

Review Forum

Jacobs, Jack. *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. viii + 268 pp. \$90.00 (hardcover).

Jack Jacobs's *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* is a unique and valuable contribution to the secondary literature on the history of the Institute for Social Research and Critical Theory more generally. His declared aim in the book is "to demonstrate that the Jewish origins of key members of the Frankfurt School, and the differing ways in which the Critical Theorists related to their origins, shed light on the development of the School, on specific works written by its leading figures, and even on differences that emerged among these figures over time" (1). He does not claim that the history and development of Critical Theory can be explained solely in terms of the Jewish backgrounds of its members. Instead, he argues that it must be situated in "multiple contexts—including that of Jewish history," (6) but also that of the history of Western Marxism; the intellectual history of the Weimar Republic; the intellectual migration from Germany in the 1930s; the postwar histories of the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Israel.

Jacobs further narrows the scope of his analysis by stating that he writes from the perspective of the "history of ideas," not philosophy, and he does "not intend either to explain or critique Critical Theory as a whole" (5), since this task has already been ably performed by other scholars. Within these parameters that he sets for himself Jacobs's book is undoubtedly successful. He demonstrates a firm command of the dauntingly extensive secondary literature on Critical Theory in both English and German, including very recent publications. Even more impressive is the extensive primary source research Jacobs has conducted in a wide variety of archives in Europe, the United States, and Israel. It provides the foundations for most of the original insights in the study. Perhaps unavoidably, he does repeat the findings of some of the earlier studies of the history of the Frankfurt School, but there is enough new material here to hold the attention even of experienced scholars of Critical Theory.

Although one could have imagined a more detailed and comprehensive treatment of the subject, Jacobs succeeds in illuminating something essential about the significance of Judaism for all of the key inner members of the Horkheimer circle and some of the less central figures as well. He accomplishes this task in only three chapters with a total of one hundred and fifty pages of text, although the eighty pages of endnotes and the nearly thirty-page bibliography leave no doubt about the scholarly labors that he invested in this project. The compact presentation of so much research on a broad array of figures over a long period of time is one of the virtues of the book.

The first chapter addresses the Weimar period and focuses primarily on Max Horkheimer, Friedrich Pollock, Leo Lowenthal, Erich Fromm, and Henryk Grossman, although it also contains interesting observations on Siegfried Kracauer and Gerschom Sholem. Sholem's insistence upon the possibility and desirability of embracing something like a pure Jewish identity provides

an illuminating contrast to the other figures' complex negotiations with the Jewish and non-Jewish aspects of their "identity," which Kracauer describes, in his criticisms of Sholem, Martin Buber, and Franz Rosenzweig, in terms of "hybridity" (30). As in the subsequent chapters of the book, Jacobs demonstrates the commonalities, but also—and perhaps more importantly—the many differences that existed in each of these figures' evolving relationship to Judaism and their own Jewishness. He stresses the role of generational conflict in Lowenthal's turn toward and Horkheimer's turn away from Judaism in the early 1920s, while at the same time describing the relative continuity with their parents' views in Fromm's interest and Pollock's disinterest in Jewish religious and cultural traditions.

Although most of what Jacobs tells us about Lowenthal's and Fromm's early involvement with Rabbi Nobel, the Free Jewish House of Learning, Rabbi Salman Baruch Rabinkow (in Fromm's case), and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann's Jewish-psychoanalytic sanatorium, will be familiar to Frankfurt School scholars, he does introduce some new interpretations. For example, he argues against the commonly held view that Fromm's and Lowenthal's break with Orthodox Judaism was the result of their deepening encounter with Freud in Reichmann's "Torah-peuticum," as Sholem called it. It was instead motivated primarily by political considerations: their criticisms of the increasingly conservative tendencies among mainstream German-Jewish religious and cultural institutions, and also of romantic intellectual projects such as Rosenzweig and Buber's new translation of the Hebrew bible. Gathering and building upon scattered insights in the secondary literature on Horkheimer, as well as his own archival research, Jacobs presents the most complete and nuanced view of Horkheimer's early relationship to Judaism. He makes clear that Horkheimer—unlike Pollock, with whom he became inseparable friends already before WWI—was raised with a "Jewish consciousness" and was sensitive to and concerned about the specific dynamics of antisemitic prejudice from a very early age.

But the most original material in the first chapter comes in Jacobs's brief but intriguing discussion of Henryk Grossmann, and his roots in the Polish and Jewish Social Democratic Parties (PPSD and ŻPSD). Like the young Lowenthal in Germany, Grossman rebelled against the assimilated, bourgeois lifestyle of his parents in Poland; he became politically active in the ŻPSD and learned Yiddish in order to address the specific needs of Jewish workers in Galicia whose interests, he believed, were being neglected by the PPSD. Jacobs shows us that Grossmann's important, but highly abstract, later work on capitalist crises emerged out of an earlier political concern for the plight of concrete workers in Eastern Europe.

In addition to his biographical sketches of these individual figures, the first chapter also contains some interesting reflections on the reasons for the rising popularity of Zionism among young German Jews—such as Fromm and Lowenthal—in the early 1920s, which included their experience of antisemitism in the German military, the declining appeal of liberal politics in the Weimar Republic, and a critique of the assimilationist politics of the mainstream Jewish organizations of the time. For Fromm and Lowenthal and many other young German Jews at this time, Zionism was associated "with a commitment to Jewish learning and tradition," but also to leftist politics. Lowenthal attributed his attraction to Zionism in the early 1920s "to the fact that I was a radical, and that I wanted to marry my communistic-revolutionary way of thinking with a messianic [...] way of thinking" (18–19).

In the second chapter, Jacobs turns to the period of exile in the United States and the Critical Theorists' increasing focus on antisemitism. He takes Horkheimer's 1939 essay, "Die Juden und Europa," as his point of departure, in order to demonstrate the limits of Horkheimer's economic approach to antisemitism and how this analysis became more complex and compelling over the course of the 1940s. Similarly, Jacobs argues—in seeming contradiction to statements he makes in the first chapter about Horkheimer's early concerns about antisemitism—that Adorno deserves most of the credit for pushing the analysis of antisemitism

to the center of the Institute's work after his relocation from Oxford to New York in 1938.

Although it is true that Horkheimer soon recognized the limitations of his analysis of antisemitism in "Die Juden und Europa," Jacobs's use of this essay as a foil here creates a number of distortions. First, he makes Horkheimer's Marxism in the 1930s seem more traditional than it actually was. For example, Jacobs approvingly cites Rolf Tiedemann's misleading claim that "Horkheimer had, in the 1930s, seen the world 'from the point of view of the proletariat,'" (60) when, in fact, Horkheimer had explicitly taken leave of Lukács, Korsch and others' arguments that correct, critical knowledge of modern capitalist society could be obtained only from the "standpoint of the proletariat."

In his seminal essay of 1937, "Traditionelle und kritische Theorie," Horkheimer stated clearly that "die Situation des Proletariats [...] in dieser Gesellschaft keine Garantie der richtigen Erkenntnis [...] bildet" (Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 4 [Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1988], 187). The economic analysis of "Die Juden und Europa" reflected Horkheimer's acceptance of Pollock's state capitalism argument and represented a break with the more nuanced Freudian-Marxist analyses of authoritarian ideology he and Erich Fromm had developed in the 1930s. Jacobs underscores Adorno's analysis of antisemitism in his 1938 study of Wagner, but he does not examine the important ways in which Adorno's study was influenced by Horkheimer's 1936 essay, "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung: Zur Anthropologie des bürgerlichen Zeitalters," which also provided the theoretical foundations for some of the Institute's later empirical work on antisemitism.

Second, Jacobs creates a false dichotomy between the Institute's interest in antisemitism and their commitment to a non-traditional Marxist critique of capitalism; the waxing of the former did not correspond more or less directly to the waning of the latter, as Jacobs seems to suggest in several places. Although he notes that the Critical Theorists never completely gave up on their "Marxist roots," he places more emphasis on a considerable shift away from an adherence to "the primacy of economics, and [...] a Marxist framework," that had allegedly still characterized Horkheimer's thinking in 1939, to a "multi-faceted explication of hatred of Jews" (110). The multi-dimensional analysis of antisemitism in the "Elemente des Antisemitismus" in *Dialectik der Aufklärung* is certainly richer and more nuanced than Horkheimer's essay, "Die Juden und Europa," but a sophisticated interpretation of Marxist theory continues to inform their later arguments, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, as in the third thesis on "bourgeois antisemitism." Indeed, Eva-Maria Ziege has argued convincingly—in her *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 24–30, 110–19, and 222–23—that the Critical Theorists preserved their Marxist theoretical convictions in the 1940s at a not always immediately apparent "esoteric" level, while at the same time demonstrating a productive willingness to cooperate at the "exoteric" level with American scholars who did not share these assumptions.

