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A Social Identity Theory of Anti-Semitism

> And why is it forbidden to deliver a female animal to a heathen woman? Because all heathen women are suspected of whoredom, and when her paramour comes to lie with her, it is possible that he will not find her at home and will lie with the animal instead. Indeed, even if he does find her, he may still lie with the animal. (*The Code of Maimonides, Book V: The Book of Holiness,* XXII, 142)

The theory of group evolutionary strategies described in *A People That Shall Dwell Alone: Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy* (MacDonald 1994; hereafter *PTSDA*) argued that Judaism may be understood mainly as a cultural invention, maintained by social controls that act to structure the behavior of group members and characterized by a religious ideology that rationalizes ingroup behavior both to ingroup members and to outsiders. Although evolved mechanisms of group cohesion are also important, it was shown that social controls acting within the group were able to structure the group to facilitate ingroup economic and political cooperation and resource competition with outgroups, erect barriers to genetic penetration from outside the group, and facilitate eugenic practices aimed at producing high intelligence and high-investment parenting ideally suited to developing a specialized ecological role within human societies. Because of these traits, and particularly an IQ that is at least one standard deviation above the Caucasian mean, Judaism has been a powerful force in several historical eras.

The proposal that Judaism may be usefully conceptualized as a group evolutionary strategy suggests that anti-Semitism be defined as negative attitudes or behavior directed at Jews because of their group membership. This is a very broad definition—one that is equally applicable to anti-Jewish attitudes in any historical era. It is also consistent with a very wide range of external processes

contributing to anti-Semitism in a particular historical era, and also with qualitative changes in the nature of anti-Jewish attitudes or the institutional structure of anti-Semitism at different times and places.

One type of evolutionary approach to anti-Semitism considers the possibility that humans have mechanisms that cause them to favor relatives or others who share genes. There is little doubt that kin recognition mechanisms exist among animals (see Rushton 1989), and some evolutionists (e.g., Dunbar 1987; Shaw & Wong 1989; van der Dennen 1987; Vine 1987) have proposed genetic mechanisms based on kin recognition as an explanation for xenophobia, although others have proposed that the genetic mechanism may well depend on learning during development (e.g., Alexander 1979, 126–128). Genetic Similarity Theory (GST) (Rushton 1989) extends beyond kin recognition by proposing mechanisms (possibly based on kin recognition mechanisms) that assess phenotypic similarity as a marker for genetic similarity. These proposed mechanisms would then promote positive attitudes and a lower threshold for altruism for similar others. There is indeed considerable evidence, summarized in Rushton (1989) and Segal (1993), that phenotypic similarity is an important factor in human assortment, helping behavior, and liking others, although whether GST can account for these phenomena remains controversial (see commentary in Rushton 1989).

Mechanisms based on kin recognition and phenotypic similarity may have some role in traditional anti-Semitism, since in traditional societies there would be much more phenotypic similarity among gentiles than between Jews and gentiles, due to differences in clothing, language, appearance (e.g., hair style), and quite often their physical features. Moreover, among Jews, there are anecdotal reports of very high levels of rapport and ability to recognize other Jews which are consistent with the existence of some sort of kin recognition system among Jews.[1] As Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell notes, "I was born in *galut* and I accept—now gladly, though once in pain—the double burden and the double pleasure of my self-consciousness, the outward life of an American and the inward secret of the Jew. I walk with this sign as a frontlet between my eyes, and it is as visible to some secret others as their sign is to me" (Bell 1961, 477). Or consider Sigmund Freud, who wrote that he found "the attraction of Judaism and of Jews so irresistible, many dark emotional powers, all the mightier the less they let themselves be grasped in words, as well as the clear consciousness of inner identity, the secrecy of the same mental construction" (in Gay 1988, 601).

However, theories based on phenotypic similarity do not address the crucial importance of cultural manipulation of segregative mechanisms as a fundamental characteristic of Judaism. Indeed, I would suggest that the segregative cultural practices of Judaism have actually resulted in ethnic similarity being of disproportionate importance for Jews in regulating their associations with others. Because of the cultural barriers between Jews and the gentile world, phenotypic similarity between Jews and gentiles on a wide range of traits was effectively precluded as a mechanism for promoting friendship and marriage

between Jews and gentiles, and there was a corresponding hypertrophy of the importance of religious/ethnic affiliation (i.e., group membership) as a criterion of assortment.

Moreover, generalized negative attitudes toward dissimilar others seem insufficient to account for anti-Semitism directed against individuals because of their group membership. The mechanisms implied by GST or proposed evolved mechanisms of xenophobia postulate that each individual assesses others on a continuum ranging from very similar to very dissimilar. The important feature of Judaism, however, is that there are discontinuities created by Jewish separatism and the consequent hypertrophy of Jewish religious/ethnic (i.e., group) status as a criterion of similarity. Fundamentally, what is needed is a theoretical perspective in which group membership per se (rather than other phenotypic characteristics of the individual) is of decisive importance in producing animosity between groups.

Creating a group evolutionary strategy results in the possibility of cultural group selection resulting from between-group competition in which the groups are defined by culturally produced ingroup markings (Richerson & Boyd 1997). Boyd and Richerson (1987) show that ingroup markers can evolve as an adaptive response to heterogeneous environments. Groups mark themselves off from other groups and thereby are able to remain reproductively isolated from other groups and adjust rapidly to new and variable environments. Judaism in traditional societies was indeed characterized by a highly elaborated set of ingroup markings that effectively set Jews off from gentile society (*PTSDA*, Ch. 4). The proposal here is that the process of creating ingroup markings is central to understanding anti-Semitism.

The body of theory that I believe is most relevant to conceptualizing anti-Semitism derives from psychological research on social identity (Abrams & Hogg 1990; Hogg & Abrams 1987, 1993; Tajfel 1981; Turner 1987). Interestingly, social identity theory was pioneered by Henri Tajfel, a Jewish survivor of Nazi concentration camps who regards the group conflict that shaped his own life as having a strong influence on his research interests (see Tajfel 1981, 1–3).

Social identity theory proposes that individuals place themselves and others in social categories (groups).[2] In the case of Jews, the categories are Jew and gentile, and this categorization into Jew and non-Jew is indeed a fundamental aspect of the social world of Jews. One of Portnoy's complaints in Philip Roth's (1969, 76) famous novel is that "the very first distinction I learned from you, I'm sure, was not night and day, or hot and cold, but *goyische* and Jewish."

There are several important consequences of this process:

The social categorization process results in discontinuities such that people exaggerate the similarities of individuals within each category (the accentuation effect). There is a psychological basis for supposing that given the highly salient cultural separatism that has often been characteristic of Judaism, both Jews and gentiles would sort others into the category "Jew" or "gentile," and that under

conditions of intergroup comparison they would exaggerate the similarity of members within each category (Brewer 1993). By this mechanism, people reconceptualize continuous distributions as sharply discontinuous, and the effect is particularly strong if the dimension is of critical importance to ingroup distinctiveness. When intergroup conflict occurs, the dimensions are likely to be imbued with great subjective importance, so that, for example, Jews would be expected to exaggerate the extent to which gentiles share characteristics and gentiles would be expected to exaggerate the extent to which Jews share characteristics. As T. W. Adorno notes, Jews are perceived "through the glasses of stereotypy" (in Adorno et al. 1950, 617) and even in the ancient world there was a strong tendency among pagan writers "to make facile generalizations about *the* Jews" (Feldman 1993, 45; italics in text). As indicated below, similar stereotyping processes are evident in Jewish perceptions of gentiles.

