

in magnitude when viewed in the light of . . . long-run social criteria." To be sure, relative to a theory of social disorganization, the event of the Civil War may be but an instance, a case; but relative to the interests, the minds and spirits of a people, the Civil War is of central importance, capable still of inflaming discussion and partisanship and competing loyalties. These two "frames of reference" are different, and perhaps even incommensurable; but it is in terms of the latter that the very motivation to write and study history is to be found. It is like arguing that one's mother shrinks in significance when viewed in the light of the laws of the ovarian cycle, genetic transmission, and the cultural norms of motherhood. It misses the whole point by insisting that there is only one important sense of "significant." As to the Rankian bugbear, what is the alternative? *Not* to describe the past as it actually happened? Then why all the discussion about method? And why any problem at all about history? There is little to applaud in this book but its sincerity and modesty, and one wonders that so much earnest "group-thinking" should have been to so little avail.

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*Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory.* 2nd Edition with Supplementary Chapter. HERBERT MARCUSE. New York: The Humanities Press, 1954. xii, 439 pp. \$5.00.

Inasmuch as the first edition of this book in 1941 has already been reviewed in this journal, the second edition will require only a few comments. It is a clear, scholarly, and sympathetic account of the development of Hegel's philosophy, especially of its social doctrines and implications. Marcuse argues that, especially in his *Jenenser* system and the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel anticipated not only the method but also much of the content of Marxism. If Hegel in later writings, such as the *Philosophy of Right*, became enamored with Prussianism and reaction, this meant a break with his own dialectical method. In political implications as in other respects, Hegelianism is worlds removed from the positivism of Comte and Stahl. Whereas the latter foreshadowed the theory of fascism and National Socialism, and even prepared the way for it, the former is fundamentally hostile and was vigorously repudiated by Nazi theorists.

Although the theses of the book are illuminating and well argued they involve exaggerations which are not purely rhetorical. Take one example: Marcuse's claim that "The empiricist restric-

tion of human nature to knowledge of 'the given' removed the desire both to transcend the given and to despair about it" (p. 20) seems at best only partially true. A Gradgrind may emphasize facts in order to exclude ideals, but empiricists have often done so in order to realize them. Similarly, it is impossible to accept the thesis that totalitarianism idolizes facts in general. In his zeal to show that fascism derives (ideologically) from positivism, Marcuse points out that "an integral part of totalitarian control is the attack on critical and independent thought," and then adds: "The appeal to facts is substituted for the appeal to reason" (p. 405). But this is obviously one-sided. Totalitarianism, whether as conceived by Comte or as realized by Hitler or Stalin, suppresses facts as much as reasons, depending on how its short and long-range interests are served.

The first edition of Marcuse's book appeared in 1941, the year of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union and the Pearl Harbor attack—two events which allied us with the Russians in the second World War. The supplementary chapter added in 1954 discusses briefly the changed outlook and some of the basic reasons for it. The main contention is that the Hegelian conception of freedom, though it is still valid, is farther than ever from realization. Both in the East and the West it is as if the critical role of Reason had been suspended. In the Soviet Union the seemingly indefinite deferment of freedom in the interest of national strength had its historical excuses. For example, when revolution failed in the advanced capitalist countries after the first World War, the Soviets were isolated and thus embarked on the path of terroristic industrialization. "Stalinist society was not less repressive than capitalist society—but much poorer." But whatever the causes or excuses the fact remained that "the image of freedom which Marxism had upheld against the prevailing unfreedom seemed to have lost its realistic content."

In the West Marcuse also sees failure. He remarks that

Hegel saw in the "power of *negativity*" the life element of the Spirit and thereby of Reason. This power of Negativity was in the last analysis the power to comprehend and alter the given facts in accordance with developing potentialities by rejecting the "positive" once it had become a barrier to progress in freedom. . . . If the contradictory, oppositional, negative power of reason is broken, reality moves under its own positive law and, unhampered by the Spirit, unfolds its repressive force. . . . Today, the Spirit seems to have a different function: It helps to organize, administer, and anticipate the powers that be, and to liquidate the "power of Negativity." Reason has become identified with reality: what is actual is reasonable although what is reasonable has not yet become actuality. [Pp. 433-434.]

In amplification of this judgment Marcuse points out that in capitalist societies mass production has facilitated mass manipulation. The rise in standards of living has made labor into "a positive part of the established society" and suspended its critical rational role. Labor has not been emancipated, for "alienation and dehumanization" remain.

Although these trends are real and dangerous, the author has certainly overstated them. It is romantic to limit the role of Reason to "contra-diction, opposition, negation," and it seems romantic, for that matter, to talk of Reason with a capital R. It is likewise misleading to omit reference to factors which, in at least some Western countries, are making headway against the trend to monolithic solidarity and conformity. Yet we can agree, of course, that the release of fearless criticism all over the world would probably do much toward decreasing war-tensions and other obstacles to individual freedom.

Marcuse's stimulating book illustrates the dramatic power of Hegelian language, but also its looseness and often grandiose exaggeration. For the poet or the politician, especially when he is in the opposition, it is most useful, though it proves more evocative of action than nicely directive. Its dangers are fully apparent when Hegelianism takes over power and the dramatic exaggerations are interpreted as specific directives. Marcuse points out that when leading Marxist theorists became revisionists they gave up Hegel, and he adds that this meant a return to simple common sense. But in an important sense it was also a return to the measured and responsible language of science.

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NEW YORK CITY