

Announcements and Reports

XIV Congress of The International Hegel Society.

The Internationale Hegel-Gesellschaft held its XIVth Congress in Athens 5-10 April 1982. Its sessions took place in the University for Political Science Panteios.

Opening speeches were made by the leader of the IHG, Dr. W.R. Beyer, by Professor Stavros Panou, president of the Greek preparatory committee, and by representatives of state and city.

The work of the Congress began with three lectures: Prof. Despotopoulos (Athens) explained his thesis that Hegel created his dialectics according to the Platonic dialogues; Olaf Gigon (Bern) drew a parallel between Aristotle's unmoved mover and Hegel's absolute spirit; Prof. Ev. Moutsopoulos (Athens) spoke on history and temporality in Hegel.

On the second day the Congress divided into group work in sections. From the beginning organizational defects were evident. It was very difficult to get any information on anything. But by putting together some bits of information picked up at chance meetings a mosaic picture began to emerge. The IHG was going through a crisis. Originally the IHG was established after the Second World War by (mainly) left-wing intellectuals. Philosophers from Eastern Europe participated in it. Now, for some reasons, all the East Europeans boycotted this Congress (except Romania). The East Europeans intend to form their own Hegel Society in collaboration with West German communists. The IHG was split.

But not only the East Europeans, a whole number of others, announced in the programme, also did not turn up. The printed programme became just a piece of paper. As a result sections were abolished or rearranged. Notices about meeting were pinned up on the wall at the entrance to the lecture halls. But even then one could not be certain who would speak because some of the speakers addressed their audience by being absent. The Congress had no staff. In the end, though, the members present somehow succeeded in presenting their papers.

For evaluation, it is useful to divide papers, roughly, into two groups. 1) Those that were delivered in the peculiar language called Professorendeutsch and composed according to the maxim that the deepest thought is the shortest distance between two quotations. To my ears most of this was pure Geistesturnen. 2) All the other papers. The paper by W.V. Doniela (Newcastle, Australia) was remarkable. He argued for the thesis that Hegel's concept of love (the centrepiece of his ethics) underlies Hegel's systematic work, in particular the concept of spirit, freedom and, later on, his dialectics. I think that philosophers interested in Hegel should pay close attention to Doniela's research and to his results when published, as I hope they will be. I also think that the research line taken by Professor R.L. Perkins (Alabama) in his paper 'Perspective, Objectivity and World in Hegel's Epistemology' will prove to be both fruitful and interesting.

On 8 April a certain gentleman by name of Matsas delivered a typical agitprop-piece full of quotations from Lenin and Engels.

He told his audience that for 30 years he had been a propagandist for the Communist Party. It became clear during the discussion that our Greek host, Professor Panou, had not approved of inviting this man to the rostrum. A heated conflict arose between Professor Panou and Dr. Beyer. The latter's temper rose to the boiling point. Professor Panou then declared that he would not deliver his paper in this atmosphere and walked out. At the farewell reception Dr. Beyer was absent.

On 9 April a meeting of the IHG elected a Steering Committee composed of Prof. Heinz Kimmerle (Rotterdam), Wolfgang Lefevre (West Berlin) and Rudolf Meyer (Zurich). In addition the meeting chose an International Board of seven members. Dr. W.R. Beyer was made Honorary President. At the meeting, Prof. Kimmerle proposed that the IHG should adopt a statute (Grundsätze). According to the proposals the IHG is to be open to all interested in Hegel's philosophy, whatever political ideologies or philosophical opinions they confess.

The next IHG Congress is planned to take place during Easter week 1984 in Rotterdam.

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Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: The Fourth Annual Conference
of The Hegel Society of Great Britain

The 1982 conference of the Society took place at Pembroke College, Oxford on 15-16 September, with Professor W.H. Walsh as Conference Chairman and Dr. Z.A. Pelczynski and Dr. David Lamb as Conference Secretaries. The 30 participants included members from Europe and the U.S.A. as well as Britain. Five papers were read, those by Hartnack and Bernasconi concentrating on restricted passages in the Phenomenology, the others referring to the Phenomenology to help explicate their chosen theme.

J. Hartnack (S.U.N.Y. at Brockport, U.S.A., and Aarhus University, Denmark) read 'Herrschaft und Knechtschaft - An Interpretation'. His reading of the Master and Slave dialectic strongly emphasized Hegel's concerns with self-consciousness as a metaphysical and epistemological topic and sought to minimize the implications of this famous passage in the Phenomenology for social and political theory. Hartnack attacked the prevalent view found in Marx, Kojève, Findlay and others that Hegel is here describing two self-consciousnesses in conflict and argued instead that Hegel presents two moments or aspects of self-consciousness; 'pure' self-consciousness (expressed in the tautology 'I am I') and 'knowing' self-consciousness. Supporting his position by emphasizing the subject-object structure of language and consciousness, and Hegel's concern to overcome this dualism, Hartnack was faced with the objection of why Hegel had chosen the 'Herrschaft und Knechtschaft' terminology if he was not concerned with social theory. Hartnack's defence was that this language was to be understood metaphorically or mythically. The by no means unanimous consensus of the conference was that