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SECULARIZATION: THE BIRTH OF A MODERN COMBAT CONCEPT*

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This essay argues that today's dominant understanding of secularization—as an epochal transition from a society based on religious belief to one based on autonomous human reason—first appeared in philosophical histories at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was then anachronistically applied to early modern Europe. Apart from the earlier and persisting canon-law use of the term to refer to a species of exclaustration, prior to 1800 the standard lexicographical meaning of "secularization" was determined by its use in public law and diplomacy to name the civil conversion of ecclesiastical property and jurisdiction. Prior to the same point the most important use of the adjective "secular" was in political jurisprudence as a synonym for temporal, civil, and political, to name a religious–political settlement from which rival theologies had been excluded as the condition of its negotiation. But this usage was domain-specific, was quite compatible with religious devotion, and had nothing to do with the putatively secular character of the spheres of philosophy or the natural sciences, thence "society". Far from seeing a shift from religious belief to autonomous rationality, early modernity in fact witnessed a significant intensification of religious belief and practice under the impact of rival confessional movements. It also emerges that the nineteenth century was characterized not by the supersession of confessional religions—or their conversion into rational religion or moral philosophy—but by their remarkable persistence and adaptation to new circumstances. In light of this, the essay argues that the variant philosophical-historical conceptions of secularization—as the epochal supersession of religious belief by human rationality—should not be understood as theories of a putative process but as "combat concepts". These were internal to an array of rival cultural-political factions that first emerged in early nineteenth-century Protestant Germany and that continue to do battle today.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern debates over secularization in the Christian West share a common understanding of the term. "Secularization" refers to an epochal transition, beginning in late medieval or early modern times, in which a culture based in religious belief was transformed into one based in an autonomous human reason. The debating positions advanced within this shared conception, however, differ widely and sometimes vehemently. Among these positions we find celebratory accounts of the linear emancipation of reason from religion through philosophy and science.[1] No less positive are dialectical accounts that regard this secularizing emancipation as one that "translates" and preserves religious ideals within rational morality and society.[2] In close proximity, though, we also find regretful anti-secularist histories, mainly advanced by Catholic intellectuals. Here the autonomizing of human rationality is treated as a catastrophic effect of Protestant theology, whose "disembedding" of reason from human nature and community delivered them over to the merciless instrumentalization of a "secular age".[3] I shall show that these variant conceptions of secularization as an epochal transition to rational humanism are the product of a particular form of philosophical history. This first emerged in the early 1800s in several related forms, all of which were committed to treating history itself as the temporal unfolding of human reason.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the history of the historiography of secularization in the twentieth century is the degree to which it was able to ignore the fact that prior to the early 1800s nobody used the term "secularization" to refer to an epochal transition from a culture of religious belief to one of rational autonomy. It turns out that apart from its earlier and persisting canon-law use to name a species of exclaustration, between 1640 and the early 1800s "secularization" was a term used in public law and diplomacy to refer to the transfer of ecclesiastical property and jurisdiction to civil ownership and

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1 John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and "Early Enlightenment" Europe* (Cambridge, 2006); Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750–1790* (Oxford, 2011).

2 Jürgen Habermas, "Glauben und Wissen", *Dialog*, 1 (2002), 63–74; in English, Habermas, "Faith and Knowledge", in Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature* (Cambridge, 2003), 101–15. Habermas, "'The Political': The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance of Political Theology", in E. Mendieta and J. VanAntwerpen, eds., *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York, 2011), 15–33. Peter E. Gordon, "What Hope Remains?", *New Republic*, 14 December 2011, available at www.newrepublic.com/article/books-and-arts/magazine/98567/jurgen-habermas-religion-philosophy.

3 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

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authority.[4] No less remarkable, though, is the degree to which the historiography of secularization failed to confront the brute historical fact of the persistence of confessional religions themselves. For this historical persistence was on display not just in early modernity, when the process of secularization is supposed to have begun, but also during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when this process is supposed to have been completed.[5] Furthermore, in the German context with which our discussion is particularly concerned, this historical persistence was juridically cemented in the constitutional recognition of a plurality of confessional religions, first in the short-lived Weimar constitution of 1919 and then again in the Federal Republic's Grundgesetz of 1949. Both constitutions treat confessional religions as a permanent feature of the German state and society.[6]

I shall propose, then, that if prior to the early 1800s nobody spoke about secularization as an epochal transition from religious belief to autonomous rationality that is in part because the language in which to do so had not been invented and in part because no such transition had taken place. In developing this historical argument my aim is not to directly engage sociological and social-historical evidence regarding church attendance, patterns of belief and non-belief, and institutional church organization. Neither is it to show that the competing philosophical histories are false theories or histories of secularization. Rather it is to argue that they do not in fact present accounts that are capable of being shown to be true or false, and in this regard they are not theories or histories at all. If the main philosophical-historical conceptions of secularization conceived a transition to a rational autonomy that had never been thought before, to name a process that had never taken place, this, I shall argue, is because they were "combat concepts": concepts that were the instruments of competing cultural-political

4 This difference between the public-law (*Säkularisation*) and philosophical-historical (*Säkularisierung*) usages of "secularization" began to be marked in the 1930s and was clearly spelled out in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, as was the identification of the early 1800s as the point of emergence of the philosophical-historical meaning. See Hans-Wolfgang Strätz and Hermann Zabel, "Säkularisation, Säkularisierung", in O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart, 1984), 789–829.

5 See the revisionist essays by Christopher Clark: "From 1848 to Christian Democracy", in I. Katznelson and G. Stedman Jones, eds., *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Cambridge, 2010), 190–213; Clark, "The Napoleonic Moment in Prussian Church Policy," in L. Riall and D. Laven, eds., *Napoleon's Legacy: Problems of Government in Restoration Europe* (Oxford, 2000), 217–36; and Clark, "Confessional Policy and the Limits of State Action: Frederick William III and the Prussian Union 1817–40," *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 985–1004.

6 Martin Heckel, "Religionsfreiheit: Ein säkulare Verfassungsgarantie", in K. Schlaich, ed., *Martin Heckel, Gesammelte Schriften: Staat, Kirche, Recht, Geschichte*, 4 vols. (Tübingen, 1997), 4: 647–849.

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programs advanced by factions engaged in multisided struggles to determine the shape of the religious and political order.

Despite their European-wide character, the epicenter of these struggles lay in Protestant Germany in the period of the *Vormärz*, the period of religious and political instability that preceded the March "revolution" of 1848. It was here, in the aftermath of Napoleon's dissolution of the empire's multi-confessional structure and suspension of Brandenburg-Prussia's "tolerationist" constitution—the latter serving to maintain a plurality of confessional religions and defend them against the solvent of Protestant rationalism—that a plethora of secularist and anti-secularist factions could seek to imprint their programs on the future religious and political order of Germany. As a result of their capacity to supply the proliferating political factions, parties, and sects with galvanizing charismatic visions of Germany's "rational" religious and political future, it became possible for an array of elite philosophies, whether Protestant–rationalist, Kantian, or right- and left-Hegelian, to migrate from tolerated academic enclaves and enter the political arena. It was in the philosophical histories attached to these politicized philosophies that the conception of secularization as an epochal transition to rational autonomy first appeared, whether this was conceived in terms of the elimination of religion through philosophy and science, in terms of the transformation of religion into a moral philosophy that preserved religious norms, or in terms of the sublimation of religion into secular social institutions or its atheistic desublimation into anthropology or sociology. These variant conceptions are best understood as instruments of the rationalist philosophies that were operating as social confessions in competition with religious ones, and as intellectual weapons of the factions and sects whose leaderships the philosophies helped to groom.

This is why early nineteenth-century philosophical histories could overlook the fact that the concept of secularization they were inventing—as an epochal transition from religious belief to rational autonomy—was one that had not been previously thought and concerned a process that had not taken place. It is also why these "histories" could ignore the fact that, far from vanishing in the face of this putative transition, confessional religions had displayed a striking historical persistence and longevity through their capacity to adapt to changing historical circumstances. The fact that today's philosophical histories of secularization continue to ignore the same fundamental historical facts should be seen as testimony to the longevity of the cultural-political struggles in which they emerged, and to the durability of the rationalist philosophical "confessions" underpinning them.

If it is the case that philosophical histories of secularization first arose as instruments of rival early nineteenth-century cultural-political programs, then the task of the intellectual historian must be to provide an account of

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the emergence of the philosophical histories from these factional programs, thence to describe the ensuing cultural-political conflicts in which the variant philosophical-historical conceptions of secularization first appeared. This is what my discussion aims to provide. The first step will be to make good on my claim that prior to 1800 the modern discourse on secularization was absent, and the transition to a rationally autonomous humanity that it topicalizes had never taken place. At the same time it will be necessary to clarify the historical fact that while there was an early modern use of the adjective "secular" to name a domain from which religion and theology had been excluded—namely the domain formed by the great public-law settlements to the religious civil wars—this usage was not grounded in "secular reason". It therefore had nothing to do with putatively secular movements in philosophy and the natural sciences, and thence with an epochal transition to a "secular age".

