

Hegel tries to reconcile them. For him, movement and rest are synonymous, becoming is identical with being, time equals eternity, reality turns into reason - and vice versa. To use a key term of dialectics, Hegel "mediates" (*hebt auf*)<sup>22</sup> i.e. annuls, preserves, and elevates each phenomenon. Reduced to an objectivation and self-alienation of the idea or the mind, it is then converted into a pure idea. This particular idea in turn becomes a subordinate element of a more inclusive "higher" idea.

Hegel thus promotes all data - even the most self-alienated ones - to rational ideas and lets them culminate in the highest and most comprehensive Idea of Ideas which he calls the Absolute Mind. At closer inspection this Absolute Mind reveals itself as nothing but a mystification of reason, as reasoning on its own, as a Godhead knowing all and everything, as the philosopher systematizing and justifying a universe full of contradictions and imperfections. By way of his dialectical and dynamic method Hegel ultimately arrives at the same point of no return which Leibniz reached through his logical and static procedure, i.e. the philosophical legitimization of the status quo with all its evils.

## V

With the other elements of the universe history shares the task of vindicating the rationality of reality. In Hegel's system it occupies an important though not a crucial position. Though placed far above nature it constitutes a partial aspect only of the all-encompassing ideal universe. In other words, while history represents but a segment of the whole, the latter is only partially historical. As against those earlier thinkers for whom history was non-existent, its existence creates a difficult problem for Hegel. As a protagonist of a closed optimistic system he has to grapple with the ever-recurring irrationalities of a dimension of human culture that is unique and never-recurring if we regard it in its entire sweep.

The peculiar predicament of history is suggested by the following questions: Who is the bearer or subject of history? Who are the objects of history? What is the connection between the two? Can the estrangement between subject and object be overcome? Can the object of history turn into its subject?<sup>23</sup> Well aware of the significance of these issues, Hegel tried to solve them with the help of a mental construct - the so-

22) "The verb *aufheben*, one of his characteristic key-words, is employed by Hegel to convey at once three distinct meanings. Among other things, the word signifies to annul, to preserve, to elevate." (J. Loewenberg, Introduction to his edition of Hegel, *Selections*, 1929, p. XIII; cf. also Stace, *Op.cit.*, sec.143, 144).

23) This is a transposition of the old antagonism between man as a means and man as an end in himself from the level of individual ethical behavior to that of collective social and historical action. While Kant stipulated that nobody ought to treat a human being exclusively as a means, Hegel conceded the World Spirit the right to use nations and persons as means to ends.