

Memo to York Gazette dated 15 February 1972

[Memorandum prepared by H. S. Harris at request of York Gazette, official publication of York University, Toronto concerning his soon to be published book entitled ***Hegel's Development I: Toward the Sunlight (1770-1801)*** Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1972. Items in brackets [] have been added by the transcriber.]

To York Gazette

From H. S. Harris, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Glendon College

Subject ***Hegel's Development I: Toward the Sunlight (1770-1801)***

Date 15 February 1972

In response to your request for a "paragraph" about the above I offer the following. You are welcome to use it (cut it, etc.) any way that you please.

In the papers of the German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) there were found after his death a large body of manuscripts that he wrote in his early years but never published. After their use by his first biographer [Karl Rosenkranz, ***Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegels Leben***, Berlin, 1844] these manuscripts remained in the library of the University of Berlin for about seventy years before they were first published in full. (The most important body of early manuscripts were published in 1907 [***Hegels theologische Jugendschriften***, ed. H. Nohl, Tübingen, 1907].

Since about 1904 these manuscripts have been studied and written about quite a bit in German. French and Italian. But they have not received much attention in English, though a representative selection was translated in 1948 [***Hegel: Early Theological Writings***, trans. T. M. Knox with an introduction and fragments translated by Richard Kroner, Chicago, 1948]. The students who have worked on them have generally remarked on their experimental character, on their lack of continuity and sharp changes of attitude and direction. The general view has been that Hegel "tried out" several different approaches to the problems about the Christian religion that interested him without being satisfied with any of them (so that in the end he simply abandoned them when he finally entered on an academic career in 1801).

Apart from being the first full discussion of these early papers and essays in English, my book is the first attempt, as far as I know, to argue that this general view is mistaken. I believe that I have shown that all of the early manuscripts can be viewed in sequence as aspects of the organic development of Hegel's conscious vocation as a "folk-educator". This vocation first emerged while he is still at school in Stuttgart and was essentially

determined by the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 (just as Hegel entered his second year as a theology student at the University of Tübingen). All of the surviving manuscripts of the next eleven years were parts of a unified programme for the cultural regeneration of Germany. He saw himself as the ideologist of a “German Revolution” that was to follow and perfect the revolution in France. Hegel’s ideas and his conception of his task certainly changed and developed a great deal in this period but not in a way that involved the denial or abandonment of the views and positions that he adopted and established in earlier work. The whole project was abandoned in the end because Hegel realized that the tide of political events was not flowing as he had expected that it would. The German Revolution was not going to take place (or at least not in a rapid and dramatic way).

I am now engaged in following the next stage of Hegel’s development: his academic career at the University of Jena from 1801-1806. This part of his story has never been properly told because it has only recently been shown (in 1967 to be precise) [Heinz Kimmerle, “Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jenaer Schriften”, *Hegel-Studien*, IV (1967), 83-94.] that the chronological order of the manuscripts Hegel did not publish in this period is different from what was believed when they were first published (before the 1014 war). Thus the evolution of Hegel’s own philosophical system, which belongs to the Jena period, has never been properly understood. None of Hegel’s writings in this period, whether published or unpublished in his lifetime, have so far been translated into English. This makes my present task all the harder - and unless it is remedied, as I hope and believe it will be within the next few years - it will inevitably make my second volume even fatter than the first (which contains about 500 pages of text and fifty of translation). This first volume will be published by Oxford University Press on March 9, 1972.

H. S. Harris