Moreover, people also place themselves into one of the categories (an ingroup), with the result that similarities between self and ingroup are exaggerated and dissimilarities with outgroup members are also exaggerated. An important result of this self-categorization process is that individuals adopt behavior and beliefs congruent with the stereotype of the ingroup.[3]

Finally, in situations where there are large proportionate differences in group size (as is typical in cases of Jewish-gentile group comparisons), there is a tendency for the minority group to stand out, with the result that both minority and majority group members tend to overestimate the consensus within the minority group (Mullen 1991). Relatively small ingroups are thus particularly likely to be perceived as homogeneous by the majority group as well as by ingroup members. Thus both Jews and gentiles are expected to be relatively prone to developing stereotypes of Jews as a relatively homogeneous group.

Perceptions of Jewish group homogeneity are quite possibly behind the very prominent theme of much anti-Semitic writing that despite appearances to the contrary, Jews are working together in a vast interlocking conspiracy to dominate gentiles. Such "conspiracy" theories, some of which are briefly described in Chapter 2, tend to overlook the extent to which different elements of the Jewish community have adopted different and even incompatible strategies vis-à-vis the gentile community (see Chapter 6). Such attributions are readily explicable within a social identity theory of anti-Semitism: outgroup members are conceptualized as having a set of stereotypically uniform negative qualities, and majority group members tend to overestimate the consensus within the minority group (Mullen 1991).

In some cases, at least, perceptions of group purpose also occur among Jews, and, from the standpoint of social identity theory, for the same reasons; i.e., as members of a very psychologically salient ingroup, Jews tend to see other Jews as members of a relatively homogeneous ingroup and as having group rather than personal goals. (Nevertheless, there is also evidence that in some cases Jews exaggerate the diversity of ingroup attitudes and behavior; see Chapter 8). Thus Irving Howe (1978) notes that Jewish group identification depends on a

powerful sense of shared experience and shared obligations and memories. As a result, individual and group goals are often not clearly separated, not the least because personal experience is filtered through a powerful sense of being a Jew. As Abraham Cahan (co-founder of the *Jewish Daily Forward*) noted in a discussion of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe, "Every Jew . . . came to feel he was part of an historical event in the life of the Jewish people" (in Howe 1978, 95).

Indeed, at the extreme, when there is very powerful commitment to the Jewish ingroup, the world becomes divided into two groups, Jews and gentiles, with the latter becoming a homogenized mass with no defining features at all except that they are non-Jews. The prominent Zionist author Maurice Samuel (1924, 150–151) makes the interesting comment that "the unbelieving and radical Jew is as different from the radical gentile as the orthodox Jew from the reactionary gentile. The cosmopolitanism of the radical Jew springs from his feeling (shared by the orthodox Jew) that there is no difference between gentile and gentile. You are all pretty much alike[;] . . . a single temper runs through all of you, whatever your national divisions. The radical Jew (like the orthodox Jew) is a cosmopolitan in a sense which must be irritating to you: for he does not even understand why you make such a fuss about that most obvious of facts—that you are all alike." Similarly, the Orthodox rabbi Mayer Schiller (1996, 59) states "Sadly it is . . . the granting of humanity to the Gentile either as an individual or as a people . . . that is so often lacking in Orthodox circles. Suffering from a kind of moral blindness, we find it difficult to see the non-Jew as anything more than a bit player in our own drama."

Social identity research indicates that the stereotypic behavior and attitudes of the ingroup are positively valued, while outgroup behavior and attitudes are negatively valued. The homogenization of the perceived characteristics of ingroups and outgroups has strong emotional overtones: people develop favorable attitudes toward ingroup members and unfavorable attitudes toward outgroup members. Consequently, Jews and gentiles are both expected to develop highly negative attitudes regarding the behavior of members of the other group and generally to fail to attend to individual variation among members of the other group. The ingroup develops a *positive distinctness*, a *positive social identity*, and increased self-esteem as a result of this process. Within the group there is a great deal of cohesiveness, positive emotional regard, and camaraderie, while relationships outside the group can be hostile and distrustful. Moreover, there is evidence that where there are proportionate differences in group size, individuals in minority groups are generally more prone to ingroup bias than are majority group members (Mullen 1991), suggesting that Jews would be even more strongly inclined toward positive ingroup evaluations than gentiles.

Social identity theorists propose that the emotional consequences of these categorizations of ingroups and outgroups result from the fact that people seek a positive personal identity as a group member. Individuals maximize the differ-

ence between ingroup and outgroup in a manner that accentuates the positive characteristics of the ingroup. They do so precisely because of this theoretically primitive need to categorize themselves as a member of a group with characteristics that reflect well on the group as a whole and therefore on them individually. For example, Gitelman (1991, 8), describing Jewish identity processes in the Soviet Union, notes that Jews developed a great curiosity about Jewish history "not merely from a thirst for historical knowledge, but from a need to locate oneself within a group, its achievements, and its fate. It is as if the individual's own status, at least in his own eyes, will be defined by the accomplishments of others who carry the same label. 'If Einstein was a Jew, and I am a Jew, it does not quite follow that I am an Einstein, but . . .'." And Marshall Sklare (1972, 34), writing of contemporary American Jews, notes that "Jews still possess a feeling of superiority, although more in the moral and intellectual realms now than in the area of spiritual affairs. While the feeling of superiority is a factor that has received comparatively little attention from students of the problem, it is of crucial importance because it operates to retard assimilation. Leaving the group becomes a psychological threat: such a move is viewed not as an advancement but as a cutting off from a claim of superiority."

Moreover, the accentuation effect is greatest on precisely those group characteristics that the ingroup perceives as most critical to this positive evaluation process. Therefore, if, e.g., gentiles evaluated themselves as proportionately less involved in moneylending and more loyal to their country than Jews, and if these categorizations were very important to their positive evaluation of their ingroup, there would be the expectation that gentiles would develop a tendency to exaggerate the extent to which Jews engage in moneylending and are disloyal, even more than they would exaggerate Jewish representation on traits that are more evaluatively neutral, such as type of clothing.

Further, people very easily adopt negative stereotypes about outgroups, and these stereotypes are both slow to change and resistant to countervailing examples. Resistance to change is especially robust if the category is one that is highly important to the positive evaluation of the ingroup or the negative evaluation of the outgroup. In terms of the above example, it would be expected that gentiles would change their categorization of Jews as having dark hair far more easily than they would change their categorization of Jews as usurers or potential traitors, because the former category is evaluatively neutral.

Finally, the stereotypes tend to become more negative and hostile in situations where there is actual intergroup competition and tension. And, as indicated in the following, intergroup competition is an exceedingly likely consequence of the categorization process.

The result of these categorization processes is group behavior that involves discrimination against the outgroup and in favor of the ingroup; beliefs in the superiority of the ingroup and inferiority of the outgroup; and positive affective preference for the ingroup and negative affect directed toward the outgroup.

