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## **Transformation of Hegelian Philosophy in B. N. Chicherin's Metaphysics and Political Philosophy\***

### **1. Introduction**

The tradition of Russian Hegelianism starts in the late 1830s when some separate circles of the followers of the German idealism became interested in Hegel. It is well known that many Russian philosophers were under the great influence of the German idealism. The early Slavophiles were the followers of Schelling. Nevertheless, they were also acquainted with Hegelianism. For example, Ivan Kireevsky was a Hegel listener in Berlin. To Slavophiles, Hegel was the object of constant criticism. They understood his philosophical system as a peak of the one-sided rationalism rooted in the West-European mentality. From the Slavophiles' point of view, Hegelian philosophy fully realized the tendency toward domination and violence by means of pure reason, which lied in the essence of the European history. Therefore, they developed their own philosophical project in opposition to the Hegelian metaphysics. This fact only shows to what extent Hegel's philosophy was significant to them. The Slavophile philosophical project aimed at the philosophy based on the idea of integral knowledge which includes both religion and rationality. In fact, it can be treated as a version of Hegelianism, since Hegel's system was the starting point of the Slavophilism.

However, the Hegelian tradition was much more diverse in Russia. Hegel was interpreted as a revolutionary (we can just remember famous characteristic of Hegel's logic as "the algebra of revolution" given by A. I. Herzen), as a conservative thinker, as an anarchist and as rationalist. The philosophers of different and even opposing movements used Hegel for the justification of their own philosophical constructions. This fact only proves the viewpoint expressed by N. Berdyaev that Hegel had made "a brilliant career in Russia".<sup>1</sup> To some extent, one can conclude that Russian XIX<sup>th</sup> century philosophy was a response to Hegel,

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<sup>1</sup> N. Berdyaev, "Russian idea", in: *O Rossii i russkoy filosofskoy kul'ture*, edited by E. M. Chekharin, Moscow 1990, 43–271.