himself became a convert to Hegelianism. The two became quite close; in August, 1826, Hegel wrote to Marie (who was with the children visiting family in Nuremberg) that "I'm living very quietly; I see virtually only Gans, my true friend and companion."²¹ Hegel supported Gans's application to become a professor of law; but many in the law faculty, led by von Savigny, objected to a Jew obtaining such a position even though the Emancipation Edict of 1812 clearly opened up such possibilities for Jews. The debate over whether to appoint Gans became quite heated, but Gans's opponents managed to get the ear of the king, who, in order to stop Gans from becoming a professor, revoked the entire Edict in 1822. Thus, in order to stop a Jewish Hegelian from becoming a professor, Jewish emancipation in Prussia was effectively abolished.

In 1825, while in Paris, Gans quite cynically converted to Christianity. (Gans was said to have claimed about his conversion that "if the state is so stupid as to forbid me to serve it in a capacity which suits my particular talents unless I profess something I do not believe – and something which the responsible minister knows I do not believe; all right then, it shall have its wish."²²) The ploy worked, and Gans became a professor over Savigny's objections; he also immediately became one of the most popular professors with the students and was instrumental in furthering the Hegelian line of thought. (Gans himself later had a very famous student: Karl Marx.)

²¹ *Briefe*, III, 520, *Letters*, p. 506.

²² Cited in S. S. Prawer, *Heine's Jewish Comedy: A Study of His Portraits of Jews and Judaism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 12.

It was also almost certainly the close friendship between Gans and Hegel that led Hegel in Berlin to reverse his views on Judaism that he had held all his adult life. From at least Tübingen onward, Hegel had viewed Judaism as a religion of egoism and servility, but after becoming friends with Gans, Hegel completely changed his view, claiming in his lectures that Judaism was the first religion of freedom, a religion that put goodness and wisdom into the concept of divinity and which stood on a higher plane even than the religion of the Greeks. (Prior to his conversion, Gans had also been the president of the short lived but historically influential Society for Jewish Culture and Science.)²³

With Gans's help, Hegel founded a new journal that brought together various luminaries to write on "scientific" subjects (in the sense of German *Wissenschaft*). The journal was never the success Hegel hoped it would be, but it reflected his commitment to be more than just a university professor; he wanted to establish a public forum that the graduates of the new Berlin-style universities (with their ideal of the "unity of teaching and research") could stay abreast of the trends in thought in various fields, ranging from literature to theology and the natural sciences.

Hegel himself continued to consort with people of all levels of society, once even having to intervene in a purported duel between a friend, the Jewish satirist, Moritz Saphir, and another acquaintance, a nouveau-riche lottery winner who had felt himself grievously insulted by one of Saphir's witticisms. (Hegel was supposed to have been Saphir's "second" at the duel, and his comical presence at such an otherwise dire occasion led both parties to call off the feud.)

In 1826, Hegel's friends had a surprise birthday party for him that went on all night. The event was reported in the newspapers, and the king, whose birthday was a couple of weeks earlier, became quite peeved that Hegel's birthday got more attention in the press than did his own. However, he had a solution: He simply banned the reporting of such private birthday celebrations in the newspapers. It did not take much effort for Hegel (or anyone else) to read between the lines and see the threat contained therein. Around the same time, Victor Cousin praised Hegel in the preface to a translation of Plato's *Gorgias*, citing Hegel's "noble conduct" during the "Cousin affair" and his courage in running such a risk; when the director of police in Berlin learned of Cousin's book, he was, to put it simply, outraged. Realizing that being on the bad

²³ Eduard Gans has undeservedly languished in some obscurity as a kind of footnote to the Hegelian movement. Fortunately, that is beginning to change. See especially the crucial work by Norbert Waszek, *Eduard Gans (1797–1839): Hegelianer-Jude-Europäer. Texte und Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991).

side of both the king and the director of police was not exactly the ideal situation to be in, Hegel laid low for a while.