"SECULARIZATION" IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY (*c.*1640–*c.*1800)

Focusing again on the modern philosophical-historical conception of secularization, understood as the long-term epochal or society-wide shift from confessional religious belief to human rational autonomy grounded in a new mentality or culture, those who assert its reality must provide evidence that the term was used in this way prior to the 1800s. Yet to the best of my knowledge no such evidence exists. Apart from its earlier and persisting canon-law usage to name a species of "exclaustration"—the permanent transfer of cloistered clergy to secular or "worldly" duties—from the 1640s to the early 1800s the central use of secularization was in public law and diplomacy to refer to the transfer of ecclesiastical properties and territories to civil ownership or control.[7]

It appears that the first recorded use of the public-law term "secularization" (*saecularisazio*, *Säkularisierung*) took place in 1646. This was in the course of the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Münster that formed part of the Peace of Westphalia (1648).[8] The French ambassador used the term simply to refer to the transfer of ecclesiastical property and territory into civil jurisdiction and control. The term "secularization" would thence be applied both to the earlier expropriation of such properties and territories by Protestant princes during the Thirty Years War, and to their transfer to civil control as part of the reparations required by the peace settlement. Lexicographers were already

7 Strätz and Zabel, "Säkularisation, Säkularisierung", 792–809. On the canon-law usage, see Madeleine Ruessmann, *Exclaustration: Its Nature and Use According to Current Law* (Rome, 1995), 15–85.

8 Strätz and Zabel, "Säkularisation, Säkularisierung", 798–99. Heckel, "Säkularisierung", 773.

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recording this usage as standard by the beginning of the eighteenth century, as we can from the entry in Hübner's authoritative conversational lexicon: "Secularization [*Secularisation*] is an action whereby a religious person or a religious place is made worldly [*weltlich*, secular], and whose income is applied to worldly things. As occurred with the archbishoprics of Magdeburg and Bremen in the Westphalian Peace".[9] German theological and political lexicons treated this meaning as standard until the beginning of the twentieth century.[10]

The context for this usage stretched back to the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555—which was the public-law treaty that radically restructured the religious constitution of the German Empire—and forward to massive secularizations that took place at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, one might say that secularization in this sense and form reached its peak in 1803. At this point, reeling under the Napoleonic conquest of Germany, the imperial government enacted a self-dissolving Reichsdeputationshauptschluss (Final Recess of the Reich's Deputation) that secularized all of the empire's remaining ecclesiastical territories and cities by transferring them to civil princes, as partial compensation for the French occupation of the Rhineland.[11] Under the tutelage of Napoleon's Grande armée, the leading territorial state of Prussia would enact a similarly radical secularization in 1806, also resulting in major loss of territory and property for the Catholic Church. Once again, even at this late stage, then, secularization referred not to an epochal process that was supplanting faith in the divine with the autonomy of human reason, but to the transfer of ecclesiastical territories and jurisdictions to civil control. Rather than being grounded in a philosophy of secular rational humanism, early nineteenth-century secularizations were driven by military and political circumstances, and by a Protestant sectarianism that sometimes presented itself as "enlightened". Even so, at this point the context for the philosophical-historical understanding of secularization was indeed forming, as we shall see below.

It might appear that something resembling the philosophical-historical conception of secularization can be found in the sphere of early modern biblical criticism and ecclesiastical history, specifically in Benedict de Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of 1670. It has thus been argued that Spinoza's ecclesiastical history—in which humanity outgrows the biblical stories of its intellectual infancy and enters rational maturity through the disclosure of Spinoza's own

9 Johann Hübner, ed., *Realen Staats-, Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicons* (Leipzig, 1711), 1366. The entry remains unchanged in the 1737 revised edition.

10 See Hartmut Lehmann, *Säkularisierung: Der europäische Sonderweg in Sachen Religion* (Göttingen, 2004), 36–56.

11 Klaus Dieter Hömig, *Der Reichsdeputationshauptschluss vom 25. Februar 1803 und seine Bedeutung für Staat und Kirche* (Tübingen, 1969).

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metaphysics of a self-unfolding ur-substance—should be regarded as the atheist and materialist spearhead of an epochal secularization of European culture, and was in fact seen in this way by the censorship authorities.[12] But Spinoza never used the term "secularization" to characterize this putative process of intellectual maturation. In fact he appears not to have used the term at all, nor indeed the adjective "secular".[13] Further, there is significant evidence that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Spinoza was not received as a "secular" thinker whose "atheism" was grounded in philosophical materialism, but rather as a heterodox philosophical theologian whose atheism arose from the heretical theologies of pantheism or Christian Cabalism.[14]

There seems to be no evidence, then, to suggest that prior to 1800 the term "secularization" was ever extended beyond its public-law sense of the civil conversion of ecclesiastical things. It might be objected, though, that even in the absence of the concept for thinking it, the process of supplanting divine worship by human reason and Christian culture by humanist culture was nonetheless silently taking place. Once again, however, we need to shift the burden of proof and ask those who claim this to supply the evidence. Even here, the most relevant body of scholarship, which deals with processes of confessionalization in early modern Europe, points in the reverse direction. It suggests instead that the

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[12] See Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670–1752* (Oxford, 2006), 43–51; Israel , *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001), 104–9, 641–5.

[13] "Secularization" does not appear in any of Spinoza's Latin texts; nor, it seems, does the adjective "secular". Neither term is listed in Emilia Boscherini's authoritative *Lexicon Spinozanum* (The Hague, 1970). "Secular" does not appear in the Latin text of the *Tractatus Theologico-Philosophicus*, and seems to be an interpolation introduced by Robert Elwes's English translation in the context of 1880s rationalism. Elwes translates Spinoza's *jus principatus*—the right of rule/*imperium*—with the phrase "the rights of secular rulers". See and compare Benedict de Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, vol. 3 of *Benedict de Spinoza: Opera* (Hamburg, 1670), 223; and Spinoza , *A Theologico-political Treatise and A Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York, 1951; first published 1883), 238. Samuel Shirley follows suit in translating *jus principatum* as the "right of secular rule". See the Shirley translation of the *Tractatus*, at 273.

[14] One of the best collections of studies of the reception of Spinoza as heterodox philosophical theologian remains Karlfried Gründer and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, eds., *Spinoza in der Frühzeit seiner religiösen Wirkung* (Heidelberg, 1984). For the early eighteenth-century reception of Spinoza as a heretical Christian Cabalist see Martin Mulsow, "A German Spinozistic Reader of Cudworth, Bull, and Spencer: Johann Georg Wachter and His *Theologia Martyrum* (1712)", in C. R. Ligota and J.-L. Quantin, eds., *History of Scholarship* (Oxford, 2006), 357–83. For a detailed treatment of the censoring the German Spinozist Friedrich Stosch for theological heterodoxy rather than philosophical radicalism see Detlef Döring, *Frühaufklärung und obrigkeitliche Zensur in Brandenburg: Friedrich Wilhelm Stosch und das Verfahren gegen sein Buch "Concordia rationis et fidei"* (Berlin, 1995).

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sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were characterized not by a diminution in divine worship but by its radical expansion and intensification.[15] This is because the successive waves of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Catholic confessionalization that swept across central and northern Europe during this period deployed pastoral and pedagogical institutions that were designed to bring whole populations within the circumference of spiritual guidance and pious lifestyles.[16]

These confessionalizing movements were both religious and political, both top-down and bottom-up. They combined the recondite tightening of theological doctrine with intense forms of popular devotion and worship, and in these regards displayed no difference in kind between Protestant and Catholic forms.[17] Confessionalization was grounded in the building of mutually opposed confessional pastoral and pedagogical institutions—parochial schools for the catechizing of the people, an explosion of new universities for the training of priests and theologians—that were designed to make formerly elite spiritual practices available to whole religious communities.[18] It was also supported by increasingly centralized confessionalized legal systems in which adherence to specific articles of faith was policed by heresy prosecutions and transformed into a condition of officeholding in the confessional state.[19] From sixteenth-century

[15] For a useful overview see Heinz Schilling, "Confessional Europe", in T. A. J. Brady, H. A. Oberman, and J. D. Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History 1400–1600: Latin Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 2, *Visions, Programs and Outcomes* (Leiden, 1995), 641–82. Succinct surveys of the impact of confessionalization within the German empire are provided in Heinz Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich: Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620", *Historische Zeitschrift*, 246 (1988), 1–45; and Wolfgang Reinhard , "Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters", *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 10 (1983), 257–77.

[16] For the impact of confessionalization at the level of the formation and differentiation of religious communities see Hans-Christoph Rublack, "New Patterns of Christian Life", in Brady, Oberman, and Tracy (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400–1600*, vol. 2, 585–606.

[17] There is thus no evidence to support Thomas Howard's claim that owing to its more territorial character Protestant confessionalization was distinguished from Catholicism through its statist instrumentalization of religion. See Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford, 2006), 215–22.

