
Hegelianism in Germany

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I'd like to talk a bit about the state of Hegelianism in Germany. I'm very interested on similar reports on the state of Hegelianism in other countries. As usual, comments and corrections are also welcome [Contact¹].

As a computer specialist, I'm an outsider to the academic circles and so some of the conclusions I draw here may be wrong due to that fact. OTOH, I'm free to say what I believe is true, as I'm independent.

In Germany, we have at least three Hegel societies: First was the "Internationale Hegelgesellschaften.V."² ("International Hegel Society"), founded 1953 in Nürnberg by Wilhelm Raimund Beyer (1902-1990).

He got support from the city of Nürnberg³, which was proud of its association with this famous philosopher (Hegel taught in Nürnberg and his wife Marie Tucher came from a famous Nuremberg family). Mr.Beyers interest seems to have been that of a Nuremberg patriot and OTOH that of a Marxist. So his Hegel society was also open to the professors from the east block and to leftists / Marxists in the west. It was not purely communist, and they had biographical and philological interest in Hegel, but they were especially interested in the radical Hegel, the dialectical Hegel, the modern Hegel etc. This society still exists (its headquarter is in Berlin⁴), has thousands of members and makes very big international congresses, I heard with thousands of participants. They publish the results of this congress in the "HegelJahrbuch"⁵ (Hegel yearbook) which is now available at Akademie Verlag, Berlin⁶ (99 DM per yearbook).

Then there is this "Internationale Hegelvereinigung" ("International Hegel association"), founded later by Gadamer in Heidelberg (it still is located in Heidelberg and associated with the Heidelberg University). It is very clear that they didn't like the openness to Marxist influences in the Hegelgesellschaft. Also, they found the scientific work of the Hegelgesellschaft not appropriate to their standards and they laid more emphasis on the Hermeneutical / Philological work. They have a more elitarian approach, you can usually only become member when you have published several works on Hegel and so they have only some dozens or hundreds of members, but many of the very well known Hegel Professors are member over there.

The results of their congresses are published (as far as I know only in German) at Klett-Cotta⁷.

These books always have the catch word / phrase of the congress as their title so it is not as easy as with the yearbooks to identify the congress results in a book catalogue. Also, these books are more expensive, usually between 180-300 DM each.

¹ <http://kai.froeb.net>

² <http://www.hegel-gesellschaft.org>

³ <http://www.nuernberg.de/>

⁴ <http://www.berlin.de>

⁵ <https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/hgjb>

⁶ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akademie-Verlag>

⁷ <http://www.klett-cotta.de>

Then there was a third association, “Societas Hegeliana”, a very leftist, one of its leading member is Hans Jörg Sandkühler. This association didn’t showed up any more in publicity within the last years . I got the information, that the new contact address is now:

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But there is another very strong force of Hegelianism, the “Hegel Archiv”⁸ (founded 1958) at the University of Bochum⁹. Bochum has no special associations to Hegel, so I think it is because their state (North Rhine Westphalia, the biggest state of Germany with some 20 million inhabitants) has a social democratic government which might have had some sympathies to one of the important thinkers who influenced in turn some of the first thinkers of the German social democracy (not only Karl Marx began as a Hegelian but also other leading German Sociademocrats). They publish the best philological work of Hegel, Die “Hegel Werke”, at Meiner Verlag, Hamburg.

The **Meiner Verlag**¹⁰ is a publishing House specialized in philosophical texts, and it seems that their owner, Mr.Meiner, has himself some interest in Hegel, at least he is member in the [internationale Hegel-Vereinigung](#) and in the Hegel Society of America¹¹ (may be in others also).

The people at the Hegel Archiv are experts of Hegel from a philological point. They also have an interesting periodical, the ‘Hegel Studien’¹², published former at the **Bouvier Verlag** (since year 2000 Meiner has become the new publisher), Bonn, a publishing house heavily concerned with Hegel related books. Well known Professor Jaeschke, world expert in religion related Hegel studies, was their head for many years. Due to their special philological interest, it seems they are more related to the “[Internationale Hegelvereinigung](#)”, Heidelberg, but they also have links (i.e. send speakers) to the “[Internationale Hegelgesellschaft](#)”.

Then there is the “**Hegel Institut Berlin**” of Dr. Frank Radtke, a little private, self financed study center for Hegel in Berlin, it seems with no connections to any other Hegel organisations (see <http://www.hegel-institut.de>). So far, its main activity in the public has been the publishing of the German Hegel works (from Suhrkamp) as a CD ROM¹³.

What I believe is sad, is that even in these Hegel associations or among leading Hegel scholars in Germany,

⁸ https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/philosophy/forschung_kdp/index.html.de

⁹ <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de>

¹⁰ <http://www.meiner.de>

¹¹ <http://www.hegel.org>

¹² <https://meiner.de/periodika/hegel-studien.html>

¹³ [cd-roms.htm](#)

there are few people really dedicated to Hegel. It is not at all uncommon that Professors doing Hegel studies come from Marx, the Frankfurt School, Heidegger, Kant etc. and look at Hegel mainly from that perspective, say to find in him something in relationship to the thinker they come from, seeing him in this light. So there were some proceedings at the Hegel congress in Stuttgart, where you would not one time hear the word Hegel or mention one of his thoughts. However, that is probably much better as when some people who have no real connection with Hegel, whom he would have opposed deeply kidnap Hegel's name in order to claim his authority for the creations from their mind.

E.g. there was a show at the Hegel museum in Hegel's birthhouse¹⁴ some years ago, called "Der Geist ist ein Knochen"¹⁵ (i.e. "Spirit is a Bone"). They made Hegel look like a post modernist and took that quote as if it was one of the center of Hegel's teachings. I guess most of you know that the nearest quotation you can find at Hegel to match that quote is a *critique* of the Phenomenology (the teaching that you can see the spirit of a person from its skull), what he criticized in saying that these teachings, made the spirit look like a bone.

New: As an interesting complement to the scenario described above, here is a text from well known Hegel professional Fulda, in which he gives an overview on the focus and questions of German Hegel research in the last 50 years¹⁶ (in German).

¹⁴ <http://www.stadtpalais-stuttgart.de/en-hegelhaus.html>

¹⁵ <http://web.archive.org/web/19990429100102/http://www.hegelhaus.de/>

¹⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20010204144000/http://www.information-philosophie.de/philosophie/hegelforschung.html>