To make matters worse for Hegel, the long-standing friction between Ludwig Fischer Hegel and the other members of the Hegel family finally came to a head. Hegel told Ludwig that Karl and Immanuel were going to university but that he was not; there were simply not enough family finances for that. (That Hegel might have cut back on other things to provide for Ludwig's education was apparently not up for discussion.) Ludwig, who was certainly qualified for university education, was instead apprenticed for a career in business. Ludwig rebelled, and, on one account, ran away. (On another account, he was thrown out of the house.) He joined the Dutch army, but Hegel did try to find out how to do something for him by speaking with Dutch friends. (Ludwig later died of a fever in Batavia in 1831; Hegel, who also died in 1831, never learned of Ludwig's death and, nor did Ludwig ever learn of his father's death.) After Hegel's death, his sons apparently tried very diligently to erase Ludwig's memory; for example, all of the letters Hegel wrote to his friend, F. Frommann, in Jena about Ludwig (Frommann and his sister were in charge of caring for Ludwig) survived, whereas all of Frommann's responses (apparently containing references to Ludwig) vanished.

In 1827, Victor Cousin invited Hegel to visit him in Paris. This was not only something Hegel had long wanted to do; it also offered him a convenient excuse to be out of town for his birthday and avoid any complications on that day that might irritate the king again. More than any of his other trips, the visit to Paris was an eye-opener. Paris, the seat of the Revolution, to which Hegel drank a toast every July 14, was all that Hegel could have hoped for a modern city. He wrote to Marie, exclaiming about the cultural riches, the cosmopolitan atmosphere, and the wealth and vibrancy of the city; he was, he told her, in the "capital of the civilized world."²⁴ He met various leading political figures and intellectuals, he got to travel to a Rousseau site (which required him to ride on a donkey in the sun on a hot day but which, he noted, was well worth the trip), he took in the theater, the opera, and the museums. Hegel, a life-long Francophile who until then had never been to France, was entranced by the French way of life. "When I return," he wrote to Marie, "we shall speak nothing but French."²⁵ Unfortunately, the French cuisine proved too much for Hegel's more pedestrian German stomach; after only a little while, he contracted a severe case of indigestion

²⁴ *Briefe*, III, 559; *Letters*, p. 649.

²⁵ *Briefe*, III, 562; *Letters*, p. 656.

and had to find a table d'hôte that served German food for the rest of his stay.

Hegel's life gradually settled down into the routine of being attacked by all kinds of detractors, being nominated for a position at the Academy of Sciences, and being immediately blackballed by Schleiermacher, all the while being a leading intellectual celebrity in Berlin, besieged by admirers, asked for favors, even asked for the equivalent of celebrity endorsements for products. He continued his card games with his less-exalted friends and his continued associations with the Bohemian element of Berlin. Hegel had become by then a Berlin fixture; the picture of Hegel finishing his lectures early in the evening (around 5:00 pm) and walking across the street to the Royal Opera House to catch that evening's performance was part of Berlin life. His students, such as Heinrich Heine and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, were themselves becoming celebrities, and the attendance at his lectures continued to rise, with people coming from all around to hear him expound his views on the nature of art and the philosophy of history. Hegel published very little after 1820; indeed, part of the most influential set of his writings were his Berlin lectures, compiled by his students and published after his death.

In a trip to the Karlsbad spa in 1829 (for health reasons having to do with chest pains), Hegel unexpectedly encountered Schelling. There had certainly been a falling out between the two over the years; Schelling had not taken kindly to Hegel's reference in the 1807 *Phenomenology* to Schelling's "identity philosophy" as the "night in which all cows are black." (In a letter, Hegel had denied it was a reference to Schelling, insisting that it referred only to his misguided followers, but Schelling did not, with some right, believe it.) Schelling was somewhat bitter over how his old friend had eclipsed him in fame, and he was convinced that Hegel had borrowed far more from him than Hegel had ever admitted in print or in private. They both reported back on their encounter to their wives; Hegel said it was just like old times, but Schelling was far more circumspect and cold about the meeting. It was clear that Hegel, who now thought of himself as an old man in fact and not just in nickname, and who was not in the best of health, felt an emotional hole in his life that had followed the breakup of himself, Schelling and Hölderlin as each had gone their separate ways. He was ready for a reconciliation; Schelling was not (or at least not yet).