[18] Anton Schindling, "Schulen und Universitäten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: Zehn Thesen zu Bildungsexpansion, Laienbildung und Konfessionalisierung nach Reformation", in W. Brandmüller, H. Immenkötter, and E. Iserloh, eds., *Ecclesia Militans: Studia zur Konzilien- und Reformationsgeschichte Remigius Bäumer zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet.* (Paderborn, 1988), 561–70.

[19] On the tight nexus of law and religion in the Saxon confessional state see Günter Jerouschek, Wolfgang Schild, and Walter Gropp, eds., *Benedict Carpzov: Neue Perspektiven zu einem umstrittenen sächsischen Juristen* (Tübingen, 2000). On early modern England as

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Scandinavia, Holland, Saxony and Bavaria to late seventeenth-century France and England, and with very few exceptions (Brandenburg-Prussia being one), European ecclesiastical history was characterized not by the removal of religion from public life but by its political and juridical consolidation, in the form of the confessional state.[20] There is every historical reason to think that rather than a diminution of Christian worship and a rise of rationalist humanism, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a significant intensification of Christian piety in increasingly confessionalized states and societies. My suggestion, then, is that if the term "secularization" was restricted to its public-law usage prior to 1800, and was not used to name a general process of de-Christianization or "disenchantment", that was simply because there was no such process for it to name.

"SECULAR" IN EARLY MODERN GERMANY (*C.*1550–*C.*1800)

We might consider the adjectival term "secular" in a similar manner, and can begin by observing that it seems to have had greater currency and significance in early modern Germany than the more technical substantive "secularization". Secular (*säkular*, *weltlich*), was a Roman Latin coinage that had long been used in theological discourses to contradistinguish temporal or worldly things from religious or spiritual (*sacer*, *geistlich*) ones. From the middle of the sixteenth century, however, this semantic pairing was transformed in a distinctive manner, through the novel identification of secular or worldly with "political" and "civil", providing a new contrast class for the terms "spiritual" and "religious". The context for this new usage was in fact the rise of the mutually opposed confessional communities just discussed, and the ensuing period of protracted religious civil war in the German Empire and elsewhere in Europe. It is no accident, then, that the central locus for the new equation of the secular or temporal with the political or civil was to be found in juridical and political discourses focused on the problems of negotiating religious settlements and governing multi-confessional societies.

a confessional state founded in the alliance between Anglicanism and the common law see J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660–1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2000).

[20] For the (entirely contingent) circumstances surrounding the failure of the Hohenzollerns to achieve the Calvinization of Brandenburg-Prussia, and hence its emergence as a "tolerant" multi-confessional state during the seventeenth century, see the unsurpassed study by Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia, 1994).

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Following the unprecedented fracturing of the imperial religion at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the onset of the wars of religion, the first and in many ways the most important of these settlements was the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555.[21] Two features of the Augsburg settlement are of particular importance for our present concerns. On the one hand, the settlement was grounded in a complex set of measures for rearranging the institutions of imperial law and government—the Reichskammergericht (Imperial Chamber Court), Reichstag (estate parliament), and (from 1559) the Reichshofrat (Imperial Aulic Court)—in order to admit parity of legal and political treatment for the two confessional blocs, the Corpus Evangelicorum and Corpus Catholicorum.[22] Taken together, these measures for establishing parity of legal treatment and access to offices, suspending theological truth as a condition for legal judgment and treaty agreement, and substituting civil peace for justice as the objective of negotiations, amounted to installing a purely political or civil modus vivendi at the center of the settlement. This opened the space in which the settlement order would come to be understood as secular or worldly in the limited sense of political or civil. On the other hand, this momentous cultural and political change was grounded not in the philosophies or "ideas" of master thinkers—Augsburg had no Hobbes or Aquinas, no Spinoza or Kant—but in the piecemeal juridical and political improvisations of hundreds of devout jurists, statesmen, and diplomats. Their concern was not to advance any kind of secular rationalism but to defend the confessional estate to which they belonged and ensure the survival of their own particular religion.[23]

The juridical–political settlement from which a new conception of the secular was emerging took the form of a polity and constitution that was neutral between rival confessional religions. It was clearly not grounded in an epochal secularization or rationalization of the "European intellect", whether envisaged as a breakthrough to free reasoning, the transcendental recovery of rational autonomy, or the sublimation of a deviant theology into political instrumentalism. Rather, it represented the improvisation of a confessionally neutral and relativistic juridical framework whose role was not to secularize or rationalize religion but to maintain a plurality of revealed confessional

[21] Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 1, *Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia, 1490–1648* (Oxford, 2012), 255–336.

[22] For detailed discussions of these measures see Martin Heckel, "Parität (I)", in *Martin Heckel, Gesammelte Schriften*, 1: 106–226; and Heckel, "Itio in partes: Zur Religionsverfassung des Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nation", in ibid., vol. 2, 636–736.

[23] See Martin Heckel, "Das Säkularisierungsproblem in der Entwicklung des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts", in G. Dilcher and I. Staff, eds., *Christentum und modernes Recht: Beiträge zum Problem der Säkularisation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), 35–95, 50–55.

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religions in perpetuity. This bifurcated structure, where a secular and relativistic juridical framework supported a plurality of revealed public confessions, represented the fundamental form of the German religious settlement. It would find serial constitutional iterations at both the imperial and territorial state levels throughout early modernity, and again in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[24]

The term "secular" was not initially used to characterize the new post-Augsburg juridical and political framework, but the terms that were used to distinguish it as "temporal" and "political" marked out the semantic space in which a new usage of "secular" would appear during the seventeenth century. The development of religious constitutions that were secular in this limited sense was by no means general, however, and was anything but guaranteed. In fact, in establishing religious pluralism only at the imperial level—among rival confessional states and estates—Augsburg actually facilitated confessionalization within territorial states and cities in accordance with the slogan *cuius regio eius religio* (whose the country, theirs the religion).[25] In doing so, in the century from 1550 to 1650, Augsburg materially helped the formation of an array of religiously disciplined, internally intolerant, and mutually hostile confessional states within the empire, all of which operated under the umbrella of the biconfessional political (secular) imperial constitution.[26] This incendiary state of affairs that had helped catapult the empire into the Thirty Years War of 1618–48, was not stabilized until the Westphalian treaties mandated the legal recognition of the three official confessions of Lutheranism, Catholicism, and Calvinism *within* the empire's territorial states.[27] These treaties thereby signaled the beginning of the protracted dissolution of the *cuius regio* principle and the quasi-theocratic order of confessional states. They did so by installing the double-sided religious constitution inside the territorial states, although this too was a protracted and uneven business.[28]

We can see the terminological results of these momentous historical transformations in the way that the political jurist Christian Thomasius characterized the authority of the civil state in religious affairs towards the end of the seventeenth century. Writing on the other side of the Westphalian treaties,

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[24] Martin Heckel, *Vom Religionskonflikt zur Ausgleichsordnung: Der Sonderweg des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts vom Augsburger Religionsfrieden 1555 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 2007).

[25] Martin Heckel, *Deutschland im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 33–66.

[26] See Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich"; and Reinhard, "Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung?".

[27] Whaley , *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 619–31.

[28] Heckel, *Deutschland im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, 181–209.

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and in Brandenburg-Prussia (whose outlier status in its failure to confessionalize made it the first territorial state to install the pluralistic religious constitution), Thomasius could fill in the space of the secular that had opened a hundred years earlier. In a textbook intended to introduce students to the discipline of public church law (*Staatskirchenrecht*), Thomasius was thus able to specify the prince's religious rights by distinguishing between two forms of authority. On the one hand, there was the religious authority of the churches that was *geistlich* or spiritual in the sense of being exercised for man's eternal salvation without any access to coercive civil power. On the other hand, there was the civil authority of the state that was secular (*weltlich*), civil (*zivil*), or political (*politisch*), in the sense of exercising sovereignty over a territory for the sole purpose of maintaining civil peace and flourishing.[29] Like the other early modern German political jurists, Thomasius did not think that religions themselves could be rationalized or secularized in a philosophical or deistic manner, and thereby form a continuum with a secularized political and juridical order, let alone with a putatively secularized domain of natural sciences.[30] He insisted instead that religion was a matter of revelation, faith, and grace, lying beyond all philosophical rationalization or metaphysical explication.[31] This was not least because those who offered such explications typically did so in order to provide philosophical grounding for a "true" religion, thereby threatening religious pluralism and even the religious neutrality of the state.

The secular character of the emerging German religious constitution thus had nothing to do with secularization understood as a civilizational shift from divine dependence to human autonomy grounded in some epochal self-assertion of philosophical rationality. It does not matter whether this autonomizing rationality is viewed as grounded in freethinking individuals, in the progressive historical refinement of man's capacity for rational self-governance, or, finally, in the delusive sublimation of Protestant religiosity into an alienated subjectivity and disenchanted world. Nobody thought about secularization or the secular in these philosophical-historical ways before 1800. And as I have already suggested, this was in part because these ways of thinking and talking were yet to be invented, and in part because no such process of secularization had taken place, while the

[29] Christian Thomasius, *Höchstnöthige Cautelen Welche ein Studiosus iuris, der sich zur Erlernung der Kirchen-Rechts-Gelahrheit auff eine kluge und geschickte Weise vorbereiten will, zu beobachten hat* (Halle, 1713), chap. 17, §§1–12.