Although groups may be originally dichotomized on only one dimension (e.g., Jew/gentile), there is a tendency to expand the number of dimensions on which the individuals in the groups are categorized and to do so in an evaluative manner.

Thus a Jew would be expected not only to distinguish sharply between Jews and gentiles, but to view gentiles as characterized by a number of negative traits (e.g., stupidity, drunkenness), while Jews would be viewed as characterized by corresponding positive traits (e.g., intelligence, sobriety). These processes have been documented in traditional East European Jewish shtetl life:

A series of contrasts is set up in the mind of the shtetl child, who grows up to regard certain behavior as characteristic of Jews, and its opposite as characteristic of Gentiles. Among Jews he expects to find emphasis on intellect, a sense of moderation, cherishing of spiritual values, cultivation of rational, goal-directed activities, a "beautiful" family life. Among Gentiles he looks for the opposite of each item: emphasis on the body, excess, blind instinct, sexual license, and ruthless force. The first list is ticketed in his mind as Jewish, the second as goyish. (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 152)

As expected, Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 152) found that this world view would be confirmed by examples of gentile behavior that conform to the stereotype, as when gentiles suddenly rose up and engaged in a murderous pogrom against Jews. Moreover, the attributes of the ingroup are superior qualities, and those of the outgroup are inferior. Jews valued highly the attributes that they considered themselves as exemplifying and viewed the characteristics of the gentiles in a very negative manner. There was a general attitude of superiority to gentiles. Jews returning from Sabbath services " 'pity the barefoot *goyim*, deprived of the Covenant, the Law, and the joy of Sabbath. . . .' 'We thought they were very unfortunate. They had no enjoyment . . . no Sabbath . . . no holidays . . . no fun . . . .' 'They'd drink a lot and you couldn't blame them, their lives were so miserable' " (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 152; see also Hundert 1992, 45; Weinryb 1972, 96). Or as World Zionist Congress President Nahum Goldmann (1978, 13) stated regarding Jewish perceptions of Lithuanians early in the century, "The Jews saw their persecutors as an inferior race. . . . Most of my grandfather's patients were peasants. Every Jew felt ten or a hundred times the superior of these lowly tillers of the soil; he was cultured, learned Hebrew, knew the Bible, studied the Talmud—he knew that he stood head and shoulders above these illiterates."

The negative attitudes were fully reciprocated. Both Jews and gentiles referred to the other with imagery of specific animals, implying that the other was subhuman (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 157). When a member of the other group died, the word used was the word for the death of an animal. Each would say of one's own group that they "eat," while members of the other group "gobble." "The peasant will say, 'That's not a man, it's a Jew.' And the Jew will say, 'That's not a man, it's a goy.' " (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 157).

Stories about the other group would recount instances of deception (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 157), and everyday transactions would be carried on with a subtext of mutual suspicion. "There is beyond this surface dealing . . . an underlying sense of difference and danger. Secretly each [Jewish merchant and gentile peasant] feels superior to the other, the Jew in intellect and spirit, the 'goy' in physical force—his own and that of his group. By the same token each feels at a disadvantage opposite the other, the peasant uneasy at the intellectuality he attributes to the Jew, the Jew oppressed by the physical power he attributes to the goy" (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 67). Indeed, the supreme term of abuse within the Jewish community was *goyisher kop* (gentile head) (Patai & Patai 1989, 152): the ultimate insult for a Jew was to be at the intellectual level of a gentile.[4]

These phenomena can be seen in contemporary America, as indicated in the following passage from Charles Silberman, who validates a generalization found in Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*:

The attributes and values that Jews developed . . . —a distaste for physical combat, for example, and a preference for academic over athletic prowess—were endowed with moral superiority. At high school football games, Portnoy recalls, there was "a certain comic detachment experienced on our side of the field, grounded in the belief that this was precisely the kind of talent that only a *goy* would think to develop in the first place. . . . We were Jews—and not only were we not inferior to the *goyim* who could beat us at football, but . . . because we could not commit our hearts to victory in such a thuggish game, we were superior. We were Jews—*and we were superior*. Indeed the only character in *Portnoy's Complaint* who is crippled by feelings of inadequacy is that rebel against Jewish particularism, Alexander Portnoy himself. (Silberman 1985, 81)

Negative attitudes toward gentiles are also prominent in Jewish religious writing (Hartung 1995; Shahak 1994), particularly in the theory and practice of cleanness. There is extensive writing from the ancient world on gentile uncleanness dating at least from the first century B.C. and appearing in the Mishnah, the Talmuds, Tosefta, the Books of Judith and Jubilees, the Acts of the Apostles, and the writings of Josephus.[5] Thus Tosefta Shabbat ix, (22) states that "it is not permitted to suck either from a Gentile woman or from an unclean beast, but if the child is in danger, nothing stands in the way of saving life" (quote in Alon 1977, 153). Alon explains the passage as indicating gentile defilement, and notes that "the milk of a Gentile woman is likened to that of an unclean beast" (Alon 1977, 153). Gentiles were viewed as intrinsically unclean, not unclean by virtue of anything they did.[6] Moreover, gentile uncleanness was not merely theoretical; it restricted actual interactions with gentiles (Alon 1977, 148–149).

These tendencies toward ingroup cohesiveness and devaluations of the outgroup are exacerbated by real conflicts of interest (see also Triandis 1990, 96). In a classic study, Sherif (1966) assigned boys randomly to groups that then engaged in a series of competitions. Under these circumstances, group member-

ship became an important aspect of personal identity.[7] The groups developed negative stereotypes of each other and were transformed into groups of "wicked, disturbed, and vicious" children (Sherif 1966, 85). Competition was thus proposed as a sufficient condition for the development of hostility and aggression between the groups. Only the development of superordinate goals (i.e., goals that required the cooperation of both groups to achieve ends desired by all) resulted in lowered animosity and the development of some cross-group friendships. Historically, such superordinate goals have not been typical of societies in which Jews have resided. Indeed, a major theme of historical anti-Semitism has involved accusations of Jewish disloyalty (see pp. 60–71).

Resource competition between Jews and gentiles has been a highly salient feature of Jewish-gentile relationships in many societies and in widely separated historical periods. In congruence with the results of social identity research, anti-Semitism is expected to be most prominent among those most in competition with Jews and during times of economic crisis, and least common among gentiles who are actually benefiting from the Jews, such as aristocratic gentiles who often profited from cooperation with them (see *PTSDA*, Ch. 5). As Jacob Katz (1986a, 7) notes regarding anti-Semitism in post-emancipation Germany, "If . . . one wishes to trace the development of hostility toward the Jews . . . one ought to disregard its ideological foundations and to concentrate on its goal. That goal . . . was determined by the pace of the Jews' entry into the positions opened up to them. Protests and complaints coincided with the Jews' progress."