In recognition of his status, he was made Rector of the university for 1829 to 1830. In 1830 at a lunch with the royal family, Hegel was reminded by the wife of the king's brother that her father was the prince of Homburg vor der Höhe, a postage-stamp principality outside of Frankfurt where Isak von Sinclair had employed Hölderlin after

Hölderlin's dismissal from the Gontard household. She and Hegel drifted off into reminiscences of those days, especially of Hölderlin, now living in Tübingen in a state of non-violent but nonetheless complete madness. Hegel, caught up again in his memories as he had been with Schelling, began to speak at length about his old friend (as the princess noted in her diary, taking on an almost Proustian voice *avant la lettre*: "At that point, he began to speak of Hölderlin, whom the world has forgotten – of his book, *Hyperion* – all of which had constituted an *époque* for me on account of my sister Auguste's relation to them – and I found by the sounding of this name a true joy – a whole lost past went through me . . . it was a remembrance awakened as otherwise would be done through a smell or melody or sound."²⁶)

Hegel's health continued to deteriorate; the gastrointestinal ailment that eventually killed him in 1831 was acting up throughout the year of 1830; he had to confine himself to bland foods and abandon many of the things he liked, such as drinking tea; his wife noticed how his normally cheery temperament was not so much in evidence, and Hegel rarely felt good enough to go out in the evening, even to his beloved opera. As his health deteriorated, his outbursts of temper, which could take on a kind of gale force at times, began to accelerate. He became more dogmatic about his own views, quick to take offense, and more likely both to start an argument and refuse to back down even when it was clear that he was wrong. But even Hegel himself knew something was wrong with him; he confessed to his friend, Zelter, that he had become too caught up in dealing with his opponents, and after one violent argument with a good friend, Varnhagen von Ense, Hegel responded to Varnhagen's offer of a handshake with an embrace, tears in his eyes. Hegel himself seemed not to like the person his illness and stresses were making him into.

When the French in 1830 staged a new revolution, driving out the restoration king and installing Louis Philippe, the "bourgeois king," Hegel's students were ecstatic, and they thought he would be too. Instead, they found him with a grumpy response, a kind of dismissal of the new Revolution's seriousness, and even a dislike of it as some kind of adolescent, Romantic replay of the first Revolution, only this time with a great danger to the European peace and the movement of European reform than had been the hard won prize of the first Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. To his baffled students, Hegel, the gregarious man who each year toasted the storming of the Bastille, seemed to be fading into an old man, fearful of the future.

²⁶ Cited in Otto Pöggeler, "Einleitung," in Christoph Jamme and Otto Pöggeler, eds., *Homburg vor der Höhe in der deutschen Geistesgeschichte: Studien zum Freundeskreis um Hegel und Hölderlin* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986), p. 15.

This was, however, not quite true. For the first time, Hegel took up the meaning of modern events in his lectures on the philosophy of history, and when he came to the Revolution, he virtually echoed Wordsworth's lines (about which he did not know) of the glory of being young at that time when he told the students, "The principle of the freedom of the will therefore vindicated itself against existing right . . . This was accordingly a glorious dawn. All thinking beings jointly celebrated this epoch. Sublime emotion ruled at that time, a spiritual enthusiasm peered into the heart of the world, as if the reconciliation between the divine with the secular were now first accomplished."²⁷ In addition to these lectures, he also embarked on a lengthy critique of the upcoming English Reform Bill then being debated in the English parliament and which was being followed with intense interest across Europe, particularly among the reform minded in Germany. He bitterly attacked the English system of awarding office on the basis of aristocratic family connections (claiming that in England, instead of valuing university education and science, they value the "crass ignorance of fox-hunters"²⁸), and he gave an eloquent description and moral denunciation of the English treatment of the conquered Irish. What was at work in England, he thought, was the darker side of modern life, the tendency for property and monetary interests to take over, such that only individual "rights" (that is, property rights) come to count. Indeed, the English constitution, rather than being the model for all European development (as many German reformers seemed to think) was in fact a system flawed in its core. The proposals of the reform bill, he argued, will only accelerate the weakening of communal ties and the thick structure of mediating institutions needed to keep the forces of modern commercial society in check and present England with what it ought to fear most: Violent revolution. (That England, the other great Protestant power, besides Prussia, was apparently heading down this path was, of course, immensely troubling to Hegel.)