Jacobs himself describes in several places the crucial connection between capitalist crisis and modern forms of antisemitism that many of the Institute members continued to take very seriously. He also notes Horkheimer and Adorno's conviction that "liberals fail to acknowledge that antisemitism cannot be expunged from such a society" (75) because they do not grasp the deep links between modern antisemitism and modern capitalist social domination. (Moishe Postone has explored these links in "The Holocaust and the Trajectory of the Twentieth Century," in *idem* and Eric Santner [eds.], *Catastrophe and Meaning* [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003], 81–114). The Institute's empirical studies in the 1940s confirmed these convictions, especially the study of antisemitism among American workers, which made clear that, in contrast to Europe, where antisemitism was more widespread among white-collar than blue-collar workers, in the United States the opposite was the case. Later in the second chapter Jacobs discusses Paul Massing's critique of German Social Democracy—in *Rehearsal for Destruction:*

A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany (New York: Harper, 1949)—for neglecting the problem of antisemitism. But more recent historical scholarship—see, for example, Geoff Eley, “What Produces Fascism: Pre-Industrial Traditions or a Crisis of the Capitalist State?” in *Politics & Society* 12, 3 (1983), 53–82—has demonstrated that unorganized workers in Germany—that is, those who probably remained unacquainted with Marxist criticisms of antisemitism as the “socialism of fools”—were more likely to support National Socialism than organized workers. Adorno took note of the fact that the radical absence of socialist consciousness among American workers provided fertile ground for anti-capitalist forms of antisemitism that were so widespread among them. In short, the Critical Theorists’ non-traditional—and non-economistic—Marxism did not foreclose, but instead continued to inform in essential ways their analysis of antisemitism in the 1940s.

In the second chapter of his book Jacobs also provides a summary of the findings and some of the contemporary reviews of three of the volumes in the Institute’s massive *Studies in Prejudice* project, which were published in 1949 and 1950. He includes in his discussion some interesting archival findings—such as an unpublished text written by Adorno in 1948 called “Remarks on the Authoritarian Personality”—that shed new light on the project, but most of the ground he covers here will be familiar to readers of earlier and more recent discussions of the *Studies in Prejudice* by Jay, Wiggershaus, Thomas Wheatland, and Eva-Maria Ziege. More interesting is Jacobs’s original interpretation of Adorno’s increasing identification with Judaism during the 1940s. Adorno’s father was a Jew who had converted to Protestantism in 1910; his mother and aunt, who also helped raise him, were both Catholic. Adorno was baptized in his mother’s faith, confirmed in a Protestant church, and briefly considered reconverting to Catholicism in 1924. Jacobs argues that Adorno viewed himself primarily as German into the mid-1930s, which would explain the relative lack of trepidation with which he travelled back and forth between England and Germany in the mid-1930s. By 1938 at the latest, however, Adorno had become highly sensitive to the catastrophic potential of contemporary antisemitism, essentially predicting in a letter to Horkheimer in February of that year the “Ausrottung” of Jews who remained in Germany. Anyone the least bit familiar with Adorno’s postwar writings will agree with Jacobs’s claim that Auschwitz changed everything. For Adorno, philosophy in the postwar period was essentially philosophy “after Auschwitz” and he concluded that “Hitler hat den Menschen im Stande ihrer Unfreiheit einen neuen kategorischen Imperativ aufgezwungen: ihr Denken und Handeln so einzurichten, daß Auschwitz nicht sich wiederhole, nichts Ähnliches geschehe” (Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 6 [Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1970], 358).

It is probably true, as Jacobs argues, that this shift in Adorno’s thinking was motivated by an increasing identification with both the Jewish victims and survivors of Auschwitz—such a transformation of self-understanding in the face of the Holocaust has been noted recently in the case of other intellectuals of mixed German-Jewish descent, for example, in the case of Richard Hofstadter (see Gary Marotta, “Richard Hofstadter’s Populist Problem and His Identity as a Jewish Intellectual,” in John Abromeit, Bridget Maria Chesterton, Gary Marotta, and York Norman [eds.], *Transformations of Populism in Europe and the Americas: History and Contemporary Tendencies* [London: Bloomsbury, 2015], 105–115). At the same time, the centrality of the concept of non-identity in Adorno’s postwar writings also suggests that his increasing identification with Jews and his own Jewishness did not imply an acceptance of monolithic or “authentic” notions of religious or ethnic identity, as several able commentators on Adorno’s work have emphasized. As Detlev Claussen, for instance, has written, “none of the attributes connected with the keyword ‘identity’—neither ‘Jewish,’ ‘German,’ nor ‘Marxist’—would suffice to characterize the unique individual who had give birth to the term ‘non-identity’ (Theodor Adorno: *One Last Genius* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2008], 260).

Jacobs focuses on the attitudes toward Israel of Marcuse, Fromm, Horkheimer, and Lowenthal in the postwar decades in the third and final chapter of his study, which is—despite the new insights and material one finds in the first two chapters—certainly his most original contribution to the literature on the history of the Frankfurt School. Jacobs begins the chapter with a somewhat surprising and perplexing generalization that emerged from his research, namely, that these four Critical Theorists' support of Israel was inversely proportional to their knowledge of, and grounding in, Judaism. So Erich Fromm, who was most knowledgeable of Jewish religious and cultural traditions, was the most critical of Israel, whereas Herbert Marcuse, the least knowledgeable and least Jewishly self-identified of the bunch, was most supportive. Jacobs situates Horkheimer's and Lowenthal's attitudes towards Israel somewhere between those of Fromm and Marcuse. Fromm did not see German and Jewish self-identification as mutually exclusive; in fact, he believed that the long period of political powerlessness experienced by Germans and Jews had created something of an elective affinity between the two cultures. Thus, one could say perhaps that Fromm's attitude toward Israel paralleled Nietzsche's attitude toward Wilhelmine Germany, which the latter summed up in the phrase, "One pays heavily for coming to power. Power makes stupid" (*The Portable Nietzsche* [New York: Penguin, 1982], 506). Whereas Nietzsche was bemoaning Germany's slow transition from the land of *Dichter und Denker* to (in the words of Karl Kraus) the land of *Richter und Henker*, Fromm was concerned that the new state of Israel's "faith in force" betrayed what Fromm viewed as the core of Jewish ethical and religious teachings. The young Fromm's strong identification with the prophetic tradition in Judaism remained decisive in his later years, long after he had abandoned the practice of Orthodox Judaism, and he rejected the notion that Israel represented the fulfillment of Jewish messianic hopes. Fromm seemed willing to accept an Israeli state only if it welcomed the return of the approximately one million Arab refugees it had created, was transformed into a bi-national state, and ceased to be an "outpost of American imperialism" (129). Fromm viewed the essence of Judaism as revolt against social oppression and identification with the victims and not with the victors of history.

In contrast to what some critics characterized as Fromm's "at times very aggressive anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism" (129), Herbert Marcuse did not hesitate to express his "personal, though not only personal, feelings of solidarity and identification with Israel," because he could "not forget that for centuries the Jews belonged to the persecuted and oppressed; that not too long ago six million of them were annihilated. [...] When finally a place is to be created for these people where they will not need to fear persecution and oppression that is a goal with which I must declare my sympathy" (118). Also in contrast to Fromm, who never set foot in Israel, Marcuse accepted invitations to speak there in both the 1960s and 1970s. When asked by an Israeli journalist about his own Jewish identity, Marcuse responded: "I have a Jewish identity in the context of the expected dangers of the persecution of Jews. I have a difficult time identifying myself with them when they are the persecutors. I sense a connection to the cultural, socialist German heritage and in the same manner I feel a connection to the period in which the United States fought the Nazis. I have many loyalties" (122). Like Fromm, in other words, Marcuse saw no inherent contradiction between Jewish and German self-identification, and he was also willing to criticize Israel; he also believed in a right of return for Arab refugees created by the *Nakba* and subsequent expulsions and favored what is today called a "one-state solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Like Fromm, and unlike Marcuse, Lowenthal's and Horkheimer's attitudes towards Israel were informed by strong residual or more recent identifications with the prophetic tradition in Judaism, but both denied the claim made by some Zionists that Israel represented the embodiment of that tradition.