A focus solely on "resource competition" is perhaps too narrow in its connotations. Humans compete over many things besides simply economic resources. A general point of this volume might be summarized by simply saying that Jews are very good at whatever they do, and that anti-Semitism arises when there are perceived conflicts of interest between the Jewish community (or segments of it) and the gentile community (or segments of it). Because of Jewish within-group cooperation as well as eugenic and cultural practices that have resulted in an average IQ of at least 1 standard deviation above the Caucasian mean (*PTSDA*, Ch. 7), Jews are highly adept in achieving their goals, whether the goals involve establishing a homeland in the Middle East, developing business and financial networks, competing for positions in prestigious graduate and professional schools, leading political, intellectual, and cultural movements, or influencing immigration policy and the political process. The success of these pursuits and the fact that these pursuits inevitably conflict with the interests of groups of gentiles (or at least are perceived to conflict with them) is, in the broadest sense, the most important source of anti-Semitism.

Competition between groups is not a necessary condition for the development of ingroup biases. Biases in favor of ingroups and against outgroups occur even in so-called "minimal group" experiments, where groups are constructed with no conflicts of interest, or indeed any social interaction at all. Even when the experimental subjects are aware that the groups are composed randomly, sub-

jects attempt to maximize the difference between the ingroup and the outgroup, even when such a strategy means they would not maximize their own group's rewards. The important goal seemed to be to outcompete the other group. As Tajfel and Turner (1979, 39) note, "Competitive behaviour between groups, at least in our culture, is extraordinarily easy to trigger off." Social categorization by itself is thus a sufficient condition for intergroup competition.

In the case of anti-Semitism, since Jews have throughout the vast majority of their history appeared as a highly distinct group, there is the expectation that this self-imposed cultural separatism is a sufficient condition for developing negative attitudes and competition between Jews and gentiles. Indeed, to the extent that an important aspect of Jewish religious practice and socialization was the inculcation of beliefs in which cultural separatism was positively valued, these effects would be likely to be much stronger among Jews than among gentiles. Since the Jew/gentile categorization process was not central to gentile socialization, except perhaps under conditions of extreme Jewish/gentile group conflict, there is the expectation that gentiles would be somewhat less invested in this categorization process than Jews.

People tend to manipulate their social identity in ways that provide positive self-evaluations. Social identity research has indicated that *social mobility* (i.e., the extent to which group boundaries are permeable) influences ingroup/outgroup attitudes. The perception of permeability reduces perceptions of conflict of interest and reduces the ability of the other group to act in a collective manner, while perceptions of impermeability lead to group strategies involving competition with the other group and negative evaluations of the outgroup. As a result, it is often in the interests of groups to foster the belief that their group is permeable when in fact it is not (see Hogg & Abrams 1987, 56). Jews have often appeared as an impermeable group, at least in traditional societies, thereby exacerbating negative and competitive attitudes toward them. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 6, Jewish groups have not uncommonly acted to minimize surface appearances of impermeability in order to defuse anti-Semitism.[8] Similar processes would occur among Jews to the extent that the gentile world was perceived as impermeable.

People readily adopt a group mentality and engage in collective behavior of an often irrational, intensely emotional sort. In periods of intense group conflict, there is a relaxing of normal standards of appropriate behavior as individuals become prone to act impulsively on immediate stimuli and emotions. Individuals acting as members of groups therefore may perform actions that individuals alone would be ashamed to commit—what one might term a disinhibitory phenomenon. Although there are other theoretical interpretations of this phenomenon, social identity theorists interpret these phenomena by proposing that members of a group adopt a common social identification in which they accept and conform to stereotypical ingroup norms (e.g., anti-Semitic beliefs) and act collectively on the basis of these norms. These findings are of obvious

relevance to anti-Semitism, because they indicate that the behavior of groups of anti-Semitic gentiles may well be impulsive, irrational, and relatively disinhibited compared to the behavior of isolated individuals.[9]

There is no requirement that beliefs regarding either the ingroup or the outgroup be true. Irrational beliefs about the ingroup function as "group uniforms" to maintain internal cohesion and separation from outgroups (Bigelow 1969). The best example of such an irrational belief about the Jewish ingroup is the conceptualization of the Jews as a "chosen people" which has been a staple of Jewish theology from its inception. This very powerful idea has even found an important place in contemporary Judaism as a civil religion, despite its incongruity with contemporary intellectual currents (see Woocher 1986, 140–146).

In the absence of tangible, obvious benefits (such as the accomplishment of superordinate goals), cultural segregation is expected to maximize perceptions of conflicts of interest with the alien group, resulting in negative cognitive structures regarding the alien group. These structures may "go beyond the evidence" and may well be based on exaggerated or false information.

The false and even contradictory nature of anti-Semitic beliefs has long been apparent to writers on the subject. Irrational religious beliefs about Jews may well have been a potent source of anti-Semitism beginning in the late Roman Empire (see Chapter 3), and similar processes are clearly at work in the Jewish religious laws of the uncleanness of gentiles summarized above. As Cecil (1972, 72) notes regarding themes of anti-Semitic literature in Germany between 1870 and 1933, "Exaggeration of Germanic virtues and Jewish vices created a distorted picture of the two races [*sic*] as representing irreconcilable and contrasting cultures." It is expected that such beliefs would accentuate the differences between gentile and Jew, thereby aiding each group in viewing the other as alien and as having different interests. The cognitive structures not only sharply differentiate Jews from gentiles but result in negative valuations of Jews in general.

Such negatively toned cognitive structures would typically be in the self-interest of the gentiles holding them. Describing late-19th-century anti-Semitic beliefs, Katz (1986a, 7) notes that "for the most part these [anti-Semitic] ideologies employ arguments of different sorts, often in a blend full of contradictions. Their contentions do not, indeed, intend to reflect Jewish realities but rather aim at combating Jewish aspirations or gains already achieved. No argument that can convince oneself or others is scorned here."

Given the context of mutual suspicion and group competition, individuals are ready to believe the worst about the other group. Thus in describing the attitudes of Christians toward Jews in 13th-century France, Jordan (1989, 257) notes that "ordinary people did not necessarily agree with every aspect of policy or every critical note sounded against the Jews by popular preachers; but they usually had no vested interest in gainsaying it." Indeed they may have had a vested interest in indiscriminately believing anything negative about the outgroup.

Fantastic beliefs about the Jews have been a staple of anti-Semitic propaganda throughout history, particularly during the medieval period (see Langmuir 1980).

One very important role of such negative cognitive structures may well be fostering a sense of group identity among gentiles that serves as the basis of a gentile group strategy in competition with the Jewish group strategy. In Chapters 3–5, I explore the possibility that gentile group strategies having many of the same collectivist, authoritarian, and exclusivist characteristics as did historical Judaism developed as a reaction to the success of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy. One very clear concomitant of these gentile group strategies is the development of ideologies in which Jews (meaning *all* Jews or the vast majority of Jews) are portrayed as the very embodiments of evil. The suggestion is that these cognitive structures facilitate resource competition with Jews by aiding in producing a sense of gentile group solidarity and group interest in conflict with Jewish interests. Clearly the actual truth of these ideologies is quite irrelevant to their utility in facilitating resource competition.