The outbreak of a cholera epidemic in Eastern Europe that spread to Germany by the summer of 1831 led the Hegel family to retreat to the countryside outside of Berlin (in Kreuzberg, today as much a part of the inner city as anywhere else). Hegel had his birthday celebration there, and all seemed to be well. The family moved back into their quarters in the city as the new term began, and Hegel began lecturing on the philosophy of right. By now, however, Hegel's star had begun to set with the

²⁷ Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte, Werke*, 12, p. 529; *Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), p. 447.

²⁸ Hegel, "Über die englische Reformbill," *Werke*, 11, p. 103; "The English Reform Bill," in *Hegel's Political Writings*, p. 310.

students; his dismissal of the July Revolution of 1830, and his increasing frailty led them to other younger more popular teachers. (Hegel resented this.) On Sunday, November 13, 1831, Hegel and Marie were looking forward to having some friends over for dinner; during the day, however, Hegel took ill and got progressively worse. The next day, his condition worsened, and the doctors thought it might be cholera. Hegel, who was very fearful of contracting the disease (thinking that with his bad digestive system, he was particularly at risk), must have suspected the worst when he saw the next day that not one but two doctors were attending to him (two doctors being required by Prussian law if cholera was suspected in a patient). Not wishing to distress his family, he retained a sangfroid about the matter. Around 5:00 in the afternoon, Marie sent for Hegel's next-door neighbor and good friend, Johannes Schulze. By the time Schulze arrived at the Hegel house a few minutes later, Hegel was dead.

Hegel's sudden death came as a great shock to the Berlin community. His funeral on November 16 was attended by a massive audience. The funeral orations by the theologian, F. Marheineke, and his friend, Friedrich Förster, likened him to a modern savior who had come to explain the modern world to itself.

Even though Hegel and his sister, Christiane, had not seen each other since early in Hegel's Nuremberg days, Christiane took the news of his death very badly; after a short correspondence with Marie, Christiane went to the Nagold River a month after Hegel's death and drowned herself. The Hegelian school that immediately formed (and immediately dedicated itself to putting out a complete edition of his works, including the unpublished lectures) began also almost immediately to fight among themselves as to who was the true bearer of the Hegelian philosophy. Before the 1840s had even begun, the Hegelian school had split into several different factions, and the wing known as the "left" Hegelians (a phrase originally made as a jest by David Friedrich Strauss) began to take Hegel's thought in an unanticipated revolutionary direction, much to the alarm of the Prussian government (and later to the alarm of all the reigning powers). The most gifted of them, Karl Marx, claimed to have transformed Hegel's "idealism" into a scientific materialism that was supposed to provide both the critique of the old order and the blueprint for a new socialist order.

In the late 1830s, Schelling introduced himself to one of Hegel's sons who was attending his lectures in Munich; never having reconciled with Hegel while both were still alive, Schelling sought his reconciliation with Hegel's son, and the two became friends. A few years later, in the ensuing uproar over the "left" Hegelians, the government offered a special chair to Schelling, specifying that among other things he had a duty

to "stamp out the dragon seed of Hegelianism in Berlin." On November 15, 1841 – almost ten years to the day after Hegel's death – Schelling gave his inaugural lecture in Berlin. Sitting in his audience that day were Søren Kierkegaard, Michael Bakunin, and Friedrich Engels – the early exponents of what would later be called existentialism, anarchism, and Marxism. The long march of Hegel's posthumous influence on European history had begun. Hölderlin, thinking of Hegel, died in 1843. Schelling died in 1854.