Jacobs does a good job of showing how Horkheimer came increasingly to identify with Judaism after his return to Germany in 1950 and how his repeated confrontations with anti-

semitism in and outside of the university eventually led him to retire early, move to Switzerland and even to regret his decision to return. In light of such dogged persistence of antisemitism in Germany—and many other places in the rest of world, even after the Holocaust—Horkheimer defended Israel's right to exist as an asylum for persecuted Jews, although he denied the claim that Israel was the legitimate representative of all Jews. Horkheimer's attitude toward Israel was colored by a lifelong aversion to nationalism, which was already apparent in his early personal and polemical writings against the First World War. He was willing to accept Zionism as a justified response to chauvinistic nationalism and militarism, but he feared the founding of the state of Israel would encourage these very vices among Jews.

Lowenthal had friends and family who lived in Israel and he travelled there for nine days in 1985. Although he was more willing than Fromm or Marcuse to accept the use of force in the foundation and defense of Israel—which he viewed as a tragic necessity to dispel the antisemitic myth that Jews were not able to defend themselves—Lowenthal also expressed concerns later in his life about the increasingly powerful conservative nationalist and militaristic tendencies in Israel. Lowenthal criticized the steady decline in Israel of the socialist aspects of Zionism and the messianic dimension of Judaism, with which he had strongly identified as a young man.

Drawing on his impressive knowledge of both the history of the Frankfurt School and of modern Jewish religious, cultural, and political traditions, Jacobs succeeds in illuminating Critical Theory and its theorists from the perspective he has chosen. Many other authors have written about the Jewish dimensions of Critical Theory, but few have done so as clearly and none as comprehensively as Jacobs. Yet, as he himself emphasizes, the perspective he has chosen may well obscure certain aspects of Critical Theory at the same time as it casts light on others. Focusing on the Jewish dimensions of the Frankfurt School occasionally leads Jacobs into questionable psychological arguments, such as his interpretation of Horkheimer's love of his future wife, Rosa Riekehr ("Maidon"), and his radical politics, as the rebellion against both the bourgeois habitus and the Jewish religious beliefs of his parents. If this were true, then it would surely be difficult to explain why he did not "outgrow" his affinity for radical politics sooner and his remarkable early devotion to "Maidon" never wavered. Focusing on the specifically Jewish aspects of the Critical Theorists' lives and works also creates a blind spot in regard to their sustained engagement with other religious traditions, such as Fromm's serious engagement with Zen Buddhism in the 1940s and 1950s, or the later Horkheimer's writings on Catholic and Protestant theology.

Most importantly, however, a "Jewish" approach to Critical Theory raises the very difficult question of the relationship of religious and cultural concepts to modern traditions of philosophy and social theory, whose self-understanding is secular and universal. Even Hegel, who was more positively disposed toward religion and metaphysics than many of his philosophical predecessors in the Enlightenment, argued that religion "must flee into the concept" in the modern age, in which philosophy has replaced religion as the most adequate way to address humanity's deepest needs and problems. Although some have argued that even modern, secular concepts cannot be separated from their pre-modern religious content, others—such as Hans Blumenberg in *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988)—have criticized these efforts, questioning the validity of such attempts to undermine the legitimacy of modern philosophical concepts. The potential dangers of abandoning modern "methodological secularism" in philosophy and the social sciences have been highlighted in more recent discussions of postcolonial historiography as well (see, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," in *Postcolonial Studies* 1, 1 [1998], 15–29 and "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?" in *Representations* no. 37 [1992], 1–26).

In any case, Jacobs explicitly denies older and more recent attempts to ghettoize Critical

Theory as a “Jewish science,” or *Dialektik der Aufklärung* as a “Jewish work” (6, 151). Thus, he seems mindful of the danger of limiting the explanatory power and truth content of Critical Theory by locating it too narrowly within any one tradition, or granting privileged epistemological access to it to those from any one tradition. If exploring the diverse and changing relationship of the Frankfurt School theorists to their own Jewishness over the course of their lives definitely illuminates Critical Theory, it by no means exhausts it, as Jacobs would certainly agree. As he states more than once, leftist politics played a more important role in bringing and holding the Critical Theorists together in its early years than their Jewish backgrounds (41, 149). Horkheimer once identified Critical Theory in terms of its interest “an der Aufhebung des gesellschaftlichen Unrechts. Diese negative Formulierung,” he continued, “ist [...] der materialistische Inhalt des idealistischen Begriffs der Vernunft” (Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 4 [Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1988], 216). Such formulations leave no question about the Frankfurt School theorists’ very successful intent to preserve and advance the best traditions in modern philosophy and critical social theory, which are equally open to all those willing to think for themselves.

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There can be few more sensitive subjects in the historiography of the Frankfurt School than the role played by their Jewish identity, such as it was, in the lives and work of its major figures. When conducting my own research on the subject in the 1960s, I was met with an almost universal denial of its significance on the part of surviving members of the Institut für Sozialforschung. Felix Weil, whose father’s fortune had funded its creation, was perhaps the most adamant. In letter after letter, he exhorted me to minimize its importance. To take one outburst out of many, composed after I sent him a copy of the completed dissertation on 16 May 1971, he wrote:

Why do you feel the need of stressing, whenever you introduce a new character, that he is or was Jewish? [...] Now, the question is whether you understand “Jewish” as a religion or as a race or nationality. I can’t imagine you, like Hitler, consider it a race. If religion, only Leo Lowenthal [...] and Erich Fromm came from Jewish-orthodox families, all the others were of Jewish-liberal or even baptized Christian, as far as I know, and no one ever was a service-attending Jew (except as a guest at a wedding) and Korsch, Wittfogel, Sorge and Gerlach and later Massing were Christians by origin. I, for example, am not circumcised, have never attended any religious services, Christian or Jewish, and my parents, too, never went to services in a synagogue or considered themselves Jewish, after having been married by a Rabbi in Mannheim only to please my mother’s parents. Technically speaking, Grünberg, born of Jewish parents, became a Catholic in order to be admitted to the Vienna University, and I was born a Catholic—but never baptized!—as for Ar-

gentina, a country where Catholicism is the official religion and the Church paid by the State any person born there is a Catholic unless proven otherwise (Martin Jay, personal collection).

Although his memory was faulty in one respect—Lowenthal's parents were assimilated, and he had briefly embraced orthodoxy in defiance of them in the 1920s—Weil was right to de-emphasize the importance of any formal Jewish training in the lives of most members of the Institute. But by reducing the choice to religious observance or racial identity, he avoided posing the question of the potential impact of even assimilated German Jewish experiences on the formation of the Institut and its intellectual itinerary.

It is not hard to fathom why Weil and his former colleagues were reluctant to foreground whatever role might have been played by the complicated legacy of their Jewish backgrounds, however attenuated. As in the earlier case of Freud, who sought to include Jung in the inner circle of the psychoanalytic community to fend off suspicions that his theories were examples of "Jewish" psychology, they were acutely aware of the still potent threat that antisemites might dismiss their ideas as mere expressions of their ethnic identities.

This was, alas, not an idle fear. Glib smears against their Jewish origins now abound in the ever-expanding campaign against their allegedly sinister role in the spread of "political correctness" and "cultural Marxism." Kevin MacDonald's, *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport: Praeger, 1998) is an obvious case in point. In the widespread demonization of the Frankfurt School as the source of "cultural Marxism's" corruption of the West—a confused, but disturbingly potent, campaign that has spread in radical right-wing circles in America and elsewhere—implicit and sometimes explicit antisemitic notes are sounded. (I have discussed this issue in "Dialectic of Counter-Enlightenment: The Frankfurt School as Scapegoat of the Lunatic Fringe," in *Salmagundi* no. 168–169 [2010/11], 30–40). This same muddled discourse also featured in the manifesto of the Norwegian mass murderer, Anders Behring Breivik, who, to be sure, claimed he was a Zionist and far more hostile to Islam than to Judaism.