In addition to completely fantastic or unverifiable beliefs about Jews, another common aspect of anti-Semitic beliefs is the exaggeration of the "grain of truth" in negative beliefs about a subset of Jews. For example, Lindemann (1991) notes that one of the more sophisticated theories of modern anti-Semitism proposes that anti-Semitism resulted from the irrational angers and frustrations of the losers of economic competition and reorganization consequent to industrialization or the development of capitalism. The "grain of truth" in this case is the fact that Jews were indeed highly overrepresented among the groups that were benefiting from these transformations and actually displaced gentile groups and lowered their place in society during this period. Other examples are the overrepresentation of Jews among radical political movements (e.g., Katz 1991) and the disproportionate representation of Jews in stock market manipulations (Ginsberg 1993, 189–199; Lindemann 1991), etc. The disproportionate representation of Jews in these activities is then viewed as an indictment of Judaism itself. As noted above, the accentuation effect described by social identity research would predict just such a tendency.

A slightly different variant of the "grain of truth" argument provides a clear illustration of the adaptiveness of the accentuation effect in group conflict. While there is good evidence that a great many New Christians in 15th-century Spain were in fact crypto-Jews (see Chapters 4, 6, and 7), some of them were probably sincere Christians. However, several modern scholars (e.g., Netanyahu 1995; Rivkin 1971; Roth 1995) as well as the 15th-century apologists for the New Christians have argued that while there were some crypto-Jews among this group, the vast majority were true Christians. These scholars accuse the Inquisition of uncritically generalizing the behavior of a few crypto-Jews to all New Christians.[10] The logic of the Inquisition, however, was, in the words of the associates of the Inquisitor General Thomás de Torquemada, that "it is better to burn some innocents than allow heresy to spread: 'Better for a man to enter

heaven with one eye than go to hell with both'" (in Johnson 1988, 227). Similarly, Cohen (1967) maintains that the 15th-century rabbis who evaluated the orthodoxy of the New Christians who had emigrated from Spain or Portugal were inclined to err on the side of assuming that they were genuine Christians, since such a judgment coincided with their interests in maintaining orthodoxy among their own constituents.

In the language of statistics, people in this respect behaved as if attempting to minimize the probability of committing a Type II error: In effect, gentiles were considering the null hypothesis "New Christians are not crypto-Jews and do not have group interests which conflict with gentiles." They behaved as if they were greatly concerned about making the error of accepting this proposition when in fact it is false. They placed less emphasis on making a Type I error, which is the error of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true. In this case, the Old Christians were rationally avoiding the possibility of a Type II error: by assuming the worst about all of the New Christians, there was less possibility of being deceived by them.

The general principle at work in these cases is that if one knows that at least some members of a group are deceivers but does not know exactly which ones, the safest policy is to assume that all are deceivers, if this policy has no negative consequences to self. In the case of the New Christians, the belief that all New Christians were deceivers not only cost nothing but also rationalized the expropriation of property from the New Christians. Moreover, there is overwhelming evidence that a large subset of New Christians, whatever the sincerity of their belief in Christianity, continued to intermarry predominantly among themselves and cooperate economically and politically (see Chapters 4, 6, and 7). As a result, the possible overattribution of religious heresy to the New Christians was highly adaptive, since it facilitated economic and reproductive competition with the New Christians as an endogamous group whatever their actual religious beliefs. In these cases even minimal evidence for cultural separatism and competition between groups appears to result in negative beliefs which are easily generalized.

In this regard, it is interesting that Öhman's (1993) evolutionary perspective on fear and anxiety emphasizes the idea that the systems associated with these emotions have evolved to respond to personal threat. The systems in both animals and humans are biased toward a low threshold for perceiving a situation as threatening, because false negatives are potentially far more costly than are false positives. While the latter represent only wasted energy and perhaps lost opportunities, the overattribution of threat ensures that all potential threats activate the system. And in the case of gentiles vis-à-vis Jews in many historical societies, there is every reason to suppose that potential losses due to false positives were essentially nonexistent because gentiles had nothing at all to gain by supposing that most Jews were actually nonthreatening or nondeceivers, especially if it was known that at least some Jews fit these descriptors. Under

these circumstances, it is not surprising that gentiles had a very low threshold for assuming the worst about Jews.

Jews have been quite aware of this tendency for overattributing the negatively perceived behavior of some Jews to the entire group, and of the power of the "grain of truth" to mobilize anti-Semitism. The Paris Sanhedrim, organized by Napoleon in 1807, replied to the general accusation that Jews were involved in usury as follows:

It cannot be denied that some of them are to be found, though not so many as is generally supposed, who follow that nefarious traffic condemned by their religion.[11]

But if there are some not over-nice in this particular, is it just to accuse one hundred thousand individuals of this vice? Would it not be deemed an injustice to lay the same imputation on all Christians because some of them are guilty of usury? (*Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrim*; in Tama, 1807, 207)[12]

During the McCarthy era, when it was well known that Jews were disproportionately involved in communism, there was a tendency to generalize the Jewish/Communist connection to all Jews, or at least it seemed that way to Jewish observers: Arnold Forster, general counsel of the Anti-Defamation League, stated that "there was an evident quotient of anti-Semitism in the McCarthy wave of hysteria. Jews in that period were automatically suspect. Our evaluation of the general mood was that the people felt that if you scratch a Jew, you can find a Communist" (in Navasky 1980, 112).[13]

Undoubtedly as a result of this tendency, Jews have often placed a very great importance on restraining behavior that could result in negative stereotypes about Jews (see pp. 197–201). Jews have been quite aware that gentiles are overly prone to developing negative stereotypes of Jewish behavior on the basis of a few exemplars of negatively evaluated behavior.

This overattribution of negatively perceived behavior has probably been exacerbated during periods, such as during the period of the Spanish Inquisition, when society itself was organized in a corporate (group) manner. Faur (1992, 39) notes that the punishment of groups rather than individuals was a central feature of the corporate structure of medieval society. This ideology was explicitly incorporated in the expulsion order of 1492:

Because when a grave and horrendous crime is committed by a member of a college or university [=corporation], it is reasonable that the [said] college or university should be dissolved and annihilated, and that the young should be punished on account of others. And that those who pervert the well-being and honest living of the cities and villages, and who, by their contamination, may harm others, must be expelled from the country. (In Faur 1992)

Though they often functioned in an adaptive manner, there are circumstances in which negative attributions about a strategizing outgroup may be maladaptive, and this can be the case even if these attributions facilitate competition with the outgroup. Thus if gentiles incorrectly perceive that Jews are causing a

specific problem (e.g., loss of a war or economic malaise among the gentiles), successful anti-Semitic actions facilitated by these attributions may have negative effects on the Jews but would not be effective in solving the problem (the scapegoating phenomenon). Opportunistic gentiles may be able to benefit by coloring their opponents with the taint of Jewish association, and individuals can be manipulated into believing that a certain policy advocated disproportionately by Jews was ipso facto against their interests.

This type of maladaptive anti-Semitism appears to have been historically important. Anti-Semitism has often been a useful weapon against liberal political movements with strong Jewish involvement (see Ginsberg 1993, 56–57), as in the case of opposition to socialism in pre–World War I Germany, at a time when the founders and leaders of international socialism were Jews (Pulzer 1964, 259). The facts that Judaism has tended to thrive in individualistic, liberal societies (see also Ch. 5 and *PTSDA*, Ch. 8) and that Jews backed liberal political views in Germany during the Weimar period prompted the conservative intellectual Edgar Jung to state that "the Jew needs only to get hold of the party of enlightenment and individualism in order to undermine from within the structure of the German social framework" (in Pulzer 1964, 311).