[30] It might well be the case that seventeenth-century natural philosophers did not in fact characterize their sciences as "secular", since they did not confront the historical problem—the need to establish non-theological political settlements to religious conflicts—that had led to the use of the term by political jurists.

[31] Thomas Ahnert, *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment: Faith and the Reform of Learning in the Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Rochester, 2006).

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secularity of the religious constitution had a quite different form, grounds, and historical consequences. Against the backdrop of a constitution whose secularity consisted in the maintenance of a plurality of confessional religions, how did it come about that in the early 1800s philosophical histories began to emerge in which secularity was supposed to consist in the progressive transformation or sublimation of confessional religion into a series of rational surrogates?

THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DISPOSITION OF PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY IN PROTESTANT GERMANY

Between 1790 and 1810 in Protestant Germany three variant forms of philosophical history appeared, each of which would eventually give rise to its own version of the new conception of secularization, as the epochal transformation of a culture based on religious faith to one based on human reason. First, Immanuel Kant's metaphysical anthropology of a double-sided rational and sensuous man produced a conception in which history was understood as the progressive transformation of sensuous man into a rational being capable of self-governance.[32] In Kant's earliest and most important philosophical history, he was thus able to provide a history of religions in which the revealed confessional religions—understood as historical condescensions to man's sensuous nature—were undergoing a progressive transformation that would turn them into a moral philosophy strikingly similar to his own philosophy of rational self-governance.[33] In Kant's political philosophy this history promised to overturn Prussia's multi-confessional religious constitution in favor of a single rational religion grounded in a democratic rational will.

Second, and improvising on Kant's double-sided anthropology by extending it beyond the human subject to the realm of "history", thereby itself imbued with a duplex ideal and material architecture, Georg Hegel was able to produce a philosophical history characterized by the successive dialectical reconciliations of historical idealities and materialities.[34] Under the political pressures of the *Vormärz* Hegelianism split into so-called "right" and "left" factions, with the right-Hegelians treating the sublimation of the dialectical oppositions as the form in which an "absolute spirit" manifested itself in historical institutions, and the left-Hegelians viewing this sublimation as the form in which human needs or

[32] Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant, History, and the Idea of Moral Development", *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 16 (1999), 59–80.

[33] Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. W. S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN, 2009), 66–87, 113–37.

[34] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (London, 1861), 56–82.

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social relationships were expressed in an "alienated" form.[35] This produced two different conceptions of religion and eventually two conceptions of secularization. One was advanced by Hegel himself, in which church and state entered into relations of reciprocal transformation leading to a moral state. Another, advanced in different ways by Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx, considered religion as the alienated form of human emotions or social relationships whose revolutionary de-alienation promised to refound the constitution in democratic politics.

A third variant philosophical history that emerged during this period had originated in Protestant "freethought" rationalism. Grounded in eighteenth-century dissenting attacks on Trinitarian Christianity such as those popularized by Tom Paine, freethinkers advanced an anticlerical "rational" Christianity in which Christ was seen as an ethics teacher, and in which God could be known directly through inspection of the individual's own conscience and consciousness.[36] Once this thoroughly Protestant practice of self-scrutiny had been transformed into the foundation of individual civil rights and freedoms, and after it had been augmented through annexation of the natural sciences understood as nothing more than the free exercise of individual reason, a philosophical history emerged in which history was understood as the progressive elimination of religious "superstition" through rational philosophy and science. In turn, philosophy and science were seen as stepchildren of the Protestant Reformation.[37]

Finally, for the sake of completeness, we must mention a fourth instance of the nineteenth-century philosophical histories, one that would issue in its own version of the new conception of secularization, even though it did not appear until the middle of the twentieth century. This was the point at which Catholic intellectuals succeeded in combining the right-Hegelian conception of social institutions as sublimated forms of the spirit's self-unfolding in history with a specifically Thomistic Catholic treatment of Protestantism (and Kantianism). Here Protestantism was understood as a theological deviation whose individual-subjective rationalism had uprooted reason and virtue from their sacramental embodiment in human nature and community.[38] As a result of this combination

35 Gareth Stedman Jones, "Religion and the Origins of Socialism", in Katznelson and Stedman Jones, *Religion and the Political Imagination*, 171–89, 185–7.

36 Clark, *English Society*, 385–95.

37 For an exemplary instance of this form of philosophical history, and for the probable first appearance of the new usage of secularization in English, see W. E. H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, 2 vols. (New York, 1866), vol. 1, 79.

38 For an insider's account of the emergence of Hegelian Thomism in the mid-twentieth century see Wayne John Hankey, "Tradition and Development of Doctrine", in D. A. Petley, ed., *Tradition: Received and Handed on* (Charlottetown, 1994), 16–52.

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it became possible to view a whole array of institutions such as the "disciplinary state", subjectivist ethics, the natural sciences, and even empirical historiography as lamentable products of a socially sublimated Protestant theology. This was now understood as midwife to a descramentalizing metaphysics that had delivered the world over to the objectification and instrumentalization that define what counts as secularization in this anti-secularist variant of philosophical history.[39]

In showing that confessional religions underwent a remarkable and lasting multiplication, intensification, and expansion during early modernity, and that the religious constitution comprised political and juridical mechanisms for managing confessional conflict with no relation to any kind of rational will—democratic or otherwise—we have done something much more (and quite other) than show that these four philosophical histories of secularization are false theories. Rather, we have shown that they have no object; that the putative transformation of confessional religion and the religious constitution in accordance with the emergence of a rationally self-governing humanity is historically nonexistent. And this makes it possible to see that the philosophical histories are not in fact theories at all. In order to understand early nineteenth-century philosophical history and the conception of secularization to which it gave rise, we must therefore approach it in a new way. It seems to me that we need to approach philosophical history not as a theory of the rational transformation of confessional religion but as the instrument of a rival rationalist confession; not as a theory of rational-democratic transformation of the religious constitution but as a rationalist factional attack on it.

With regard to the confessional character of philosophical history it is, of course, important to observe that its principal architects, Kant and Hegel, were Protestant rationalists for whom Catholicism's revealed, ritualistic, and clerical character made it into the definitive confessional religion; although Hegel made the "alienated" and legalistic character of Judaism into the ultimate source of "positive" religion.[40] Both thinkers advanced speculative philosophical histories in which Catholicism was supposed to have been superseded by the Protestant recovery of the freedom of individual conscience and consciousness. But these histories also presumed or prophesied that Protestant confessional religion was now itself about to be superseded or secularized, supposedly by a rational religion or moral philosophy in which man's capacity for rational self-consciousness and self-governance would be fully realized.

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39 See Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 28–75, 96–9, 146–58. See also Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation*, 36–64. For more detail see Ian Hunter, "Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* and Secularization in Early Modern Germany", *Modern Intellectual History*, 8 (2011), 621–46.

40 James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (New York, 1983), 29–46.

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Even more important to observe, though, is the fact that Kantian and Hegelian philosophies were grounded in a metaphysical infrastructure, combining a philosophical anthropology, cosmology, and teleology, that was largely indistinguishable from the parallel metaphysical infrastructures of the confessional religions and was in fact derived from them.[41] Furthermore, the central teaching of such philosophical history, that man is an atemporal rational being undergoing progressive historical realization, was a direct projection of Kantian and Hegelian metaphysical anthropology and teleology. When it was applied to the confessional religions, by treating them as the merely "empirical" or "sensuous" husks of an emergent rational religion or moral philosophy, this teaching thus amounted to a sectarian attack on them. It was made on the basis of a rival Protestant–rationalist anthropology, cosmology, and teleology.[42] Rather than being a theory of confessional religions, the philosophical history of their rational transformation (soon to be secularization) was a sectarian repudiation of them arising from the extra-ecclesial academic religion of Protestant rationalism. Here it should be noted that the sectarian character of the Catholic philosophical histories that emerged in the mid- to late twentieth century was more overt than their de facto Protestant rivals. For while the Catholic histories justifiably viewed "German idealism" as a kind of covert Protestant confession, they did so from the perspective of its deviation from (Catholic) theological truth—stigmatizing its "disembedded" rationalism and subjectivism—and they contrived to portray the multi-confessional German religious constitution as the surreptitious enforcement of Protestant rationalism by an "Erastian" state.[43]

With regard to the political sectarianism of philosophical histories that projected the rational ("democratic") transformation of the religious constitution, it is important to recall the particular sense in which the constitution was neutral or secular in relation to the confessional religions. This neutrality did not consist in a philosophy or ideology of a free and omnicompetent human reason, one whose "detranscendentalizing" and democratizing—for example, in a noncoercive sphere of democratic deliberation—might turn the constitution into an instrument of rational self-governance.[44] We can recall that it consisted rather in a series of concrete measures improvised within the institutions of public law, measures for ensuring parity of juridical recognition and political

41 This builds on Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 2001), 274–363.

42 See also Stedman-Jones, "Religion and the Origins of Socialism".

43 For this line see Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 121–9, 222–39.

44 For this view see Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. W. Rehg (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 302–28.