Even Gershom Sholem, who should have known better, could belittle the Critical Theorists' work—he had no use for its Marxist roots and personally disliked Horkheimer—as coming from one of "the three most remarkable Jewish sects' that German Jewry produced" (*From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth* [New York: Schocken, 1980], 131). Although this characterization might be seen as a back-handed compliment, it is important to recall Sholem's disdain for what he saw as the failed attempt to create a viable culture at once German and Jewish.

In the face of the School's denial of its importance and their enemies' magnification of it, it takes a subtle and cautious analyst to calibrate the role of the Jewish dimension in the lives and thought of the Frankfurt School. Happily, Jack Jacobs, in his long-awaited study of *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, goes a long way to achieving that goal. Carefully traversing the minefield created by his topic, he makes clear his skepticism that Critical Theory was in any seriously substantive way "a Jewish theory," but insists that the varied experiences many of its members had as Jews in Germany and then America left an imprint on the choices they made in their scholarly work and political allegiances. Limiting his discussion to three major themes—the typically "Jewish life paths" many followed, their increasingly sensitive response to the threat of antisemitism, and their attitudes toward the state of Israel—he shows that a combination of internal and external pressures can be discerned in the history of the first generation of the Frankfurt School.

Internally, several members were at one time or another in their lives observant Jews with a serious commitment to its practices and traditions. Here his main examples are Leo Lowen-

thal, Erich Fromm, and—to a lesser extent and mainly near the end of his life—Max Horkheimer, all of whom rejected the problematic assimilated identities of many German Jews. Jacobs's detailed treatment of Lowenthal is particularly insightful, and he provides a credible account of Fromm's religious involvements without the benefit of Lawrence J. Friedman's comprehensive new biography, *The Lives of Erich Fromm* (New York: Columbia UP, 2013), which appeared too late to be of help. One dimension of Fromm's biography not covered by Friedman but discussed by Jacobs is his involvement with the non-Zionist Freeland League, headed by Isaac Nachman Steinberg, in the 1950s.

Jacobs also convincingly takes issue with the assessment by earlier commentators like Judith Marcus and Zoltan Tar of the significance for Henryk Grossmann, the Marxist economist whose importance waned after the Institute's initial decade, of his extensive involvement in the Jewish socialist movement, the Bund, in the eastern Europe from which he came. Although Jacobs concedes that other Institute members, most notably Friedrich Pollock, Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, Felix Weil (whose first name he inexplicably often misspells as Feliks), and Theodor Adorno, never passed through an observant phase or benefited from a Jewish education, he argues that they remained, in George Mosse's formulation, "German Jews beyond Judaism" (which he prefers to Isaac Deutscher's controversial category of "non-Jewish Jews").

In addition to whatever experiences they may have had as temporarily observant Jews, most of the members of the Institute had also suffered, to one degree or another, the pressures of an increasingly virulent antisemitism in both Europe and America. In Weimar, to be sure, they were often shielded from its direct effects, abetting their inclination to explain injustice more in Marxist class terms than in racial or religious ones (an inclination that lingered as late as Horkheimer's controversial essay of 1939, "Die Juden und Europa"). But with their forced emigration to this country, in which social discrimination against Jews was ironically more prevalent than in the one they had left, and the gathering storm of the Holocaust, whose effects they witnessed with horror from afar, they came to appreciate more and more its central role in the worsening crisis of Western civilization.

One of Jacobs's most interesting findings is that Adorno, himself only half Jewish and not immune to typical German Jewish arrogance towards *Ostjuden*, was arguably the first to realize its importance in the late 1930s, leading him to urge the Institute to focus both its empirical and theoretical energies on explaining its role as a "spearhead" of other erosions of human freedom. Although not all of his colleagues shared his alarm—Marcuse in particular, seems not to have bought the "spearhead" theory—their new sensitivity to its importance influenced their empirical work on an uncompleted study of American labor and the multi-volume *Studies in Prejudice* they produced in a sometimes tense collaboration with the American Jewish Committee, as well as the more speculative exploration of "Elemente des Antisemitismus" in *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, published in 1947. Following the lead of Detlev Claussen (*Grenzen der Aufklärung: Die gesellschaftliche Genese des modernen Antisemitismus* [Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994]) and Eva-Maria Ziege (*Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2009]), Jacobs refutes the conventional wisdom that the Frankfurt School's empirical and theoretical writings were rarely integrated, arguing instead that on the question of antisemitism, each benefited from the other. He also contends that the Marxist explanation they originally favored—the Jews as representatives of the sphere of circulation being phased out in late capitalism—was not entirely abandoned, as it seemed to be in the psychoanalytically driven analysis of *The Authoritarian Personality*, but relativized by being made one "element" in a non-hierarchically organized constellation of different sources.

Jacobs's final section investigates with exemplary thoroughness the range of attitudes different members of the School had towards the state of Israel. The Israel they knew, it bears stressing, was still largely leftist in orientation, ruled by the Labor Party rather than Likud, and

only just beginning to embark on its settlement policy in the territories won in the 1967 war. Not surprisingly, their main concern was for a Jewish homeland that might serve as a refuge for past victims—or potential future ones—of the antisemitism whose horrific effects were all too fresh in their minds. Although often uneasy about the nationalist exclusivism harbored by a Zionism that had soured on universal values, they were almost uniformly in agreement that the existence of Israel as a Jewish State needed to be defended. The main dissenter, it turns out, was Erich Fromm, who supported a bi-national state before 1948 and was critical of Israeli intentions even in the 1967 war. Jacobs contrasts him in particular with Marcuse, who did not let his qualms about particular Israeli policies undermine his solidarity with the Jewish state. Whereas Fromm refused to visit Israel, Marcuse went directly after the war and affirmed the validity of Israel's self-protective military actions in conversations with no less a figure than Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan. Horkheimer, Adorno, and Lowenthal, Jacobs shows, were somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

Extrapolating from the contrast between Fromm and Marcuse on Zionism, Jacobs contends that a pattern exists in explaining the Frankfurt School's range of attitudes: "Fromm, the Critical Theorist with the *strongest* grounding in Judaism, was also the Theorist most inclined to doubt the desirability of the State in the post-Holocaust era. Marcuse, the *least* Jewishly knowledgeable, was least inclined to continue to raise fundamental questions about the state" (148). Aside from the fact that generalizing from such a modest sample is a dubious enterprise, Jacobs provides little evidence that Fromm based his humanist critique of Zionism on specifically Jewish principles (which, as we know, have not prevented many observant Jews from being avid supporters of the State of Israel, even as it lurched to the right). Oddly, he ignores one piece of evidence that might have supported his case. While mentioning the abiding influence of Fromm's early teacher of the Talmud, the Chasidic socialist Salman Baruch Rabinkow, he does not note Rabinkow's growing skepticism about Zionism in the early 1920s, which would likely have left a mark on the young Fromm. But Jacobs also does not consider contradictory evidence, such as Fromm's friendship with the totally assimilated, non-observant American sociologist David Riesman, which is presented in Friedman's biography as a major source of his critique of Israel. It is hard not to wonder if in this particular case, Jacobs is projecting his own investments onto the figures whose careers he is tracing.

One final observation is in order, which derives from Jacobs's prudent resistance to the claim that Critical Theory was somehow a "Jewish theory," a resistance that ironically makes him more of an ally of Felix Weil than of the Max Horkheimer who near the end of his life credited the Jewish taboo on graven images as a hidden, but potent source of Critical Theory's reluctance to present a positive version of utopia. In a letter to me of 27 June 1971, Weil wrote:

You refer to Horkheimer's stressing his Jewishness as Rektor of the university. You seem not to know that then he even, on the high holidays, attended synagogue services (but not of the orthodox kind, just the reform-liberal one). But, as he told me, he did this not as a late Believer, but as an ostentatious act of a political nature [...] anyway you cannot project back into the 20's what the old Horkheimer of the 60's said or is now saying (including the 'other' and the *Bilderverbot*, where I can't follow him at all) (Martin Jay, personal collection).