In addition, there are cases in which novel ideas were attributed to Jewish subversion in order to discredit them and thus maintain the status quo. The Inquisition had a very chilling effect on intellectual endeavor in Spain for centuries; one of its common techniques was to discredit new ideas as Jewish subversion. For example, Castro (1954, 637; 1971, 576) describes the complaint of a biblical exegete in 1584 that any nonstandard interpretation of the Bible was considered to be Jewish subversion. The result was that "culture and Judaism eventually became synonymous terms, and, as a result, scientific research, study, and teaching became impossible or fell into disuse in the seventeenth century" (Castro 1971, 576; see also Haliczer 1989).[14] Intellectuals entered the fields of jurisprudence or theology and avoided science in order to evade all suspicion of Judaism (Castro 1971, 551). Copernican astronomy remained prohibited as contrary to biblical doctrine. Even in the late 18th century—more than 300 years after the onset of the Inquisition, a prominent Spaniard stated in opposition to a plea for scientific freedom, "Why does anyone have to pay attention to any heretical dogs, atheists, and Jews like Newton, who was a terrible arch-heretic . . . , [like] Galileo de Galileis, whose very name implies that he must have been an arch-Jew or proto-Hebrew, and others whose names cause people to shudder?" (in Castro 1971, 577).[15]

An Evolutionary Interpretation of Social Identity Processes and Collectivism

The empirical results of social identity research are highly compatible with an evolutionary basis for group behavior. Current evidence indicates that the minimal group findings can be generalized across subjects of different ages,

nationalities, social classes, and a wide range of dependent variables (Bourhis 1994), and anthropological evidence indicates the universality of the tendency to view one's own group as superior (Vine 1987). Moreover, social identity processes occur very early in life, prior to explicit knowledge about the out-group. An evolutionary interpretation of these findings is also supported by results indicating that social identity processes occur among advanced animal species, such as chimpanzees. Van der Dennen (1991, 237) proposes, on the basis of his review of the literature on human and animal conflict, that advanced species have "extra-strong group delimitations" based on emotional mecha-nisms. I would agree and suggest that one emotional mechanism is in fact the self-esteem mechanism proposed by social identity theorists. Other emotional mechanisms that may be involved are the social conscientiousness/guilt mecha-nism discussed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 7) and the experience of psychological relief obtained by individuals who join highly collectivist, authoritarian groups (Galanter 1989a; see below). These latter mechanisms, although not considered by social identity theorists, would result in strong positive feelings associated with group membership, and feelings of guilt and distress at the prospect of defecting from the group.[16]

The powerful emotional components of social identity processes are very difficult to explain except as an aspect of the evolved machinery of the human mind. I have noted that the emotional consequences of social identity processes are a theoretical primitive in the system. As Hogg and Abrams (1987, 73) note, this result cannot be explained in terms of purely cognitive processes, and a learning theory seems hopelessly ad hoc and gratuitous. The tendencies for humans to place themselves in social categories and for these categories to assume powerful emotional and evaluative overtones (involving guilt, empathy, self-esteem, relief at securing a group identity, and distress at losing it) are the best candidates for the biological underpinnings of participation in highly cohesive collectivist groups.[17]

An evolutionary perspective is also highly compatible with the falsity and contradictory nature of many anti-Semitic beliefs. Evolution is only concerned with ensuring accuracy of beliefs and attitudes when the truth is in the interests of those having those beliefs and attitudes (Krebs, Denton & Higgins 1988). In the case of anti-Semitism there is no expectation that specific anti-Semitic beliefs will be accurate, but from the standpoint of evolutionary theory, these beliefs may be eminently adaptive in promoting evolutionary goals. Similarly, truth is not a requirement for the effectiveness of the rationalizations, apologia, and self-deceptions so central to maintaining positive images of the Jewish ingroup throughout history. These phenomena are the topics of Chapters 7 and 8.

Finally, the fact that social identity processes and tendencies toward collectiv-ism increase during times of resource competition and threat to the group (see Hogg & Abrams 1987; Triandis 1990, 1991) is highly compatible with suppos-ing that these processes involve facultative mechanisms triggered by between-

group conflict. As emphasized by evolutionists such as Alexander (1979) and Johnson (1995), external threat tends to reduce internal divisions and maximize perceptions of common interest among group members. Under conditions of external threat, human societies expand government and there is an increase in cooperative and even altruistic behavior. Such changes presumably reflect a species-wide facultative strategy of accepting higher levels of external authority and becoming more group-oriented under conditions of external threat.

Students of anti-Semitism have often noted that anti-Semitism tends to increase during periods of political and economic instability. The suggestion is that during periods of perceived external threat, gentiles are more prone to form cohesive, cooperative groups directed against outgroups, and especially against outgroups perceived as being in competition with the ingroup. This will be a major theme of Chapters 3–5.

Much remains to be done in attempting to develop an evolutionary perspective on mechanisms of between-group competition. As is the case for many other psychological adaptations (MacDonald 1991, 1995a; Wilson 1994), there appear to be important individual differences in social identity processes. Thus Altemeyer (1994) finds associations among attraction to cohesive groups, authoritarianism, feelings of ingroup superiority, hostility toward outgroups, ethnocentrism, a heightened concern for social identity, and religious fundamentalism. Congruent with the present perspective, there is evidence that Jews are high on ethnocentrism. Using an instrument designed to measure ingroup bias—an indicator of ethnocentrism, Silverman and Case (1995) found that Jews had the highest bias toward their own ethnic group among groups classified as White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs), Asians, Italians, Other Europeans, and Blacks, with the only significant difference between Jews and WASPs.

The theory and data related to social identity are also highly compatible with research on individualism and collectivism (Triandis 1990, 1991). Individualism/collectivism constitutes a dimension of individual differences, with group (cross-cultural) differences in the trait resulting in differences between societies in the extent to which emphasis is placed on the goals and needs of the ingroup rather than on individual rights and interests. For individuals highly predisposed to collectivism, ingroup norms and the duty to cooperate and subordinate individual goals to the needs of the group are paramount. Collectivist cultures develop an "unquestioned attachment" to the ingroup, including "the perception that ingroup norms are universally valid (a form of ethnocentrism), automatic obedience to ingroup authorities [i.e., authoritarianism], and willingness to fight and die for the ingroup. These characteristics are usually associated with distrust of and unwillingness to cooperate with outgroups" (Triandis 1990, 55). Like social identity processes, tendencies toward collectivism are exacerbated in times of external threat, again suggesting that the tendency toward collectivism is a facultative response that evolved as a mechanism of between-group conflict.

The existence of such a mechanism implies that the group has been the vehicle of selection, in Wilson and Sober's (1994) terms. It is an important theoreti-

cal question whether such adaptations for between-group competition are compatible with selection at the individual level. Given that these mechanisms appear to be highly sensitive to the presence of external threat to the group, they may also track individual self-interest, since in times of threat, group and individual interests increasingly coincide. One could conceptualize a person as choosing between a self-sacrificial act that helps a group with whom one shares a significant genetic overlap, and a selfish act that is very unlikely to help an individual confronted by a menacing group and would also be likely to cause the group as a whole to fail. Under such circumstances, it is better to hang together than hang separately. The unit of analysis is the group, and the psychological mechanisms are the result of between-group conflict. However, such a mechanism is compatible with supposing that people have an algorithm that attempts to balance the costs and benefits to the individual of continued group membership with costs and benefits to be gained by deserting the group and engaging in an individualist strategy.

