



A Zone of Engagement

By Perry Anderson

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The texts in this volume offer critical assessments of a number of leading figures in contemporary intellectual life, who are in different ways thinkers at the intersection of history and politics. They include Roberto Unger, advocate of plasticity; the historians of antiquity and of revolution, Geoffrey de Ste. Croix and Isaac Deutscher; the philosophers of liberalism, Norberto Bobbio and Isaiah Berlin; the sociologists of power, Michael Mann and W.G. Runciman; the exponents of national identity, Andreas Hillgruber and Fernand Braudel; the ironists of science, Max Weber and Ernest Gellner; Carlo Ginzburg, explorer of cultural continuity, and Marshall Berman, herald of modernity. A concluding chapter looks at the idea of the end of history, recently advanced by Francis Fukuyama, in its successive versions from the nineteenth century to the present, and considers the situation of socialism today in the light of it.

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Editorial Review

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In the world of contemporary social theory, a new book by Anderson is a major event. The publication of two books, even of collected essays, is a completely unprecedented development. Fans of one of Britain's most illustrious historians will find plenty of good reading in these long-anticipated volumes. Culled primarily from the pages of the London-based *New Left Review*, Anderson's essays range over such topics as the rise of the English state, the character of democracy in ancient Greece, and intellectual life under Mrs. Thatcher. The pieces in *English Questions* are centered around the question of why English society and culture exhibits such a profoundly conservative tendency. *A Zone of Engagement*, by way of contrast, assesses the work of such seminal figures as Isaiah Berlin, Antonio Gramsci, and Max Weber. These erudite books are essential for larger or academic libraries.

- Kent Worcester, *Social Science Research Council, New York*

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About the Author

Perry Anderson is the author of, among other books, *Spectrum*, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, *English Questions*, *The Origins of Postmodernity*, and *The New Old World*. He teaches history at UCLA and is on the editorial board of *New Left Review*.

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