Jacobs may well be right in downplaying claims such as Lorenz Jäger's that "*Dialectic of Enlightenment* was a Jewish book [...] a philosophical assertion of Jewishness at a time of its greatest danger" (cited 151). Although a case could be made—as Sarah Hamerschlag has in *The*

Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2010)—that the defense of non-identity in that book and elsewhere in Horkheimer's and Adorno's works is an expansion of the perennial "otherness" of the Jew into a universal virtue, it would be problematic to say that Critical Theory is somehow a secularized version of Judaism in one form or another. From the perspective of Jews, after all, they are not the eternal "other" condemned always to wander in the wilderness; for them this is a fate projected on to them, ever since Jesus's fateful curse on the way to the crucifixion, by gentile animosity.

Still, by refusing on principle to speculate on the substantive legacy of Jewish beliefs in elements of Critical Theory, Jacobs excuses himself a bit too quickly from examining in any depth the one figure associated with the School who may well have been most indebted to them, Walter Benjamin. The paradox of Benjamin's case is that however much he may have rebelled against his assimilated parents, he never became a practicing Jew, and after an early flirtation with the Zionist youth movement, which he understood in cultural rather than political terms, he distanced himself from explicitly Jewish organizations or causes. And yet, his fascination with Jewish theological ideas, often heterodox and esoteric, abetted by his friendship with Sholem, was immense. Jewish messianism, mysticism, Adamic philosophies of language, antinomian fantasies of redemption—all were palpable influences on his syncretic worldview. In explaining that fascination in an early letter of 1912 to a Zionist friend, Ludwig Strauß, he explicitly denied the importance of the Jewish *Erlebnis*—a term he identified with the then fashionable figure of Martin Buber—and stressed instead its *geistige* attraction. "Das Judentum," he wrote, "ist mir in keiner Hinsicht Selbstzweck, sondern ein vornehmster Träger und Repräsentant des Geistigen" (Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe* vol. 1 [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995], 75). Benjamin's debts to Jewish themes and experiences have been analyzed in an acute manner by Irving Wohlfahrt ("'Männer aus der Fremde:' Walter Benjamin and the 'German-Jewish Parnassus,'" in *New German Critique* no. 70 [1997], 3–85).

Benjamin's subsequent struggle to incorporate aspects of his idiosyncratic reading of Jewish teachings in his growing allegiance to Marxism is a convoluted story, still very much the object of interpretive controversy. His resistance to Sholem's entreaties to move to Palestine and his abortive attempt to learn Hebrew testify to the ambivalences he felt about the translation of theory into practice. Nor did he ever apply his penetrating intellect to the causes of, and possible remedies for, the antisemitism that ultimately contributed to his death. And yet, without acknowledging the critical role of Judaism in Benjamin's intellectual formation, whose attenuated influence can also be found in Adorno's work, it is hard to appreciate the full significance of the Jewish dimension of Critical Theory, broadly understood.

Jacobs, to be sure, has done so much to illuminate other aspects of the intricate relationship between the Frankfurt School's history and the Jewish origins and experiences of a majority of its members that it would be churlish to tax him for not plunging into the deep and murky waters of Benjamin's thought. No subsequent discussion of that relationship will be able to ignore the wealth of new material he has unearthed, the care and balance of his judgments, and the salutary caution he has exercised in presenting them. Although far more than that of a German Jewish sect, their history cannot be told, *pace* Felix Weil, without taking into account the Jewish star in the constellation of influences that generated their remarkable work.

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into twelve languages. His *Reason After Its Eclipse: On Late Critical Theory* will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 2016.



As Jack Jacobs acknowledges in the introduction of his new book, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, there exists a large and impressive literature on the Institut für Sozialforschung and its Critical Theory, which poses challenges to authors entering this crowded field. What new ground is there to explore? While the relationships of the members of the Frankfurt School to Judaism and Jewishness are topics that have been discussed previously, I can think of no book that focuses on them so broadly—grappling with the group around Max Horkheimer as a whole—and so specifically. In addition to examining the relationships that members of the Institute had to Judaism, Jacobs also explores how issues related to Jewishness affected Critical Theory. Thus, Jacobs succeeds in teaching us something new and, more importantly, something quite valuable. Not only does his book aim to present Critical Theory in a new light, but it also serves as a superb case study in how politically unaligned members of the German leftwing intelligentsia maneuvered—to borrow the title of George Mosse's book—as “German Jews Beyond Judaism.”

The first chapter is devoted to the Jewish life paths of several members of the Frankfurt School. While one can encounter similar material in biographies of Institute members or in histories of Jewish life in Frankfurt, there is no one study with such a focused, prosopographic analysis. Jacobs has two aims in the chapter: on the one hand, he wants to explore the variety of Jewish life paths that coalesced within the Institute; on the other hand, he wants to focus on the relationship between this contextual angle and the formation and early history of the Horkheimer Circle. I suppose this is why the life paths of other notable members of the cohort are reserved for later chapters, but this also results in some short-changing of major figures in the middle and late history of Critical Theory. For example, it is puzzling that Walter Benjamin receives such scant attention. By the same token, the focus on Jewish life paths of figures that played an important role in the exile history of the Institute—such as Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno, and Franz L. Neumann—is also relatively limited. Nonetheless, these are relative quibbles. Jacobs's achievement is to assemble material that has been scattered until now and to use it to present the complexities of Critical Theory's Judaic/Jewish context.

The second chapter focuses on the topic of antisemitism in the work of the Frankfurt School. Although this is material that has been examined by nearly every scholar of Critical Theory, here is where Jacobs's focus on the Judaic/Jewish context pays the biggest dividends. Jacobs is able to show compellingly and convincingly how and why the concept of antisemitism became a top research priority for the Institute for Social Research during its years of exile in America. Jacobs highlights how the group's conception of antisemitism changed during this period of time and demonstrates how comfortably the Institute's empirical and theoretical work on the subject fits together.

The final chapter was my biggest surprise. The focus is on how the members of the Frankfurt School viewed the state of Israel. This was a topic that I had never encountered elsewhere, and it is striking how relevant their differing observations and evaluations remain today—anticipating many of the battle lines regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that persist to the present.

Jacobs's feats with this book are all the more commendable because the Judaic/Jewish angle is fraught with a significant pitfall. I would characterize it as methodological, and perhaps even epistemological. A Judaic/Jewish analysis of the Frankfurt School must necessarily grapple with the problematic topic of German Jewish identity. Were members of the institute "Non-Jewish Jews," German Jews committed to the project of *Bildung*, Oedipal rebels rejecting (or temporarily embracing) more orthodox relationships to Judaism in efforts to challenge the religious and cultural practices of their parents' generation? As one soon discovers in Jacobs's account, it turns out that each member of the Institute had a unique relationship to Judaism and Jewishness. How, then, can a coherent picture be created without engaging in false essentialisms and distortive reductions? How can one grapple with the topic of identity in an era in which the very concept of identity has been subjected to so much valid criticism? Jacobs signals his awareness of these problems in his introduction. As he explains, his intention is

to demonstrate that the Jewish origins of the key members of the Frankfurt School, and the differing ways in which the Critical Theorists related to their origins, shed light on the work of the School, on the specific works written by its leading figures, and even on differences that emerged among these figures over time (1).

Jacobs is careful not to over-emphasize the influence of Jewishness and Judaism on the formation and development of Critical Theory, but his caution against overplaying the importance of his analytic framework does create a vagueness in need of clarification. As Jacobs writes,

I do not believe that Critical Theory is a Jewish theory, any more than psychoanalysis is a "Jewish science." The latter assertion was a Nazi calumny. The former is deeply suspect. And yet, I intend to argue that the lives of key members of the Frankfurt School's founding generation are illuminated by situating these men in multiple contexts—including that of Jewish history (6).

Given that he focuses exclusively on the Judaic/Jewish context, how can the reader assess its importance relative to the other aspects whose significance Jacobs acknowledges but does not cover? Without reassembling the constellation of forces that shaped the formation and development of Critical Theory, an important mystery remains: how are we to assess the significance of the Jewish life paths that Jacobs has chronicled? Like Jacobs, I, too, am convinced that the Jewish origins of the Institute members are an important piece of the history of the Frankfurt School, but I do not know how exactly to situate this context among the others.