There appear to be examples of people who are so extremely collectivist that defecting from the group is not a psychologically available option. Especially striking has been the phenomenon of individuals who readily undergo martyrdom or mass suicide rather than abandon the group. We see examples periodically in modern times, and there are many historical examples, ranging from Christian martyrs in ancient times to a great many instances of Jewish martyrdom over a two-thousand-year period.

There is little doubt that Jews tend toward the extreme end of the collectivism dimension, and Triandis (1990, 57) regards Judaism as a collectivist culture. Indeed, it is instructive to review the discussion of Jewish "hyper-collectivism" presented in Chapter 8 of *PTSDA*. There it was noted that Jewish groups have had a tendency to retain genetic and cultural separatism even when cut off for centuries from other Jewish groups, and even in the presence of prolonged intense anti-Semitism and enforced crypsis. In the ancient world, Jews alone of all the subject peoples in the Roman Empire engaged in prolonged, even suicidal wars against the government in order to attain national sovereignty. Many authors have noted the religious fanaticism of the Jews in the ancient world and their willingness to die rather than tolerate offenses to Israel or live under foreign domination. For example, Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian and apologist, stated that

[we face] death on behalf of our laws with a courage which no other nation can equal. (*Against Apion,* 2:234)

And from these laws of ours nothing has had power to deflect us, neither fear of our masters, nor envy of the institutions esteemed by other nations. (*Against Apion,* 2:271)

Although not all Jews were willing to die rather than betray the law, "story after story reveals that this generalization is true" (Sanders 1992, 42). "No other nation can be shown to have fought so often in defence of its own way of life, and the readiness of Jews to die for their cause is proved by example after

example" (Sanders 1992, 239). Jewish political activity against the Romans often included threats of martyrdom if external signs of Roman domination were not removed from Jerusalem and the Temple (Crossan 1991, 103ff). In recent times, the members of the Zionist Stern Gang who fought the British for control of Palestine "conceived of the final battle with the British as an apocalyptic catharsis out of which they could expect only death" (Biale 1982, 101).

It should also be noted that Hasidic and other ultra-Orthodox groups (haredim) are a prominent and increasingly powerful force within contemporary Judaism, amounting to at least 650,000 Jews worldwide (see Landau 1993, xxi) and representing 23 percent of the Israeli electorate in the 1996 elections. Historically, the type of social organization represented by these groups has been far more the norm than the exception, so that even in late-19th-century Poland the great majority of Jews were organized in ultra-Orthodox Hasidic congregations dominated by their rebbes (e.g. Litman 1984, 6). These groups are extremely collectivist in Triandis's (1990, 1991) sense. They rigidly adhere to traditional exclusivist practices, such as dietary and purity laws, and have very negative views of outsiders, including more liberally inclined Jews. The authoritarian nature of these groups is particularly striking: "A haredi . . . will consult his rabbi or hasidic rebbe on every aspect of his life, and will obey the advice he receives as though it were an halachic ruling" (Landau 1993, 47). "The haredim's blind obeisance to rabbis is one of the most striking characteristics of haredism in the eyes of the outside world, both Jewish and Gentile" (Landau 1993, 45). Famous rebbes are revered in an almost god-like manner (*tzaddikism*, or cult of personality), and indeed there was a recent controversy over whether the Lubavitcher Rebbe Schneerson claimed to be the Messiah. Many of his followers believed that he was; Mintz (1992, 348ff) points out that it is common for Hasidic Jews to view their rebbe as the Messiah.

As an example of the intensity of group feeling among traditional Eastern European Jews, Zionist leader Arthur Ruppin (1971, 69) recounts his visit to a synagogue in Galicia (Poland) in 1903:

There were no benches, and several thousand Jews were standing closely packed together, swaying in prayer like the corn in the wind. When the rabbi appeared the service began. Everybody tried to get as close to him as possible. The rabbi led the prayers in a thin, weeping voice. It seemed to arouse a sort of ecstasy in the listeners. They closed their eyes, violently swaying. The loud praying sounded like a gale. Anyone seeing these Jews in prayer would have concluded that they were the most religious people on earth.

Later those closest to the rabbi were intensely eager to eat any food touched by the rabbi, and the fish bones were preserved by his followers as relics.

Another measure of collectivism is community control over individual behavior. Controls over individual behavior are a highly salient feature of mainstream Judaism, apparent throughout *PTSDA*. Shaw (1991, 65) provides a particularly well-described example from Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The community very precisely regulated every aspect of life, including the shape and length of

beards, all aspects of dress in public and private, the amount of charity required of members, numbers of people at social gatherings, the appearance of graves and gravestones, precise behavior on the Sabbath, the precise form of conversations, the order of precedence at all social gatherings, etc.[18] The rules were enforced "with a kind of police surveillance," and failure to abide by the rules could result in imprisonment or, at the extreme, in excommunication.

The suggestion is that Jews tend toward hyper-collectivism. Moreover, the reputation of Jews as willingly suffering martyrdom rather than deserting the group suggests that among Jews there is a significant critical mass for whom desertion is not an option no matter what the consequences to the individual. Consider, for example, the response of groups of Ashkenazi Jews to demands to convert during the pogroms surrounding the First Crusade in Germany in 1096. Behavior in this instance was truly remarkable.[19] When given the choice of conversion or death, a contemporary Jewish chronicler noted, that Jews "stretched forth their necks, so that their heads might be cut off in the Name of their Creator. . . . Indeed fathers also fell with their children, for they were slaughtered together. They slaughtered brethren, relatives, wives, and children. Bridegrooms [slaughtered] their intended and merciful mothers their only children" (in Chazan 1987, 245).

It is very difficult to suppose that such people have an algorithm that calculates individual fitness payoffs by balancing the tendency to desert the group with anticipated benefits of continued group membership. The obvious interpretation of such a phenomenon is that these people are obligated to remain in the group no matter what—even to the point of killing their own family members to prevent the possibility of becoming a member of the outgroup. Such examples suggest that there are no conceivable circumstances that would cause such people to abandon the group, go their own way, and become assimilated to the outgroup.

I do not suppose that such an extreme level of self-sacrifice is a pan-human psychological adaptation.[20] However, it may well be the case that a significant proportion of Jews are extremely prone to collectivism, to the point that they do not calculate individual payoffs of group membership. The proposed model is that over historical time, average group standing on the trait of collectivism increases among Jews, because individuals low on this trait (in this case, individuals who do not conform to expected standards of group behavior) are more likely to defect voluntarily from the group or be forcibly excluded from it (see *PTSDA*, Chs. 7 and 8).

