

Junghegelianische Geschichtsphilosophie und Kunsttheorie. Von Ingrid Pepperle. Literatur und Gesellschaft. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978. 287 Seiten. M 9,-.

The Young Hegelians mark the beginning of modern theories of society and cultural criticism, for it is from their writings that the genesis of almost every alternative political movement of our time derives. In no other period was philosophical thought conceived in such a close relationship to political movements and social change. Interest in the Young Hegelians has grown consistently since the forties as a result of the publication of Marx's early works. Western scholars realized that, particularly on the basis of Marx's Manuskripte, a revision of the birth of communist theory would be necessary. Therefore they turned their attention to the period of 1838-1848 to discover the nature of this important process in the disintegration of Hegel's philosophical hegemony. More recently, in the sixties, the New Left has returned to the Young Hegelians because they represent a successful attempt to break with the burden of ossified tradition. In their search for alternatives to orthodox Marxism, the Left Hegelians offer a model for developing the dialectic as a weapon of criticism. Ingrid Pepperle's monograph (together with an earlier study in the same series: Rainer Rosenberg, Literaturverhältnisse im deutschen Vormärz, 1975) is meant explicitly to respond to these developments among Western scholars with a relatively orthodox Marxist interpretation of the Vormärz period. Based on her earlier presentation of key texts by the Young Hegelians (Einführung in die Haleschen und Deutschen Jahrbücher, Kronberg/Tn., 1971), Pepperle focuses here on their revolutionary theories of history and art and establishes them as a necessary stage in a linear development toward the scientific theory of communism proposed by Marx and Engels. The investigation is divided into two main parts, centering on the writings of two important contributors and editors of the Hallesche Jahrbücher, Arnold Ruge and Eduard Prutz. In the first and less interesting part, Pepperle presents a straightforward exposition of Ruge's and Prutz's philosophical and political positions, basically following the critique of the Young Hegelians offered by Marx and Engels in the Manuskripte, The Holy Family and German Ideology. In the second part, Pepperle discusses the literary theories evolved by Ruge and Prutz, with sections on problems of periodization and reception (of the Enlightenment, Romantics, Junges Deutschland, and their own contemporaries). Although it is impossible to speak of a syste-

-9-

matic aesthetic position, the Young Hegelians consistently tried to relate the art process to the social conditions determining it. Thus, the work of art was not evaluated by means of content analysis alone but rather in relation to the conditions that it reflects and which affect it. Thus, Ruge and Prutz provide real insights into the historical determination and function of literature, but at the same time, they never question their own idealistic assumptions about the role of intellectual and ideological factors in changing society.

Marc Silberman
University of Texas at
San Antonio

Auf dem roten Teppich. Erfahrungen, Gedanken, Impressionen. By Hedda Zinner. Berlin: Buchverlag der Morgen, 1978. 455 pages. DDR 11,50 M.

Hedda Zinner's book Auf dem roten Teppich is of importance not only for those interested in the author herself, but also for anyone interested in the cultural affairs of the GDR, particularly the early post-war years. Zinner begins with her return from Moscow in June, 1945, and proceeds to describe three decades of life in the GDR. She describes the efforts, including those of her husband Fritz Erpenbeck, to rebuild the cultural life of Berlin on a socialist foundation. Erpenbeck played an important role in the publishing industry and in journalism, while Zinner worked first with the "Berliner Rundfunk" and later with various theatres. Although Zinner is not well-known today, at least in the West, she was a significant figure in the first decades after the war. Her work with a wide variety of genres and media acquainted her with many important cultural and political figures of the GDR, who emerge frequently in the book. In addition to writing of her contacts and experiences with these figures, she deals extensively with the problems of the early post-war years, personal as well as political, cultural as well as social, and with the origin, development and performance of her various works. Zinner's purpose in writing this book is best expressed by the author herself: "Ich habe nicht die Absicht, Geschichte in ihrer Komplexität zu vermitteln ... Worauf es mir ankommt: einen Hauch der Atmosphäre einzufangen, wie ich sie ganz persönlich erlebte und empfand." Zinner does exactly that and therein lies the value of her book.

Elaine Gress
Washington University