EDITORIAL FOREWORD

The greatness of a philosopher does not consist only in his or her attempt to interpret the basic types of human experience comprehensively or to analyze this experience rationally, consistently, and systematically. The greatness of a philosopher also consists in the depth, richness, and creative challenge of his or her fundamental insight, intuition, or understanding of the meaning of this experience, of his or her ability to reveal the universal aspects of human nature as such, to shed a light of understanding on the meaning of what we do, hope for, and care about as people, and to inspire us in our struggle to actualize our humanity as visitors on this earth! Thus, we ask regardless of when or where a philosopher has flourished, can this philosopher speak to us today? Can he or she enhance our understanding of our present predicament? Can he or she inspire us in our struggle for freedom, justice, and happiness? In short, is this philosopher relevant?

In *International Law and the Possibility of a Just World Order: An Essay on Hegel's Universalism*, Steven V. Hicks has shown with admirable success that Hegel’s social and political philosophy is, contrary to a number of critics, relevant to the contemporary debate on one of the most urgent questions in the sphere of international politics: is it possible for the nation states of the world to coexist under the conditions of peace, justice, mutual respect, and prosperity? We can no longer discuss the questions of freedom, human rights, peace, international law, ecology, business, education, poverty, or scientific research from the standpoint of the sovereign state alone, for the geopolitical, economic, and cultural map of the world has undergone a radical change during the last two decades of the twentieth century. The world is becoming, as Hicks has thoughtfully argued, more and more interdependent economically, culturally, and politically. We should accordingly ask: What kind of world system, or organization, is most conducive to the realization of human goals on the individual, communal, national, and international levels? Our quest in raising this question is a quest for a rational world order, an order within which individuals, communities, and nations can flourish under the conditions of human dignity. Hicks’s lucid, insightful, and challenging reading of Hegel has, I think, contributed much to our understanding of the basic issues involved in the concept of world order: international law, world peace, individualism, poverty, community, universal justice, communication, freedom, and human rights. Hicks has shown that Hegel’s vision of human history, human nature, and the meaning of human life can be used as a guiding principle in the development of world community. Perhaps achieving this goal is the ultimate task of inquiry, of scholarship, of the life of the mind!

*International Law and the Possibility of a Just World Order: An Essay on Hegel's Universalism* establishes Hicks as one of the most distinguished authorities in Hegel scholarship. This book shows a deep understanding of Hegel’s work, the basic problems that confront us as a family of nations, and
also the basic principle that should guide us in the development of a just world order. We owe Hicks much gratitude for bringing Hegel alive to us today, for making Hegel speak to one of the most vital issues we now face, and for making philosophical reflection useful for our practical life.

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