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representation for two religious parties, for suspending theological truth-claims in treaty negotiations, and for concluding purely political ("secular") forms of peace, as the means of establishing the conditions of political coexistence for the two confessional blocs. The historical premise of the secularity of the religious constitution was not that religious differences might one day be overcome through the growth of a secular human reason, but rather that such differences were so profound that they had to be treated as a permanent feature of culture and politics. They were thus capable of management only through a public-law instrumentarium whose neutrality or secularity had little to do with human reason and everything to do with the maintenance of a purely political peace or modus vivendi. Again, this is what accounts for the bifurcated or Janus-faced character of the German religious constitution: its structure as a juridical–political framework that is secular in the sense of adopting a stance that is neutral towards the rival confessions and relativistic with regard to their theological truth-claims, but only as a means of ensuring the permanent coexistence of an array of legally recognized confessional churches each teaching its own version of absolute religious truth.[45]

What is not sufficiently understood is that the constitution's relativistic stance towards absolute theological truths would be extended to absolute philosophical truths, including the truth-claims of German rationalism and philosophical history. We have already observed that their nonnegotiable metaphysical anthropologies, cosmologies, and teleologies placed the rationalist philosophies and philosophical histories in a similar social and juridical space to that occupied by the confessional religions whose rivals they were. This would eventually make it possible for the philosophies, conceived in Germany as "philosophical ideologies" or *Weltanschauungen*, to receive constitutional recognition and protection of the same kind afforded to the confessional religions.[46] The condition of this occurring, however, was that philosophical truths should be quarantined within the same relativistic or secular juridical framework as theological truths, and could on no account be allowed to capture the constitutional framework itself, for the same reason that theological truths had to be prevented from doing so.

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45 See Heckel , "Religionsfreiheit"; also Ian Hunter, "Religious Freedom in Early Modern Germany: Theology, Philosophy, and Legal Casuistry", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113 (2014), 37–62.

46 Section 137(7) of the Weimar religious constitution—enacted in 1919 and then incorporated into the constitutional Grundgesetz of 1949—thus states, "Associations whose purpose is the cultivation of a philosophical ideology [*Weltanschauung*] shall have the same status as religious bodies". See Parliamentary Council (of the Federal Republic of Germany), *The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany* (Wiesbaden, 1971), 84–8.

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Rationalist philosophies thus were not the foundations of Germany's secular religious order, but schools of thought to be maintained within it in a manner analogous to the confessional theologies and churches. Among the philosophical truths to be maintained relativistically within the constitution—as the teaching of an array of philosophical and political factions—was the doctrine that the entire religious and political order would eventually be transformed into the transparent expression of a rationally self-governing humanity. In purporting to provide a "theory" of the religious constitution as the alienated form of a rationally self-governing humanity, philosophical history was thus actually engaging in a sectarian attack on it. This is because in doing so it was attempting to retroactively implant its own rationalist sectarian truth as the foundation of the constitution in a manner that would undermine its capacity to maintain the neutral framework for a plurality of confessions, among which philosophical rationalism would find its place. The so-called philosophical-historical "theory" of the (future) grounding of the religious constitution in a secular democratic rationale thus amounted to a cultural-political attack on it by factions seeking to install their sectarian "truth" in place of the regime of managed confessional pluralism.

Despite its radical scope, this redescription of the religious and political disposition of Protestant rationalism and philosophical history finds significant prima facie confirmation in the events surrounding the attempt by the Prussian Department of Religious Affairs to censor Kant's philosophical history of religion in the 1790s.[47] The scene for these events was set by the government's Edict on Religion of 1788. The edict had reaffirmed the constitutional recognition of a plurality of confessional religions, while simultaneously attempting to contain the threat to this constitutional order that was posed by the anti-confessional proselytizing of Protestant rationalism. This was to be achieved not by banning the latter, but by requiring clergy to teach their particular confession's articles of faith (whatever they were) when performing their public office, even if they held different (rationalist) views in private.[48] The philosophical history of religion that Kant advanced in his *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* and associated writings exemplified this threat to the religious constitution in two key regards: first, in arguing that the official confessions, with their revealed biblical basis, were only empirical condescensions to man's historical immaturity, destined to

47 For a detailed discussion see Ian Hunter, "Kant's *Religion* and Prussian Religious Policy", *Modern Intellectual History*, 2 (2005), 1–27.

48 The full German text of the edict is available in the companion volume to Dirk Kemper's invaluable microfiche collection of the ensuing controversy literature. See Dirk Kemper, ed., *Mißbrauchte Aufklärung? Schriften zum preußischen Religionsedikt vom 9. Juli 1788. Begleitband* (Hildesheim and New York, 1996), 226–343.

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be supplanted by a "pure religion of reason" in the form of a self-governing moral philosophy;[49] and second in declaring that the legitimacy of the state depended on its laws being in accord with the self-governing reason of a community of rational beings.[50] Kant thus argued that the edict and thence the constitution were illegitimate because the edict supposedly sought to forestall the progressive purification of confessional religion that was leading to a religion and a politics of rational self-governance that would constitute an age of "Enlightenment".[51]

The degree to which modern scholarship has repeated Kant's own view of the situation is quite remarkable, which is to say it simply presumes that Kant's philosophical history contained a presumptively true theory of religion and politics that was being repressed by a religiously reactionary government.[52] But that is symptomatic of the degree to which this scholarship remains informed by philosophical history and its cultural politics. In light of the preceding discussion, though, it should be clear that Kant's philosophical history of the rational supersession of the confessional religions was nothing other than an attack on them from an extra-ecclesial rationalist confession invested in a metaphysics of man's rational apotheosis. Similarly, Kant's "theory" that the legitimacy of the constitution depended on its being willed by a community of rational beings was nothing more than an attempt to undermine the constitution by elevating a particular metaphysical truth about humanity (as a rationally self-governing collective being) above the competing plurality of religious and philosophical truths, and thus above the constitution itself. In other words, in treating Kant's religious rationalism and philosophical history as an illicit form of sectarian proselytizing, the Prussian Department of Religious Affairs understood the historical situation far more clearly than have modern philosophical historians. For within the cultural and political order of the Prussian religious constitution, Kantian

49 Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, 6–87.

50 Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice", in M. J. Gregor, ed., *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1996), 273–310, 296–7.

51 Ibid ., 302–3; and Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'", in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss (Cambridge, 1970), 54–60.

52 C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 48–53; Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 855–88; and, for a more nuanced version, Thomas P. Saine, *The Problem of Being Modern: Or, the German Pursuit of Enlightenment from Leibniz to the French Revolution* (Detroit, 1997), 280–310. This view has now been convincingly called into question by an important revisionist study arguing that the edict itself was an Enlightenment measure and wholly in keeping with Prussian secular religious pluralism. See Michael J. Sauter, *Visions of the Enlightenment: The Edict on Religion of 1788 and the Politics of the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century Prussia* (Leiden, 2009).

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philosophical history was indeed a rationalist sectarian attack on the confessional religions and the constitutional order that guaranteed their coexistence.

THE POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF PROTESTANT RATIONALISM IN THE *VORMÄRZ*

If in the 1790s Kantian religious rationalism and philosophical history had been largely quarantined within the secular and pluralist religious constitution, how did it come about that by the 1840s it had joined an array of highly visible variants—freethinking, Hegelian, Feuerbachian, Marxian—from which emerged concepts of secularization that had never been thought before, and philosophical histories of a process of secularization that had never taken place? The Kantian, Hegelian, and Marxian traditions have, of course, deposited their own answers to this question in the archive and the classroom. They have done so, however, by deploying the architecture of philosophical history itself, namely the dialectical oppositions between theory and practice, the ideal and the material, norms and facts, and thence the promise of a series of reconciliations that must realize reason in history.[53] This has allowed them to answer our question by arguing that the dialectical realization of Kant's "theory" of human reason and freedom had been temporarily stalled by a repressive government acting on behalf of "conservative" religions, but would be achieved in historical "practice" through its successive "detranscendentalizing" by Hegelianism and, of course, by Marxism.[54] Such accounts are undermined in part by the fact that the political realization or "detranscendentalizing" of Protestant rationalism never took place, and in part because they conceive of political change in philosophical-historical terms, as the material realization of ideas.

As we have seen, though, rather than being the objects of an ideal theory that might be realized in history, Kantian reason and freedom were the spearheads of

[53] For Kantian and Hegelian accounts see, respectively, Allen W. Wood, "General Introduction", in A. W. Wood and G. Di Giovanni, eds., *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology* (Cambridge, 1996), xi–xxiv; and Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, 48–53.

