

theses of Zhdanov, who completely rejected all non-Soviet literature, and who proclaimed the irreconcilable contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie. As Lukács himself stated, he remained faithful to the fundamental principles of the Blum Theses—but in “Aesopian” terms.

It is because of this implicit political content that Lukács prefaces the collections of his essays; but these are not meant as “repudiations” (to quote Mr Said). Rather, they are attempts to situate his essays within the historical, political conjunctures to which they allude.

War, so Clausewitz tells us, is but a continuation of politics by other means. For Lukács, literary criticism was but a continuation of politics by other means.

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## Hegel

Sir,—Walter Kaufmann’s review of Charles Taylor’s *Hegel* (January 2) needs a reply. Much of what he says is right. Professor Taylor’s history is certainly impressionistic, his scholarship incomplete. His account of Hegel is selective and non-polemical, and, most seriously, he often fails to get to grips with Hegel’s arguments. Yet Professor Kaufmann overstates these “defects” only because he has missed what Taylor is offering.

English Hegel students have badly needed a satisfactory account of Hegel as a whole. The books by Stace, Mure, and Findlay were written for an audience that is not today’s audience. The students who will read Taylor belong to a generation which shares Taylor’s own philosophical and political concerns. They have passed through Marx and the young Hegelianism of the New Left; they have emerged into Heidegger, Habermas, Wittgenstein, Chomsky, and even Lévi-Strauss. The Hegel that is increasingly being taught today is a very different figure from the Hegel that their grandparents studied; and even different from the Hegel their predecessors stumbled across during their Marxist odyssey ten years ago. All this means two things. First, Hegel can no longer be read merely as the “Idealist” whom Marx decisively transcended (upended?). His own philosophy of society thus naturally becomes interesting for its own sake once more. Second, it is no longer clear that his idea and practice of philosophy itself is outdated. As positivism dies, the Kojevian claim that Hegel is still the nearest to a viable total philosophy will seem increasingly serious in the next few years.

Given these constraints and possibilities, the “defects” in Taylor’s treatment fall into perspective. He could hardly have avoided some “history of ideas”; yet how could he have given us a complete and rigorous account of early German thought? Kaufmann makes much of two points, both I think trivial. He tasks Taylor with suggesting that Hegel reappeared in Anglo-Saxon thought at the turn of the century (not last decade). And he rakes Taylor over the coals for claiming that Herder influenced Hegel. Why? Because Hegel mentions Herder only infrequently and disparagingly. But it is clear that German thought after Herder mutates in striking ways, and that

Hegel’s philosophy is part of this new trend. Certainly the idea of influence is knotty; but the slightest knowledge of academics suggests that it cannot be treated simply in terms of what writers actually say about one another.

Kaufmann’s more technical complaints, too, fall into place. How could a general introduction to Hegel for a new generation of students also be (1) a comprehensive analysis of all Hegel’s thought, (2) a deep elucidation of his most important arguments, and (3) a description of his most penetrating polemics? One cannot be expected to do everything in one normal book.

Yet Kaufmann implies two valid criticisms. One is the lack of a single all-inclusive “picture” of Hegel. My own feeling is that Taylor has erred in underplaying Hegel’s philosophy of religion and the consequent general theories of “Spirit” and “Nature”. Hegel’s philosophy cannot be grasped as a totality unless we take seriously his frequent assertion that speculative philosophy is a rational transformation of Christian theology. No other approach, I believe, can make sense out of his philosophy of history, his philosophy of freedom, or his meta-philosophy. No doubt other Hegelians will have different but analogous complaints.

The other valid criticism is that Taylor is not rigorous. Certainly Hegel is vastly more rigorous than Kaufmann pretends. Even in the uniquely florid *Phenomenology*, there are often good hard arguments within the text. They need mining and polishing, but on the whole Hegel is faithful to his view that *Verstand* must remain omnipresent within philosophy—as much as any other great philosopher. (The case is exactly the same for Wittgenstein, whom Kaufmann also calumniates by his phrase “not in the habit of offering rigorous arguments”. It is simply that Wittgenstein’s arguments are often uniquely complex and acute; they do not fit the simple-minded schemes we learned at our supervisor’s knee.) It is true that when one turns to Taylor on a favoured passage, one is apt to be disappointed all too often that he remains on the surface. Yet this is only to say that we need also a series of deeply analytical treatments of parts of Hegel; I think particularly here of the preface to the *Phenomenology*, or the introduction of the *Philosophy of Spirit*.

The fact remains that Taylor will now, and rightly, be read as the only contemporary introduction to Hegel for English-speaking students. Let those who come after do better—if they can.

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Sir,—In his review article “Coming to Terms with Hegel” (January 2), Walter Kaufmann states that “after G. E. Moore published his ‘Refutation of Idealism’ and his *Principia Ethica*, both in 1903, Hegelianism ceased to be a vital force in Anglo-American thought”. This will be news to some of us. F. H. Bradley, who died in 1924, published his *Essays on Truth and Reality* in 1914 and a second much-enlarged edition of his *Principles of Logic* in 1922; McTaggart, whom Professor Kaufmann mentions in passing, published the two

volumes of his *Nature of Existence* in 1921 and 1927 (a major work which, if not directly Hegelian, could not have been written outside the Hegelian tradition); and Collingwood’s work, now generally recognized to be very vital indeed, extended from 1924, with *Speculum Mentis* to *The New Leviathan* (1942), though his influence grew with the posthumously published books on nature and history. (The mention of Collingwood naturally calls up Croce and the Italian Hegelian School, to which Professor Kaufmann makes no reference: Croce’s *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel*, 1907, is a masterly book.) Moreover, during the 1930s at Oxford, there was much discussion of Hegel and Marx, which Professor Kaufmann claims to be a more recent preoccupation: I myself attended an illuminating and devastating series of lectures by E. F. Carr on this subject, and I recall how rapid a fall-off there was in the adherence of the young Marxians. Nor, I think, must we forget a remarkable, though regrettably forgotten, work issuing from Cambridge at this time, namely, Michael Oakeshott’s *Experience and its Modes* (1933), which owed its inspiration directly to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Professor Kaufmann rightly stresses the recent outpouring of books on Hegel; but such quantity should not obscure the high quality of Hegelian studies and discriminating discipleship which, in Britain at least, continued throughout the period associated in the public mind chiefly with the domination of linguistic philosophy.

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## Surveying Ireland

Sir,—It was good to see such a handsome review (February 6) of John Andrews’s long-awaited account, *A Paper Landscape*, of the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth-century Ireland.

Your reviewer (Roy Foster) called attention, and rightly so, to that incomparable quarry for local studies in Ireland, the Ordnance Survey memoirs. He also called attention more particularly to Larcom’s publication in 1837 of the memoir for Templemore parish, which is in fact the city of Londonderry. The comment however on the Templemore volume managed to give the impression that it was quite literally the first and last of its kind. What seems to have escaped the notice of your reviewer is that in 1969 the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland published the equivalent memoir for Antrim parish. The aim at that time was not to initiate a series but simply to demonstrate, with Antrim as an example, how important a source the memoirs were and how relatively simply a local history group could edit and publish these materials for its own area. There is some evidence now to suggest that this example is being followed. And Brian Trainor’s introduction to the Antrim volume is still probably the best brief statement of what riches these “statistical surveys”, to use his phrase, contain.

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