

In their movement away from systematization and the prevailing modes of discourse, and not simply in their distancing of themselves from Marx, lay the truly revolutionary nature of their work. In not coming to terms fully with this unspoken problematic of Critical Theory, Jacoby's advance upon Slater is a limited one.

REPLY TO SLATER AND PLAUT

by Russell Jacoby

Phil Slater is to be congratulated for his temperate response to an intemperate review; or rather: he should be congratulated except that his very restraint is more ruthless than any anger. For little bothers Slater more than the implication that he is poking around with individuals. His book is "concerned not with individuals but theoretical apparati and their operation," apparently located in some transhuman universe. Neither the situation of his book nor the options that the Frankfurt School faced can be understood in individual terms; nor in fact are any of the criticisms that he advances "introduced arbitrarily." Everything is mainlined into the course of history. Consistent with this, I am not named once but am known exclusively as the reviewer. It is only surprising that Slater does not sign himself the angel of history. Pace Slater, he will be known as the author.

Here as elsewhere there is too much evidence of the muck of the Althusserians. Against an idealist reading, to which the reviewer succumbed, the author suggests a materialist reading, which of course is *political*. "Political" serves as the official stamp of left-wing legitimacy. Italicized and underlined it does wonders for tired Marxist clap-trap. That the book is political can hardly be questioned; after all, it is subtitled "A Marxist Perspective." Yet I fail to see why the "*political* motivation" or the "*political* intentions" redeem a book that is substandard.

The author also borrows a favorite ploy from the Althusserian closet: past tripe is explained away by the fact that it was written at a particular time and place, as if there could be some doubt about this. That something is written at a particular "conjuncture" becomes the universal excuse. Althusser regularly does this, at the same time as lambasting "historicism." Apparently no one has seen fit to mention the inconsistency. No matter.

The author has adopted this approach. We are reminded that the book was published in England in 1977; no evidence is offered to prove this, but it will not be contested here. This fact is supposed to go far in explaining the book. We are presented with a short course on the impoverished history of British Marxism. The reviewer's charge that the book only illuminates the author's insular intellectual world is answered by the insular intellectual world of British Marxism. The author turns out to be a guiltless agent of British intellectual stagnation. It is difficult to know what to make of this: is this a confession? or a boast?

To be sure, and to be fair, the book intends not simply to be a witless reflection of a witless situation, but an "intervention." Like "political," this turns pedestrian Marxism into high science. As to the quality of the intervention, the author and reviewer are totally at odds. Nothing the author states here about his "three-fold aim" or his "differentiated" critique improves matters. Despite its political motivation and the specific ideological situation of Britain in the 1970s, I think the book is shoddy in conception and execution; and for some reason—perhaps only nostalgia—I imagine

that the author is partly responsible.

One comment about Timothy C.L. Plaut's friendly communication: there is a difference between us. I confess to my "unease with unease" and am hardly ready to consign Marxist political economy to the museum; nor do I think that "uncoupling from Marx" constitutes an adequate perspective for interpreting critical Theory. Consider three kindred and almost simultaneous essays: Adorno's "Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?" (1968), Marcuse's "Obsolescence of Marxism?" (1967), and Horkheimer's "Marx heute" (1968). Nor do I think that is an either-or choice, either a critique of instrumental reason or political economy. I as well as others have tried to argue (see my "The Politics of the Crisis Theory," *Telos* 23, Marramao's "Political Economy and Critical Theory," *Telos* 24), that critical theory remains fundamentally committed to political economy, though this relation cannot be reduced to a formula.

NOTES ON JEWISH CRISES

by Mitchell Cohen

Harvey Blume's review of Gershom Scholem's *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (*Telos* 31) misrepresents Zionism and Scholem's attitude toward the Palestinians, and contains serious historical inaccuracies regarding Scholem's record in the Israel-Arab conflict.

Blume claims that the absence of any discussion of the Arab-Jewish problem in this particular volume demonstrates that "Scholem completely shares the failure of Zionism" to consider the Arabs. In the first place, to argue that Zionism as a whole is monolithic or to argue that the Zionist movement was monolithic concerning the Palestinians is a serious factual distortion. There are and always have been serious differences within Zionism on just about every issue, including that of the Palestinians. Socialist-Zionists, religious Zionists and right-wing revisionist Zionists have agreed on few issues outside of the need for a national solution to the Jewish problem. Aharon Cohen's mammoth *Israel and the Arab World* (1970) superbly documents this fact. If one argues that all of Zionism can be reduced to the thought or policies of a Ben Gurion or a Begin (neither of whom agreed with each other on almost anything), then one can argue just as well (and wrongly) that socialism may be reduced to Stalinism.

Secondly, had Blume researched Scholem's record instead of presenting his own biases, he would have discovered that Gershom Scholem has long been a Zionist profoundly concerned with the Palestinian question. That he did not include any articles dealing with the issue in the particular volume under question was, of course, his prerogative. But that does not justify erroneous conclusions. Scholem was, during the years of the British Mandate, a member of *Brit Shalom* (Peace Alliance), an organization espousing equal rights for Arabs and Jews and the less than popular idea of a bi-national state in Palestine. Along with other prominent figures, such as Martin Buber, Scholem was active in the work of the League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement. During this, his most active political period, Scholem was denouncing just what Blume accuses him of—ignorance of the Arabs. While Scholem's chief concern in more recent years has been the internal dynamics of Jewish history and Jewish mysticism, one will nonetheless find his name on the list of sponsors of a major symposium scheduled for Tel Aviv this fall entitled "When the Guns Fall