

REVIEWS

HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT. Translated with Notes by T. M. Knox. (Milford, Oxford University Press; 21s.)

There is difference of opinion in the philosophical world whether ethics is a part of general philosophy or a separate subject of study linked more with sociology than with philosophy proper. The rise of Communism and of National Socialism is forcing men to ask themselves again: should right and wrong have the same meaning for all mankind? whence do the sanctions of ethics derive their authority? are they mere social expedients or are they more? Then there is another group of questions which need answering afresh: about the liberty and freedom of the human person, the basis of property and the State. Have all nations an equal right to existence? Is the State the highest court of appeal for human beings? Should war be the final criterion of right in international relations?

The philosophy of Hegel is of more than passing interest for both these groups of questions. Ethics, for Hegel, was by no means a mere by-product of philosophy but rather its culmination, it is the Logical Idea concretised, and now studied as the Absolute Idea. This is the province of what Hegel called the 'Philosophy of Right.'

Not less important was Hegel's influence on the second group of questions. We have long been aware of the use made of the Hegelian dialectic by Engels and the Marxian theorists. Hegel has also been regarded by some English philosophers as providing the philosophical basis of democracy, and there is no doubt that some of the cherished principles of modern democracy are deduced, developed and defended by Hegel in his ethics. Thus he maintains that it is personality alone which can confer a right to things, and this is given to all men independently of their status. Therefore he argues that what in Roman Law was called a 'jus ad personam' was a perversion of the due order of things, because this right is not a right of the person as person but at most a right of the person in his particular capacity. It is perverse to treat the right of a person in his particular capacity before the universal right of personality as such. If the lawyers of ancient Rome had realised this, they would not have been able legally to justify slavery. The essential freedom of all persons was explicitly recognised by Hegel as one of the unique contributions of Christianity to the human race.

But side by side with this, as we proceed from the realm of Abstract Right through Morality to Ethical Life, and in particular to the section on the State, we find many of the principles of modern Germany similarly deduced, though by no means so rigorously. The

deductions of the Family and the State may even be the weakest links in the Hegelian chain, with the possible exception of the earlier deduction of Nature from the Logic. Nor does the final justification of war as the ultimate solution of international problems make so grand a conclusion to so ambitious an aim.

This new translation of the 'Philosophy of Right' provides the philosophical world with the sources which it needs for knowing just what Hegel himself said. There is a new translation of Hegel's text, also the explanatory notes which Hegel added to many of his paragraphs. Thirdly, there are the Additions to the text made from notes taken at Hegel's lectures. These notes were first reproduced in Gans's 1833 edition, and provide a most important commentary, since they are in effect Hegel's own commentary. Besides these additions, there are notes on the text by Professor Knox, which are exegetical and illustrative.

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SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION. By M. Alderton Pink. (Nelson; 3s.)

The book is the most recent addition to the now monumental stack of popular blue prints on post-war re-organisation. The author argues for the adoption of a sort of New Deal making allowance for national characteristics and traditions. He examines the possibility of keeping some of the public controls of war-time; he makes a very fair attempt to steer clear of party views and to penetrate the arid crust of political economy. The theme of the book (so the publishers tell us) is not what we can afford but what we *ought* to do—a naive principle which the author follows in company with nearly all the Post-War Planners. Yet we can scarcely condemn the vulgar realism of those who (remembering 1919) demand just *how* we are going to make sure of a land fit for heroes to dwell in. The author scouts the notion that the causes of war are primarily economic: 'No; let us at long last realise that the true cause of war is spiritual;' and Mr. Pink has already (on page 56) elucidated that cause, 'it was caused by the nature of Hitler and his henchmen.' Spiritual disorders must be corrected by spiritual means. The remedies are to hand in *Social Reconstruction*. More significant, we are told, for the future (than a declaration of faith in line with traditional Christianity) is a 'pilgrimage (Mr. Alduous Huxley's) to the goal of a profound religious conviction that is not bounded within the limits of an existing creed.' Let us have one sound, broad principle to fly to in all the dilemmas and congestions of our national and international life:—Mr. Pink produces it in commending the 'far more genuine realization than there was in the days when religious forms were more widely observed, that poverty and discontent will be banished from the community only when the love of one's neighbour becomes a reality; that international peace will