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978-0-521-17488-6 - Between Tradition and Revolution: The Hegelian Transformation
of Political Philosophy

Manfred Riedel

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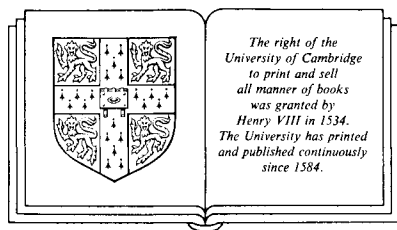
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Manfred Riedel
Translated by Walter Wright



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Preface

This study deals with the relation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to modern revolution and the classical tradition of political thought in Europe. This presupposes an entirely different point of view from that offered by the history of this influential book during the nineteenth century and its varying influence on the global ideologies of Marxism, Liberalism and Fascism, a conception of Hegel which has become popular since K. R. Popper. Anyone who chooses not to follow the ideologies of contemporary history, but rather assumes as I do that it is an intellectual virtue to understand a philosophical author as he understood himself, is confronted, when interpreting the *Philosophy of Right*, by questions which were posed to Hegel by his predecessors and under the condition of being conscious of his own times. Thus, this study attempts to correct the distortions and flaws in the history of the book's influence by offering a point of view which allows Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to be read within the context of Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, Hobbes's *Leviathan* and Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Only when these amendments have been made can the importance of that conceptual revolution and the new perspectives offered by it be understood, a dramatic change which has determined the language of political philosophy since Hegel and Marx.

I am greatly obliged to Walter E. Wright for the fact that my book can now appear in English. Without his energetic initiative this translation probably would not have been made so soon. I should also like to thank Robert Pettit for reading the English manuscript and offering constructive suggestions. The text of Chapter 2 is based on a lecture I delivered at the University of Oxford in the Spring of 1978. The text of Chapter 3 was written for the book edited by Z. A. Pelczynski: *Hegel's Political*

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Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives (Cambridge University Press, 1971). I want to extend my final thanks to the editor for allowing this study to be reprinted here.

Erlangen, August 1983

Manfred Riedel