[54] A left-Hegelian or Marxian version of the story is offered by Warren Breckman, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the Political Theology of Restoration", *History of Political Thought*, 13 (1992), 437–62; and Breckman , *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1999), 258–97. Breckman treats Marx as approaching the final socialization (or "secularization") of Kantian and Hegelian idealisms that had yet to break free of "Christian personalism". For the inverted mirror-image Catholic account—according to which German idealism was indeed Protestant rationalism but for just that reason was capable of being instrumentalized and imposed as a supraconfessional state pedagogy—see Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 222–39.

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a sectarian metaphysics deployed in cultural and political combat. And far from signifying the blocking of rational enlightenment by political conservatism, the quarantining of Kant's philosophical history of Christianity in fact represented the restraint of rationalist sectarianism in accordance with the pluralist religious constitution. In fact, in the 1790s nothing guaranteed that Kantian religious rationalism and philosophical history would enter the political domain and give birth to a new and politically consequential conception of secularization. Like Spinozism before it, Kantianism might have continued to occupy the space of a tolerated academic sect, similar to the space that it occupies today. I shall now argue that what permitted Kantian, Hegelian, and Marxian religious rationalisms to obtain political salience, and their philosophical histories of secularization to become culturally and politically consequential, was not the dialectical realization of human reason, but something else altogether: namely the military and political destruction of the constitutional order in which they would otherwise have been maintained as tolerated philosophical sects. This is what made it possible for the Protestant–rationalist campaign against confessional religion to enter into an increasingly factionalized political domain, and to forge a new philosophical-historical conception of secularization as a key weapon of cultural and political combat.

In offering a brief outline of these developments we will have three main objects of concern. First, the resurgence of Protestant university metaphysics in its Kantian and post-Kantian forms; second, the role of this metaphysics as a type of spiritual grooming responsible for forming the charismatic insight and authority of the "critical" philosopher; and third, the manner in which the cultural and political instability of the *Vormärz* permitted this philosophical persona to migrate from its academic and ecclesiastical enclaves into an array of proliferating political parties and sects, where it supplied the template for the charismatic philosopher–politician. Taken together, these three factors constituted the context for the appearance of the new philosophical-historical conceptions of secularization.

THE RETURN OF METAPHYSICS

One way of understanding the resurgence of rationalist or idealist philosophies in Protestant Germany between the 1790s and 1850s within the scope of this argument is by approaching them as recoveries and transformations of traditional theocentric and theo-rational Christian metaphysics, whether of the kind elaborated by Aquinas or, in the Protestant world, by Balthasar Meisner and Christoph Scheibler.[55] Traditional metaphysics had provided a

[55] Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments*, 52–62, 102–15, 285–316.

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vast intellectual architecture organized around the opposition between divine immaterial substance and human material being.[56] This opposition was mediated by complex conceptions of man's transformative access to the divine, for example, through human participation in divine intellection on the basis of man's own rational intellectual substance. In Kantian philosophy this duplex architecture was projected onto the human "subject", forming the basis of a double-sided metaphysical anthropology.[57] It thus gave rise to the Kantian opposition between a spontaneous intellect and a passive sensibility, and to complex models of the transformation of the person through the progressive intellectualization of sensibility; for example, in pure thinking or pure willing.[58] In Hegelian philosophy the same metaphysical anthropology or Christology was projected onto "history". From this arose the Hegelian opposition between the so-called ideal and material dimensions of history, and also the complex (Christological and Trinitarian) figures of mediation and transformation—or *Aufhebung* and sublimation—through which whole societies or civilizations were supposed to be historically transformed in accordance with the dialectical self-realization of a "world spirit".[59]

We have already indicated the manner in which this metaphysical architecture could be placed at the disposal of religious rationalism in the case of Kant's philosophical history of Christianity. In his lectures published as *The Philosophy of Right* (1820), Hegel provides us with a more immediately pertinent example, by superimposing the dialectical–metaphysical architecture onto the church–state relation itself. He does this by arguing that in a historically undeveloped culture the state serves the narrow material ends of maintaining security and peace—thereby cutting itself off from philosophical and scientific truth—while the church is the receptacle of spiritual truth, but only in the form of an inchoate feeling for God, divorced from the rational Idea: "We do indeed know from history that there have in the past been periods and conditions of barbarism in which all higher spirituality had its seat in the Church, while the state was merely

56 Heinz Heimsoeth, *The Six Great Themes of Western Metaphysics and the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. R. J. Betanzos (Detroit, 1994), 38–81.

57 On Kant's "noumenal anthropology" see Reiner Wimmer, "Homo noumenon: Kants praktisch-moralische Anthropologie", in N. Fischer, ed., *Kants Metaphysik und Religionsphilosophie* (Hamburg, 2004), 347–90.

58 Walter Sparn, "Kant's Doctrine of Atonement as a Theory of Subjectivity", in P. J. Rossi and M. Wreen, eds., *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered* (Indianapolis, 1991), 103–12.

59 Yerkes, *Christology of Hegel*, 7–50; Cyril O'Regan, "The Trinity in Kant, Hegel, and Schelling", in G. Emery and M. Levering, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (New York, 2011), 254–66.

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a secular [*weltliches*] regime of violence, arbitrariness, and passion".[60] And Hegel clearly uses the term *weltlich* or "secular" in a similar way to Thomasius, as a synonym for a specifically political form of government separated from the domain of religious truth. In Hegel's case, however, the metaphysical opposition of the "ideal" and the "material" has transformed this separation into a symptom of the secular state's undeveloped, one-sided, and defective form: "A bad state, of course, is purely secular and finite, but the rational state is infinite within itself".[61] This is because the whole point of Hegel's "history" of church and state is to project their dialectical mediation and eventual reconciliation.

According to this dialectical process the state loses its secular material character as it rationally realizes "the Idea" (of Christian freedom) that had initially been present in religion as mere feeling. For its part, religion comes to consciousness of the Idea it had been harboring as feeling through the process of rationalization that is bringing this Idea to self-conscious realization in the state.[62] Hegel does not appear to have used the substantive "secularization" (*Verweltlichung*) to characterize this reciprocal process in which confessional religion is rationalized while the state is spiritualized, yet within a few years his followers would. What is immediately clear, though, is that this conception of a dialectical historical process soon to be baptized as "secularization" was (just as it had been for Kant) utterly inimical to the order of the Prussian religious constitution. We can recall that the constitution had suspended theological and philosophical truth in order to constitute a secular framework whose role was not to rationalize confessional religions, or sublimate them into a "rational state", but to maintain them in perpetuity as the condition of achieving their political coexistence. But then Hegel's hostility to this "barbaric" religious constitution was predictable, given that his dialectics were grounded in a sectarian metaphysics of man as a simultaneously spiritual and material being, whose role was not to recognize the carefully calibrated separation and relation of churches and state but to project its overcoming through the "dialectical self-realization of the world spirit"; that is, through some kind of social or political imposition of Hegelian metaphysics.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE METAPHYSICIAN

Once again, then, no philosophical-historical process of secularization, no Kantian rationalization of confessional religion, Hegelian dialectical mediation of church and state, or Thomist sublimation of Protestant rationalism into state

60 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1991), §§272, 298.

61 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, 270.

62 Ibid., 302–4.

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religion had ever taken place. Nor would it. Not only did an unmediated and decidedly non-dialectical separation of state supervision and religious truth sit at the core of the early modern religious constitution and its nineteenth-century Prussian inheritor, but this Janus-faced structure of a secular and relativistic juridical framework supporting a plurality of revealed confessional religions has remained constitutive of the German religious constitution right up to its present (post-1949) form, where it has been repeatedly affirmed by the German Constitutional Court. To reiterate the central point of the argument, this is not to falsify Kantian and Hegelian philosophical histories of church and state as such, but to show that they are something quite other than histories or theories of their putative objects. Rather, they are better understood as historical projections of the metaphysics of spiritual and material being whose concrete role lies in the spiritual or intellectual grooming, the *Bildung* or *Seelenführung*, of the philosophers who expound them.

The central purpose or "ethical telos" of Hegel's dialectical discourse on the church and state is thus to shape the philosopher himself. This takes place by presenting the philosopher as subject to an internal contradiction between his inner and outer worlds that parallels the "barbaric" opposition between church and state, whose overcoming will grant privileged insight into the future reconciled form of history:

> The most immediate knowledge spirit can have of itself when it assumes the shape of a human individual is that it is capable of feeling. It does not as yet have an object, and the individual simply feels himself determined in some particular way. He then tries to distinguish between himself and this determinate quality, and sets about creating an internal division within himself. Thus, my feelings are split up into an external and internal world ... I encounter a contradiction within myself which threatens to destroy me ... I survive and seek to overcome [*aufzuheben*] the deficiency ... [63]

Only through this act of inner spiritual self-transformation is the philosopher qualified to participate in the larger historical or "national" mediation of the ideal and the real, thereby becoming the consciousness in which the Idea or world spirit discloses itself, and thence capable of reshaping religion and the state in accordance with this Idea:

> Self-consciousness, then, is a philosophical concept, which can only attain its full determinate character in philosophical discourse. If we take this as established, we may further conclude that the determinate national consciousness is the nation's consciousness of its own being. The spirit is primarily its own object ... It seeks to create a spiritual world in accordance with its own concept ... and to produce religion and the state in

63 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975), 48–9.