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Those familiar with Jack Jacobs's earlier collection, *On Socialists and "the Jewish Question" after Marx* (New York: New York UP, 1992), will instantly recognize one characteristic trait when they open this book. The actual text comprises some 150 pages that are complemented by almost 80 pages of endnotes. Jacobs's desire to present a clear line of argument is partially undercut throughout by his admirable hesitation to hide any more evidence from his readers than is absolutely necessary to get the book between the covers. Jacobs generally remains intensely conscious of how finely cut his arguments ultimately are and refrains from any attempt to manipulate the material simply to suit his purposes. It is a shame that the book has appeared with endnotes (not to mention that the endnotes, from the outset, are not on the pages they are grouped under), since the main text and the notes really do need to be read in close dialogue. Indeed, trying to reconstruct why Jacobs chose to distribute the material between the main text and the notes in quite the way he did repeatedly raises intriguing questions.

Put differently: the violence toward the material involved in the creation of any kind of synthesis is and remains one of the chief concerns of Critical Theory. With his account Jacobs is trying to square the circle. On the one hand, he wants to throw into sharp relief what he considers the essential. On the other, he readily gives voice to the accidental. This may not make for satisfactory reading if all one wants is a quick and dirty introduction and a convenient headline. To anyone seriously interested in the questions Jacobs raises, however, his book offers a careful and thought-provoking engagement of the relevant material. Jacobs's style of presentation, I would argue, bears testimony not only to the common-place wisdom that authors are never entirely in control of their texts, but also to Jacobs's many years of close engagement of Critical Theory and his own deep-seated affinity with its concerns.

I was most struck by this impression when reading Jacobs's first chapter on the "Jewish Life Paths" of (future) members of the Frankfurt School because what actually caught my attention above all in this chapter was the diversity of life paths he describes. This may not be quite the effect he was hoping for since he is, if I understand it correctly, in part trying to establish certain basic patterns, not least in order to suggest links between these patterns and the later academic and political profiles of those moving along these paths. Yet in this chapter in particular I found myself rather more intrigued by the accidental than the essential, which, I would argue, gives a vibrant indication of the depth, richness, and diversity of Jewish life in Germany, at least in certain centers like Frankfurt and Berlin—Emily Levine would obviously have us add Hamburg to this list—before 1933. I am well known as a pessimist when it comes to the evaluation of relations between German Jews and non-Jews prior to 1933, so my suggestion here is not that this richness is owed to a favorable non-Jewish environment but, rather, that where they managed to form a critical mass, German Jews, in a process of complicated and often painful negotiation with the majority society in whose midst they lived, managed to create for themselves sufficient room for maneuver to carve out a much broader range of "Jewish life paths" than many of us generally appreciate. Looking back from the perspective of a Germany in which the sheer existence of Jewish life will continue to be to some extent miraculous for a long time to come, I developed a novel sense of marvel and elation at the ordinariness of the admixture of German Jewish achievement and banality reflected in Jacobs's account, not least given that those whose life paths he reconstructs ultimately came from a relatively homogeneous social and cultural background.

My chief concern regarding Jacobs's discussion of the Frankfurt School in exile is to do with the so-called "spearhead" theory of antisemitism. Not least in light of Martin Jay's remarks in his review I am wondering whether there is a risk that certain lines might become blurred in this context. Jay credits Adorno with the initiative "to urge the Institute to focus both its empirical and theoretical energies on explaining its role as a 'spearhead' of other erosions of human freedom," adding that "not all of his colleagues shared his alarm." Yet the notion of antisemitism

as a “spearhead” paving the way for something more sinister yet was in fact introduced by Franz Neumann who, as Jacobs notes, indeed believed that Adorno “overestimated the significance of antisemitism” (59).

Neumann explained his understanding of the spearhead theory in *Behemoth* (beginning his discussion, incidentally, with the remark that “races exist, there is no denying it”). Given that *Behemoth* was published in 1942, Neumann can hardly be taken to task for having failed to anticipate the order of magnitude of what had begun to unfold in Eastern Europe. Even so, the position he took strikes me as being fundamentally at odds with the direction in which Adorno and Horkheimer were thinking at the same time. At one juncture, Neumann suggests that Luther’s “ironical remarks on how they [the Jews] should be expelled sound much like those of *Der Stürmer* [...] in which advertisements appear offering the Jews one-way tickets to Palestine.” Even in the early 1940s this surely amounted to a fundamental misunderstanding of the seriousness both of Luther and the National Socialists. Neumann himself explained that the National Socialists aspired to “the complete destruction of the Jews,” adding that it, i.e., the complete destruction of the Jews, “is only part of a wider plan defined as ‘the purification of German blood.’” He then proceeded to discuss eugenics and forced sterilizations. Neumann may not have been in a position to know that in fact the National Socialists proceeded the other way around, i.e., that the so-called “euthanasia” program allowed the National Socialists to pioneer killing techniques later adapted in the death camps. Yet it surely follows from his formulation that he assumed whatever had happened or would happen to the Jews to be less bad than whatever non-Jews had experienced as a result of National Socialist eugenics.

Summarizing his argument, Neumann enumerated three ways in which antisemitism acted as a spearhead. Firstly, “racism and Anti-Semitism are substitutes for the class struggle,” he stated, effectively equating racism and antisemitism. He concluded from this that “the internal political value of Anti-Semitism will, therefore, never allow a complete extermination of the Jews. The foe cannot and must not disappear; he must always be held in readiness as a scapegoat for all the evils originating in the socio-political system.” Secondly, “Anti-Semitism provides a justification for eastern expansion,” and, “finally, Anti-Semitism in Germany is an expression of the rejection of Christianity and all it stands for.” Neumann then went on to blame Nietzsche for preparing the ground for the latter, adding that it was the German middle class that had been “most deeply affected” by Nietzsche. “The protest against a world that did not satisfy their ambitions and against a value system that imposed moral restraints upon them,” Neumann closed his discussion of antisemitism, “is expressed in the anti-Christian and anti-Jewish movement” (Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966, 98, 109, 111, 125, 127, 129).

The 114-page Appendix to *Behemoth* that Neumann added in 1944 included a section of slightly over two pages on antisemitism. Since Neumann began this section with an explicit reference to Hitler’s speech of 30 January 1944, we know that it was compiled long after the unfolding genocide against European Jewry had become broadly available public knowledge in the West. This makes Neumann’s reference to “the decline of the Jewish population and the fate of the deficit population” that “can be seen from two tables prepared by the Institute of Jewish Affairs” all the more chilling. He added that “the estimates appear reliable,” yet neither reproduced nor summarized the two tables, so that his readers did not actually know what those estimates were. The second of the two tables in question categorized the “deficit population” in three rubrics: evacuated or emigrated, deported to Eastern Europe, and “balance dead.” The latter was estimated at slightly over three million. Yet even against this backdrop Neumann maintained his line of argument. He was now critical of the scapegoat approach, however, not for any of the many good reasons that there are for questioning its usefulness, but because the banishment of the scapegoat is supposed to bring closure, “while the persecution of the Jews, as practiced by

National Socialism, is only the prologue of more horrible things to come.” Antisemitism, he reiterated, “is thus the spearhead of terror” and “the Jews are used as guinea pigs in testing the method of repression.” In short, “the extermination of the Jews is only the means to the attainment of the ultimate objective, namely the destruction of free institutions, beliefs, and groups. This may be called the spearhead theory of Anti-Semitism” (Neumann, *Behemoth*, 500–551).

Jacobs quotes this final passage in one of his endnotes (187), though not from *Behemoth* but from a memorandum Neumann submitted to the Office of Strategic Services in May 1943, which is largely identical with the relevant section in *Behemoth*, demonstrating that events in the at least nine months that lay between the two texts in no way influenced his judgement. And yet Jacobs also suggests—rather improbably, I would have thought, given Neumann’s actual position—that “Horkheimer came to accept Neumann’s spearhead understanding”, held to it, even when Marcuse protested against it, and “apparently had the support of Adorno on this issue” (69). As evidence for the latter contention, Jacobs cites a statement by Adorno in *The Authoritarian Personality*. Yet if one looks at the passage in question, matters are not as straightforward as Jacobs’s citation might suggest. “It has often been said,” Adorno wrote,

that anti-Semitism works as the spearhead of antidemocratic forces. The phrase sounds a bit hackneyed and apologetic: the minority most immediately threatened seems to make an all-too-eager attempt to enlist the support of the majority by claiming that it is the latter’s interest and not their own which really finds itself in jeopardy today.

