

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-Brunswick, 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