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such a way that it will conform to its own concept and be truly itself or become its own Idea.[64]

Christian metaphysics had long constituted a "psychagogical" discipline in which the few chosen to undertake its arduous spiritual exercises were ascribed privileged insight into the transcendent foundations of the temporal world. Sometimes, as in the cases of bishop–philosophers like Augustine of Hippo, Ambrose of Milan, and Cyril of Alexandria, power was exercised in this world on that basis.[65] And as a result of the "subjectivist" and "historicist" adaptations of the architecture of metaphysics carried out by Kant and Hegel, a variant of this same authority had resurfaced in early nineteenth-century Protestant Germany.[66] It did so in the form of the charismatic authority of academic metaphysicians who claimed access to a supra-empirical Idea of religion and the state on the basis of a split that they induced in themselves between sensibility and intellect, the material and ideal, and the "external and internal world", as part of a spiritual exercise in self-overcoming that promised privileged access to the ideal within the real.[67]

METAPHYSICAL POLITICS

Such claims to supra-empirical insight into church and state had no effectual political consequences so long as the political and juridical foundations of the existing religious constitution remained intact. Under those conditions, the charismatic spiritual authority of the philosophers remained largely confined to the tolerated domain of universities, lodges, illumination societies, and literary journals, just as the parallel authority of the confessional theologians and clergy was confined to the rival churches. Were the secular and pluralistic political–juridical regime to be disrupted, however, then it might be possible for charismatic philosophical authority to be exercised beyond the academic enclave.

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64 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 53.

65 See Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), 71–117.

66 Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments*, 293–316

67 For the standard Kantian and Hegelian view of this in contemporary scholarship, according to which, rather than being the architecture for a spiritual exercise, the divisions between spontaneous intellect and passive sensibility (or the ideal and material worlds) do in fact pertain to the structure of "human experience", see Robert B. Pippin, "The Kantian Aftermath: Reaction and Revolution in German Philosophy", in A. W. Wood and S. S. Hahn, eds., *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century (1790–1870)* (Cambridge, 2011), 19–45; Pippin , *The Persistence of Subjectivity: On the Kantian Aftermath* (New York, 2005).

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This is what happened as a result of the military, political, and social crisis that engulfed Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century and persisted through to the 1848 "revolution" and National Assembly and, beyond that, to the formation of the Bismarckian state in 1871. This crisis began when the French revolutionary armies overran the Rhineland in 1794, leading to the extensive compensatory secularization of ecclesiastical territories within the empire under the terms of the Reichsdeputationshauptschluss (Final Recess of the Reich's Deputation) of 1803. It culminated in Napoleon's defeat of Prussia and dissolution of the German Empire in 1806. These events created the political circumstances that allowed rationalist philosophies to exit their university enclave cultures and enter the juridical and political arenas. This started to occur when the proliferating political parties, factions, and sects that emerged in the lead-up to the National Assembly of 1848 began to incorporate academic philosophies such as Kantianism and Hegelianism as a means of shaping their platforms and leaders. This was the period that witnessed the emergence of a slew of republican, liberal and radical democratic political factions, some of which began to understand secularity in a new way: not in terms of the maintenance of a plurality of confessional religions, but in terms of curtailing the social role of the churches in such areas as schooling, marriage, and moral education, in the name of individual reason and rights.[68] The same period also saw the formation of various anti-secular cultural and political factions seeking to defend the social role of the Protestant and Catholic churches, sometimes under the umbrella of monarchical or federalist forms of government.[69]

This development had been under way throughout the *Vormärz* but would find its showcase in the 1848 Paulskirche National Assembly itself, and the welter of controversial commentary on its constitutional deliberations. For our immediate concerns the most remarkable feature of the assembly, charged with unifying Germany as a parliamentary democratic state, is the fact that so many of its key factions were jointly philosophical–theological and political. Without attempting to be exhaustive, we can thus observe that the Deutscher Hof was a radical democratic faction informed by freethinking rationalism, scientific naturalism, and anticlericalism in the manner of Paine and the Jacobins.[70] This mix was personified in the leading factional figure of Carl Vogt, a physiologist and zoologist

[68] Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806–1848* (New York, 2000), 191–226.

[69] Clark, "From 1848 to Christian Democracy".

[70] At this stage the factions were named after the hotels and cafés in which they met, although they were in fact the seed-forms of the political parties—the democratic socialist (SPD), Marxist–communist (KPD), liberal, conservative, and Catholic (*Zentrumpartei*)—that would dominate the next national assembly, to be held at Weimar in 1919. For an overview

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who argued against religious education, sacramental marriage, and confessional churches by appealing to a free individual scientific rationality. The Donnersberg faction was a leftist breakaway from Deutscher Hof, cofounded by the "left-Hegelian" philosopher Arnold Ruge, and committed to a more radical form of popular democracy and a program of comprehensive de-Christianization. Ruge's vaunting insistence on the inferiority of Vogt's "mechanical" materialism to Marx's "dialectical" kind, which prophesied a working-class revolution that would desublimate (secularize) alienated forms of social activity, is symptomatic of a key feature of this political milieu; that is, the degree to which political factions, sects, and parties formed and re-formed around rival philosophical-historical visionaries claiming charismatic insight into the unfolding of reason in history.[71]

On the "right", Catholic political theologians such as the canonist Ignaz Döllinger found their home in the Café Milani faction, which combined an antirepublican defense of territorial monarchies with a confessional defense of the rights of a national Catholic church. While not a delegate to the assembly, the Lutheran political metaphysician Friedrich Julius Stahl, cofounder of the antiliberal, antidemocratic Prussian Konservative Partei, exercised a similar influence on the Christian right to that exercised by the left-Hegelians on the antireligious left. Drawing on Schelling's philosophical idealism and Savigny's nationalist historical jurisprudence, Stahl was a legal philosopher who conducted a running public commentary on the assembly, especially with regard to the relations between church and state.[72] Here he provided a powerful critique of both Vogt's freethinking naturalism and all forms of religious rationalism or "philosophical religion", arguing for his preferred position, where a quasi-theocratic constitution would acknowledge revealed Christianity as the foundation of the "national spirit" and thus of the legal and political order.[73]

These proto-political parties were the conduits through which academic philosophical rationalism and philosophical history entered the political arena. On one side of the historical equation, rationalist philosophy and philosophical history provided a potent spiritual grooming for leaders of political factions. This imbued them with a purely charismatic but nonetheless galvanizing "insight" into

of the factions see Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany: 1845–1945* (Princeton, NJ, 1969), vol. 3, 61–3.

71 On the constitutively factionalized character of these ideological groupings see the fascinating study by Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary Refugees: German Socialism in Britain, 1840–1860* (London, 2006).

72 For his hostile commentary on the 1849 constitution's pluralistic religious provisions see Friedrich Julius Stahl, *Parlamentarische Reden* (Berlin, 1856), 81–8.

73 Friedrich Julius Stahl, *Principles of Law*, trans. R. Alvarado (Aalten, 2007).

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the so-called "present level of historical consciousness", which they claimed to personally embody, and thence into the future fully rational forms of religion and state. On the other side, the emergent political parties and sects promised to provide the philosopher–politicians with a means of bypassing the existing constitutional order and achieving the direct political realization of their sectarian rationalist theory-programs. This included their programs for the transcendental rationalization of confessional religion, the reciprocal rationalization of religion and moralization of the state, or the desublimation of religion into democratic politics, which were now on the verge of being called "secularization".

In the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* of 1844, the journal he coedited with Ruge, Marx provided an exemplary but entirely symptomatic expression of this nexus between philosophical charisma and political sectarianism. His claim was that Marxism represents the dialectical realization of philosophy in political practice:

> As philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapon in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people, the emancipation of the Germans into men will be accomplished ... The emancipation of the German is the emancipation of man. The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot realize itself without the transcendence [*Aufhebung*] of the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot transcend itself without the realization [*Verwirklichung*] of philosophy.[74]

This dialectical incantation, whose spell continues to bind even today, was not, of course, a theory of the realization of idealist philosophy through its desublimating materialization in a self-transcending proletariat. Like Hegel's model portrayal of the reciprocal dialectical transformation of church and state, Marx's account of the reciprocal *Aufhebung* of philosophy and the proletariat was not directed outwards to the historical situation. After all, the idealist philosophies whose materialization he prophesied were not false theories capable of being rectified through their famous materialist inversion. Rather, they were metaphysical discourses providing the moral grooming for a cadre of intellectuals imbued with charismatic insight into the realization of metaphysics in history. Again like Hegel's discourse on church and state, Marx's discourse on philosophy and politics was directed at the political metaphysician himself, setting the scene for a particular kind of "work of the self on the self". The opposition between a too-spiritual philosophy and a too-material proletariat was in fact the architecture for an act of inner overcoming that Marx performed on himself, the reward for

74 Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction", in Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. A. Jolin and J. O'Malley (Cambridge, 1970), 129–42, 138.