Presumably it was exactly these apologetic connotations that made the spearhead approach popular with the institute’s funders. Even so, Adorno continued,

Looking back [...] at the material surveyed in this, and other, chapters, it has to be recognized that a link between anti-Semitism and antidemocratic feeling exists. True, those who wish to exterminate the Jews do not, as is sometimes claimed, wish to exterminate afterwards the Irish or the Protestants. But the limitation of human rights which is consummated in their idea of a special treatment of Jews, not only logically implies the ultimate abolition of the democratic form of government and, hence, the legal protection of the individual, but it is frequently associated quite consciously[...] with overt antidemocratic ideas (Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford, with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz-Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality* [New York: Harper, 1950], 653).

I would also draw attention to a questionnaire among Horkheimer’s papers that deals specifically with the spearhead approach (“Re: Anti-Semitism—Spearhead of Nazism”, Datierung unklar, Typoskript, 6 Blatt; Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt/Main, Na 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 670 — “Treatise on Antisemitism” und zugehörige Dokumente, Bl. 12–17). Asked about the usefulness of the spearhead approach Horkheimer answered

in the affirmative, but the hypothesis, in which we concur, that Anti-Semitism is a menace to democracy and Christianity, has to be made specific through an analysis of

the various forms which the primitive drives take among the different nations, religions, and strata of the population. Study must also be made of how far these drives which stand against our culture are preserved in existence and even reinforced by certain deficiencies in it, as, for instance, the displacement of individuals and their rights by social groups and their privileges, the spread of standardized mass culture wherein activities and ideas are manipulated by monopolistic interests, the replacement of autonomous thinking by mere receptive interest in information, and spontaneous behavior, by automatic adjustment. All these tendencies contribute to a weakening of man's resistance to his repressed primitive drives and hinder their adequate sublimation.

It may well be that Horkheimer and Adorno had tactical reasons for not making clarifying remarks of this kind when it was more opportune to let their funders believe they shared their apologetic understanding of the spearhead approach, but that they should ever have subscribed to it in a substantive manner seems to me to be highly improbable and would raise some very tricky issues in trying to reconstruct the evolution of their thought.

The confusion, I imagine, arises from a genuine dialectic involved in the insistence that a thorough understanding of antisemitism is a prerequisite for any thorough understanding of society at large. For this contention to be true, antisemitism and the Shoah indeed had to be about "more than" the Jews (though always also about them). The potential problem in this context is demonstrated all too clearly by the way in which Neumann regularly includes an "only" in the equation. He does not want antisemitism to be "only" about the Jews. The National Socialist persecution of the Jews, according to Neumann, is "only part of a wider plan," "only the prologue of more horrible things to come," "only the means to the attainment of the ultimate objective" etc.

I have a second observation relating to the exile period. In his discussion of Horkheimer's much-maligned text, "Die Juden und Europa," Jacobs argues that it was written "from a bluntly Marxist perspective" and then goes on to cite Gershom Sholem's appalled reaction to the text. On Sholem's account, the text suggested that "Horkheimer wanted to rewrite Marx's essay" "Zur Judenfrage" (44, 51). Here I think Jacobs may have missed a beat. The suggestion that Horkheimer was emulating Marx's essay rests on more than matters of content. Like "Zur Judenfrage", Horkheimer's text comprised two parts, of which the first did not deal with the Jews but with the general context, and the second part, which did discuss the specific situation of the Jews, was substantially shorter. This cannot possibly have been a coincidence and Horkheimer must surely have been aware of the fact that his modelling the text so closely on "Zur Judenfrage" in formal terms would be a considerable provocation, almost regardless of its content. Clearly, Sholem had taken the bait. It is worth noting in passing that this also indicates that Sholem was sufficiently familiar with "Zur Judenfrage" to register the provocation.

Jacobs's third chapter on post-war attitudes towards Israel, while equally rich in material and observation, is the most problematic in the book. I have two principal concerns. Firstly, the Frankfurt School recedes in this chapter as the study's focus and therefore stops providing a plausible framework. Of the four personalities that Jacobs examines, only one (Horkheimer) was still at the core of the school's activities after 1945. Of the remaining figures, Lowenthal was the one who arguably remained closest in spirit to the school's programme, yet he was almost entirely cut off from it. Marcuse was more closely associated with it by others, yet, as Jacobs himself points out, his political differences with his former colleagues were "quite stark" (207), and Fromm had left the institute before the war and become openly antagonistic to its endeavors.

Secondly, Jacobs structures much of his discussion along the all too conventional distinction between attitudes toward the State of Israel, on the one hand, and toward Israeli government

policies, on the other. Rather more helpful would have been a distinction between attitudes toward Israel and attitudes toward Zionism. The bulk of the material Jacobs discusses hinges on the extent to which the modern State of Israel realizes Judaism's traditional messianic vision. Jacobs thus runs the risk of short circuiting (negative) sentiments toward the State of Israel, toward specific aspects of Zionist ideology, and toward the messianic hypostatization of either or both.

Gershon Sholem for one never wavered in his insistence that Zionism signalled a radical departure from Jewish tradition and that any attempt to see the State of Israel as a fulfilment of the messianic promise would have catastrophic political implications. Yet he was equally unwavering in his Zionism. Conversely, it goes without saying that adherents of Critical Theory have every reason to defend Israel's existence with any and every means conceivable but could not possibly affirm Zionism as an ideology. For Horkheimer, Zionism's "refusal to trust any longer in the prospects of pluralism or of the civilization of the autonomous individual in Europe" (cited 138) was surely of inordinately greater concern than "his understanding of prophetic tradition and of the ways in which the creation of Israel conflicted with that tradition" (142).

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My thanks to John Abromeit, Martin Jay, Thomas Wheatland, and Lars Fischer for their close readings of my work, and for their thoughtful comments and criticisms. I hope to engage with major points made by each of these scholars.

John Abromeit asserts that my use of Horkheimer's essay "Die Juden und Europa" "creates [...] distortions" by misrepresenting the nature of Horkheimer's Marxism, and contends, in support of this assertion, that I "approvingly" cite "Rolf Tiedemann's misleading claim that Horkheimer had, in the 1930s, seen the world 'from the point of view of the proletariat.'" Abromeit does not point out to his readers the source of this last phrase, which he finds problematic. In a letter of August 1940 from Adorno to Horkheimer, which I quote in my book on pages 59 and 60, Adorno writes: "I am beginning to feel [...] that I cannot stop thinking about the fate of the Jews any more. It often seems to me that everything that we used to see from the point of view of the proletariat has been concentrated today with frightful force upon the Jews." That is: the claim that Horkheimer had earlier seen things "from the point of view of the proletariat" was made by none other than Adorno, and only echoed by Tiedemann and, more recently, by me. It is, of course, possible that Adorno was incorrect in his depiction of the evolution of Horkheimer's perspective—but I do not think he was.

The question that remains open here is how we are to understand Adorno's phrase. Abromeit argues that I make "Horkheimer's Marxism in the 1930s seem more traditional than it actually was" and quotes a passage from Horkheimer's essay "Traditionelle und kritische Theorie" (1937) in which Horkheimer had declared that "the situation of the proletariat is, in this society, no guarantee of correct knowledge." Adorno was intimately familiar with Horkheimer's essay—and he agreed wholeheartedly with Horkheimer on the point Horkheimer had made in the passage just quoted. When, three years later, Adorno asserted in passing that both he and Horkheimer had earlier seen things "from the point of view of the proletariat" he was merely using that phrase as a way to describe their Western Marxist roots. Horkheimer was not an orthodox Marxist in the 1930s. He was also not fully in agreement with Lukács or

Korsch. But his perspective in the period before the Second World War was closer to that of Western Marxists than to that of Social Democratic or Communist Party theorists.

Both Adorno and Horkheimer continued to be sympathetic to Western Marxist ideas for many years thereafter. I agree completely with Abromeit's assertion that "a sophisticated interpretation of Marxist theory continues to inform their later arguments." I also agree wholly with Martin Jay's depiction of my position on this point: "[Jacobs] contends that the Marxist explanation they originally favored [...] was not entirely abandoned, as it seemed to be in the psychoanalytically driven analysis of *The Authoritarian Personality*, but relativized by being made one 'element' in a non-hierarchically organized constellation of different sources."

On other, specific, points, Jay (by whose works I have been profoundly influenced) and I, apparently, do not agree to the same extent. Jay writes: "Extrapolating from the contrast between Fromm and Marcuse on Zionism, Jacobs contends that a pattern exists in explaining the Frankfurt School's range of attitudes [...] Aside from the fact that generalizing from such a modest sample is a dubious enterprise, Jacobs provides little evidence that Fromm based his humanist critique of Zionism on specifically Jewish principles." As to the size of the sample: the chapter of my book which deals with Critical Theorists and the State of Israel discusses the relevant views not only of Fromm and Marcuse, but also of Horkheimer and Lowenthal. Adorno had hardly anything to say about Israel after 1948—the period on which that chapter is tightly focused. Is there a theorist who played a significant role in the first generation of the Frankfurt School and who ought to have been included in that chapter but whose work I did not discuss? I believe that I have not sampled theorists, but discussed the views of all of the theorists who fit in the relevant category.

As to Fromm: The very first article by Fromm on Israel published after it became an independent country, which appeared first in Yiddish (in June of 1950), and then in English (in September–October 1951), was entitled "Jewish State and Messianic Vision." The article, which was published in *Freeland*, begins as follows: "The Zionist press and large sections of Jewish public opinion have greeted the establishment of the State of Israel as the fulfillment of the messianic hopes of the Jewish people [...] The claim that the state is a fulfillment of [...] Jewish messianic hopes is not only unjustifiable but contradicts the most fundamental principles and values of Jewish tradition." The rest of the article is devoted entirely to providing evidence in support of that contention. Fromm writes, for example, that "one of the most important reasons for consistent Jewish refusal to adopt Christianity was that they could not believe the Messiah had already come while war and injustice were rampant on earth. Can a Jewish State, as it establishes a precarious existence in a war-threatened world, where hundreds of millions live in semi-slavery, contain in its foundations the fulfillment of messianic hopes? To ask the question is to answer it in the negative."

A second example: In an interview with his friend Dr. I. N. Steinberg, which was published under the title "On the Mental Health of the Jewish People" in *Freeland* (June–August 1952), Fromm proclaimed:

The Jewish messianic idea includes a profound thought in the statement: "For our iniquities we have been driven from our land." Whenever we reject the fundamentals of our morality we must necessarily lose our land and independence. And equally, a return to the land, the return to Zion, can happen only when the Jews—as all nations of the world—are ready to put into practice the principles of peace and justice. Do not forget that we have had a Shabbatai-Zvi movement once before in our history, a movement which captured the imagination of our people with the vision of Messianic redemption.

Throughout the rest of his life, Fromm's attitude towards the State of Israel stemmed precisely from Jewish principles. Fromm's friendship with David Riesman does not provide a contradictory explanation of the origins and bases of Fromm's position.

I am not sure that I understand Jay's conjecture that "it is hard not to wonder if in this particular case, Jacobs is projecting his own investments onto the figures whose careers he is tracing." If, by this, Jay means to suggest that my attitude towards Israel might be rooted in my own commitment to Judaism, I'll take this moment to clarify that I am an altogether secular Jew, deeply involved with Jewish cultural institutions, but wholly lacking in any attachment to Jewish religious beliefs.

Jay also asserts that I excuse myself "a bit too quickly from examining in any depth" Walter Benjamin. Thomas Wheatland would likely agree. Here, I can offer only a weak defense. After many years of work, I am still not sure that I have substantial things to say about Benjamin and Judaism that go beyond the studies published by Irving Wohlfarth, Susan A. Handelman, Eric Jacobson, and others, and chose not simply to repeat what earlier scholars have already said. And I had trouble finding a way to fit Benjamin into my work. That is: including Benjamin would likely have exploded the parameters of my study. My book deals with three "moments." I grapple first with the handful of men who were full-time members of the Institut für Sozialforschung and who were resident in Frankfurt in the period immediately preceding the Nazi seizure of power. Benjamin was not a member of the institute during that period. I grapple, secondly, with the studies of antisemitism conducted by the institute while in exile in the US. Benjamin did not make it to the US, and was not directly involved in constructing or writing those studies. I focus, finally, on attitudes towards the State of Israel after its declaration of independence. Benjamin was long since dead when Israel became an independent country. But I may, admittedly, protest too much. Benjamin's ideas are clearly relevant, and worthy of more space than that devoted to them in my book.

Wheatland ends his review by asking how,

given that [Jacobs] focuses exclusively on the Judaic/Jewish context, [...] the reader [can] assess its importance relative to the other aspects whose significance Jacobs acknowledges but does not cover? Without reassembling the constellation of forces that shaped the formation and development of Critical Theory [...] how are we to assess the significance of the Jewish life paths that Jacobs has chronicled?

In his masterful study, *Adorno* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), Martin Jay has described all of the relevant points in the constellation of that particular thinker—Western Marxism, aesthetic modernism, mandarin cultural conservatism, Jewish matters, and deconstructionism. I would argue, with reference to the Frankfurt School as a whole, that all these stars—though one or another of them may have shone more brightly at some times than at others—remained present, even when they were not immediately visible. Jewish matters were part of the constellation throughout, but were by no means always of precisely the same significance.

Lars Fischer does not care for my discussion of the spearhead theory—a subject, which I mention very, very, briefly, and only in passing. My friend Lars is skeptical that either Horkheimer or Adorno ever "subscribed to" the spearhead theory "in a substantive manner". In an "aide-mémoire" attached to a letter to Morris D. Waldman and dated 30 December 1943, Horkheimer provided notes on remarks he had made during a talk, which he and Adorno had had with Waldman. In these notes, Horkheimer writes

In close connection with our various empirical investigations into the nature of anti-semitism in this country, we have been endeavoring to lay the foundations for a workable theory of this phenomenon. [...] It is our belief that a theory which penetrates to the core of a social evil [...] may become an intellectual weapon by itself. The idea that antisemitism is not alone a menace to the Jews, but a symptom of the crisis facing democratic civilization, will cease to be a mere propagandistic statement, and become a certitude (Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 17 [Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1996], 526).

Fischer seems to think that such statements ought not to be taken at face value. I suspect that when he wrote that letter, Horkheimer believed what he wrote.

Fischer compares the structure of Marx's "Zur Judenfrage" with that of Horkheimer's "Die Juden und Europa", and suggests that Sholem noticed that parallel, and was provoked by it. Comparing the structure of these two pieces is an exceptionally interesting idea, and well worth closer consideration. However, I am not quite certain that Sholem picked up on the structural parallels. He responded—strongly and negatively—to the *contents* of Horkheimer's piece, which echoed aspects of the contents of Marx's essay. The question of whether he also registered the formal similarities is one I will continue to ponder.

Fischer, finally, argues that the Frankfurt School recedes in importance in my last chapter, and thus does not provide "a plausible framework" for that portion of my work. He also believes that I ought to have written less about "the all too conventional distinction between attitudes toward the State of Israel, on the one hand, and toward Israeli government policies, on the other", and more on the "distinction between attitudes toward Israel and attitudes toward Zionism." His first point suggests that we may not always understand the term Frankfurt School (which I use rather loosely) in precisely the same way. Fischer notes that, of the four figures whose works I discuss in chapter three, only one (Horkheimer) remained intimately involved in the School's activities. I consider Lowenthal, Marcuse, and Fromm as thinkers operating in traditions of the Frankfurt School even after each of these men had severed their ties to (or had been severed from) the institute. I discuss their early careers in the first portions of my book, and complete the arc by discussing their late-life views in the book's final chapter. And the distinction between attitudes towards Israel and towards Zionism may well be of consequence to Fischer (and is a distinction in which I, personally, am very interested). It was, however, not a distinction of such great interest to Horkheimer or Fromm or Marcuse or Lowenthal once the State of Israel came into existence.

At the end of the day, it is my sense that the differences between my positions and those of my reviewers are not particularly sharp or deep. To be sure, we do not always agree on how to interpret the fine points, and have somewhat distinctive orientations and interests. But I have great respect for all of those who have contributed to this forum, and genuinely hope that all of the participants will be open to continuing to engage in intellectual exchanges with me on the Frankfurt School and other matters of common interest in the years ahead.

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