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which was charismatic insight into the future reconciled or de-alienated form of society. It was this social performance of metaphysical insight, in the context of small groups functioning as political schools and sects, that allowed philosophy to function as a "spiritual weapon". For in relation to sect followers lacking an equivalent spiritual grooming, it permitted leaders to exercise the authority accruing from intellectual self-cultivation and charismatic insight, contested and fleeting though this sectarian authority typically was.

We have already taken note of the manner in which the philosophical confessions of Protestant rationalism could undermine the existing religious constitution, declaring that it was blocking the progressive rationalization of religion that would issue in a society of self-governing rational beings, a rationally self-conscious moral state, a philosophically self-conscious proletariat, and so on. Now we can see that this philosophical delegitimation became politically consequential not through the dialectical realization of philosophy in society but in a quite different manner: through the role of rationalist philosophies in delivering charismatic programs and leaderships to political sects whose scope of action was provided by the military and political destabilization of a particular constitutional order. These were the circumstances in which the new philosophical-historical conception of secularization—as the epochal transition from a Christian supernatural ordering of society to one based solely on an autonomous human rationality—could emerge in the form of an array of rival cultural-political combat concepts.

THE EMERGENCE OF SECULARIZATION AS A MODERN COMBAT CONCEPT

Such variant philosophical-historical conceptions of secularization first began to appear in the 1830s, in the form of a linked array of rival programmatic concepts serving factionalized religious and political interests. In the turbulent social and intellectual space created by the military–political suspension of the German religious constitution, these rival philosophical–political factions proposed to transcend the constitutional meaning of the secular as the political and juridical maintenance of a plurality of revealed confessional religions, in favor of an all-embracing secularity grounded in the nature of human reason and its historical realization. And they could contrive to relegate the actual political–juridical meaning of secularization understood as the civil conversion of ecclesiastical things, in favor of a supposedly more philosophically fundamental and historically consequential understanding that as yet only existed in their programs. This was the context that permitted the factions to first use the term "secularization" to refer to the epochal transformation of a Christian into

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a rational society, and to project it in their rival philosophical histories and competing party platforms.

If Hegel himself did not use the German form *Verweltlichung* ("worldlification", secularization) to characterize the reciprocal rationalization of religion and spiritualization of the state, then in 1837 the Hegelian ecclesiastical historian Richard Rothe did. If not the first use, then Rothe's is certainly among the earliest uses of secularization (*Säkularisierung*, *Verweltlichung*) in its modern philosophical-historical sense, to name an epochal process of de-Christianization. Rothe defended the "right-Hegelian" variant, in which the rationalization of the church is accompanied by the sublimated Christianization of the state.[75] He thus faithfully outlined Hegel's dialectical process in which the church was secularized as its ideal of freedom was realized in the state, while the state was thereby desecularized:

> In the same relation by which Christendom brings into existence a Christian state—that is, a state that is perfect in and for itself—the church becomes superfluous. Because in just such a state Christian life finds the only truly appropriate cosmic entity and organ of its historical efficacy. The Church is secularized [*säcularisirt*] in the same proportion as the state is desecularized [*ent-säcularisirt*] . . .[76]

Hegel's student Carl Ludwig Michelet followed the same lexical pathway in 1843, declaring that secularization originated in God's becoming man, but now referred to the realizing of divine man in all areas of social life:

> Law, morality, family, state, art, religion are only the ways in which God eternally became and becomes man. The goal of history is this secularization [*Verweltlichung*] of Christianity, which a writer [Hegel] has recently rightly claimed to be the true Christian state, where Christianity does not remain a mere religion—although not without being sorely tested by Reaction for saying so.[77]

Michelet's use of secularization in its new philosophical-historical sense occurred in a polemical defense of Hegelian philosophy against Schelling's attack on it, and is indicative of the factionalized cultural and political context in which the new usage was emerging. This is the sole appearance of the term in his four-hundred-page book.

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75 *Pace* Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 226–7, Rothe's program was symptomatic not of the imposition of Protestant rationalism as the ideology of a secular state, but of a failed sectarian attempt to subordinate the destabilized Prussian state to a rationalist philosophical religion.

76 Richard Rothe, *Die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche und ihrer Verfassung* (Wittenberg, 1837), 85.

77 Carl Ludwig Michelet, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der neuesten deutschen Philosophie mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den gegenwärtigen Kampf Schellings mit der Hegelschen Schule* (Berlin, 1843), 305.

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The left-Hegelian or Marxist philosophical-historical usage of secularization was emerging in the same context and time frame. In a letter to Ruge written in September 1843 regarding the foundation of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, Marx displays the role of the charismatic philosopher–politician in formulating and leading a project of revolutionary desublimation or secularization: "In Germany ... a reign of stupidity has come upon us ... It is becoming clearer every day that independent, thinking people must seek out a new center. I am convinced that our plan [for a new Paris-based journal] would satisfy a real need and real needs must be satisfied in reality". The grounds for this extraordinary self-certainty lie in Marx's self-elevating conception that the de-alienating transformation of religion and society will announce themselves in and to an individual who has come to participate in the world's coming to consciousness of itself: "The reform of consciousness consists *only* in making the world aware of its own consciousness ... Our whole object can only be—as is also the case in Feuerbach's criticism of religion—to bring religious and philosophical questions into the form of human self-consciousness".[78] It is unsurprising that, in the following year, this charismatic faction leader would publish a political prophecy in which the desublimating secularization of religious consciousness would take place in and through the realization of a radical democratic state:

> But the religious spirit cannot be really secularized [*verweltlicht werden*], because what is it other than the un-secular [*unweltliche*] form of a developmental level of the human spirit? The religious spirit can only be actualized in so far as the developmental step of the human spirit whose religious expression it is emerges in and constitutes its secular [*weltlichen*] form. This occurs in the democratic state.[79]

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, none of these putative processes of secularization had actually taken place, or ever would, since they were in fact historical projections of the exercises in spiritual grooming through which rationalist philosophers cultivated the charismatic persona required for leadership roles in an array of academic, political, and theological factions. It thus represents a significant misunderstanding of this state of affairs to imagine that any of the philosophies were connected to a "progressive" politics through some historical materialization of their concepts or theorizations.[80] But it is no less fantasmatic to imagine that

[78] Karl Marx, "Briefe aus den Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern", in *Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels—Werke*, Bd. 1 (Berlin DDR, 1976), 337–46, 343, 346, original emphasis.

[79] Karl Marx, "Zur Judenfrage", in *Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels—Werke*, Bd. 1, 347–77, 360.

[80] See, for example, Warren Breckman's philosophical-historical argument that left-Hegelian debates over the revolutionary de-alienation of religious personhood represented an

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the sectarian rationalism of the Protestant philosophies ensured their political realization courtesy of their instrumentalization by a bureaucratic state bent on an "Erastian" subordination of the churches.[81]

What swept the rationalist philosophies into political reality was neither their materialization (secularization) in a moral state or social class, nor their instrumentalization (secularization) by a secular state bent on their ideological imposition, but a set of circumstances of an altogether different kind. In one regard these circumstances were formed by the capacity of the rationalist philosophies and histories to imbue the leadership of political sects with the charismatic authority to propose installing their particular "theory" of secularization as the constitutional foundation of religion, law, and state. At the same time, it was only the military and political suspension of the existing constitutional order that permitted the rationalist philosophies to migrate from their tolerated academic enclaves and enter the political sects that were proposing to refound the pluralistic and relativistic religious constitution on the basis of a "true" theory of religion and politics. For just this reason, however, the rationalist philosophies could be swept out of political reality if, for example, political circumstances led to the reinstatement of the pluralist religious constitution as the modus vivendi between the rival cultural and political factions. This is what happened with the short-lived constitution of 1849, which terminated the rival programs for the philosophical-historical secularization of religion and society by reestablishing the constitutional protection of a plurality of confessional religions.

A subsequent military and political suspension of the religious constitution between 1933 and 1945 would be terminated in two quite different ways. In West Germany this would occur through the 1949 reinstatement of the secular and relativistic religious constitution, which now extended protection to "philosophical ideologies" such as Marxism, to the extent that they did not interfere with pluralistic order of confessional religions. In Soviet East Germany, however, the constitutional interregnum would be terminated through a program to impose the Marxist conception of secularization through the instrumentarium of a party state, thereby demonstrating the only form in which philosophical history could deal with both the nonexistence of the process of secularization and the historical persistence of confessional religions.

unfolding emancipatory "theory" of politics and society, in Warren Breckman, "Politics, Religion, and Personhood: The Left Hegelians and the Christian German State", in D. Moggach, ed., *Politics, Religion, and Art: Hegelian Debates* (Evanston, IL, 2011), 96–117.

[81] The central argument of Howard's *Protestant Theology*.

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