Given the importance of conformity to group norms for Judaism, it would be expected that individuals who are low on collectivism would be disproportionately inclined to abandon Judaism, while successful Jews who are the pillars of the community and thus epitomize the group ethic of Judaism would be disproportionately likely to be high on group conformity and also likely to be reproductively successful. For example, Jordan (1989, 138) notes that Jews who defected during the Middle Ages (and then sometimes persecuted their former

coreligionists) tended to be people who were "unable to sustain the demands of [the] elders for conformity."[21] This trend may well have accelerated since the Enlightenment, because the costs of defection then became lower. Israel (1985, 254) notes that after the Enlightenment defections from Judaism, due ultimately to negative attitudes regarding the restrictive Jewish community life, were common enough to have a negative demographic effect on the Jewish community.

There has probably always been a selective process, such that people who have difficulty submerging their interests to those of the group are disproportionately likely to defect from Judaism. Such individuals would have chaffed at the myriad regulations that governed every aspect of life in traditional Jewish society. In Triandis's (1990, 55) terms, these individuals are "idiocentric" people living in a collectivist culture; i.e., they are people who are less group oriented and less willing to put group interests above their own. It has often been observed among historians of Judaism that the most committed members of the group have determined the direction of the group (e.g., Sacks 1993, ix–x); such individuals are also likely to receive a disproportionate amount of the rewards of group membership. It is likely therefore that there has been within-group selection among Jews for genes predisposing people to be extremely predisposed to collectivism, to the point that a significant proportion is simply incapable of calculating individual payoffs of group membership.

This hypothesis is highly compatible with the finding that Jews have been overrepresented among non-Jewish religious cults (Marciano 1981; Schwartz 1978). Recently there has developed a fairly large literature on religious cults having characteristics that illustrate the importance of social identity processes and clearly place them on the extreme collectivist end of the individualism/collectivism dimension. These charismatic groups are highly cohesive, collectivist, and authoritarian (e.g., Galanter 1989a,b; Levine 1989; Deutsch 1989). Within the group there is a great deal of harmony and positive regard for group members, combined with negative perceptions of outsiders. Psychological well-being increases when the person joins the group, and individuals experiencing dis-affiliation undergo psychological distress. Galanter (1989a) finds that individuals who join cults experience a sense of relief—a finding that I would interpret as resulting from the fact that cult membership often satisfies a very deep emotional need.

This emotional motivation may be increased by personal feelings of threat prior to joining the cult. Many individuals who join cults are not satisfied with their lives and feel personally threatened (Clark et al. 1981)—a finding that I interpret as resulting from the triggering of collectivist mechanisms in a facultative manner as a response to external threat. These perceptions of external threat may be nothing more than subjective feelings of "not doing well" in life. Galanter found that the individuals who experienced the greatest relief upon joining cults were those who were most distressed prior to joining, and case study material indicates that many of these individuals were experiencing economic,

social, and/or psychological stresses (e.g., change of residence, being fired from a job, illness of relatives [Galanter 1989a, 92]). Sirkin and Grellong (1988) found similar associations in their sample of cult members from Jewish families.

Galanter (1989a, 23) finds that 21 percent of the Divine Light commune (organized by Maharaj Ji) were Jewish, despite the fact that Jews represented only approximately 2.5 percent of the U.S. population. Moreover, 8 percent of Galanter's sample of members of the Unification Church of Reverend Sun Myung Moon were Jewish. This finding is compatible with the proposal that Jews have a stronger tendency toward collectivism in general. In addition, a very large percentage of Jews are involved in specifically Jewish groups having many of the features ascribed to these religious cults, including, I would suppose, the haredim, Orthodox Jews, Conservative Jews, and Zionist groups in the contemporary world. In traditional societies, of course, all Jews were Orthodox.

Further, Sirkin and Grellong (1988) found that cult members from Jewish families had a greater number of highly religious relatives than contrast Jewish families. This occurred despite the fact that the contrast Jewish families were actually more religiously observant than the families of cult members. These findings are highly compatible with the hypothesis that cult membership is influenced by genetic variation: cult members come disproportionately from relatively unobservant families who nevertheless have a strong familial predisposition toward membership in highly collectivist groups. The relative lack of religious observance among these cult-involved families may have resulted from their greater tendency toward intellectual, cultural, and political activities that were seen as incompatible with traditional religious observance. However, these cultural activities failed to provide the psychological sense of intense group involvement desired by the children, with the result that the children were prone to joining religious cults.

Social identity processes, ethnocentrism, and the tendency toward collectivism are clearly central to Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy, but they have also been of critical importance in the phenomenon of anti-Semitism. In Chapters 3–5 I will argue that several historically important examples of anti-Semitic movements have given rise to highly collectivist gentile movements that were, in certain critical ways, mirror images of Judaism.

NOTES

1. A writer in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (May 11, 1993) comments on the incredible sense of commonality he has with other Jews and his ability to recognize other Jews in public places, a talent he says he has heard called "J-dar". While dining with his prospective gentile wife, he is immediately recognized as Jewish by some other Jews, and there is an immediate "bond of brotherhood" between them that excludes his gentile companion.

2. I am greatly indebted to David Dowell, Department of Psychology, California State University-Long Beach, for introducing me to social identity theory as a theoretical approach for understanding group conflict.

3. For example, in the case of traditional shtetl Jews in Poland in the early 20th century, the self-concept that Jews did not engage in physical labor was so strongly held that even starving Jews would refuse to engage in such labor. The prominent Zionist Arthur Ruppin (1971, 70) recounts an incident in which he observed a Christian chopping wood for a Jew. When the Jew was asked why he did not employ one of the many unemployed Jews in the area, he replied that "A Jew does not undertake such work, even when he is starving; it is not suitable for a Jew." Jewish avoidance of physical labor was also commented on by gentiles, often with anti-Semitic overtones. The American sociologist Edward A. Ross (1914, 146) wrote that "the Hebrew immigrants rarely lay hand to basic production. In tilling the soil, in food growing, in extracting minerals, in building, construction and transportation they have little part. Sometimes they direct these operations, often they finance them, but even in direst poverty they contrive to avoid hard muscular labor."

4. Attitudes of mutual hostility have been common throughout Jewish history. There are numerous examples of mutual hostility and contempt between Greeks and Jews and, later, between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire in both Jewish and Christian sources (see Ch. 2 and 3). Patai (1977, 380ff) notes a general tendency for Jews to reciprocate attitudes of hostility and contempt toward gentiles in pre-Enlightenment Europe, and attitudes of superiority were particularly characteristic of the Sephardim. This Jewish belief in their own superiority has often aroused hatred among gentiles. The 15th-century anti-Semitic chronicler Andrés Bernáldez stated that "They [Jews and New Christians] had the presumption of arrogance; [they thought] that in all the world there were no people who were better, or more prudent, or shrewder, or more distinguished than they because they were of the lineage and condition of Israel" (in Castro 1971, 71).

5. In the Acts of the Apostles 10:28, Peter says "ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (in Alon 1977, 154).

6. The authoritative 12th-century *Code of Maimonides, Book X, The Book of Cleanness* summarizes a vast body of the law of cleanness in which a wide variety of very minimal contacts with gentiles and things associated with gentiles brings uncleanness. For purposes of uncleanness, male gentiles over nine years of age and female gentiles over three years of age are considered "in every respect as men who suffer a flux [i.e., a discharge from the penis]" (p. 9; see also especially p. 213). Such a person is a "Father of Uncleanness" and hence capable of rendering persons, utensils, and garments unclean by contact (p. 25). Regarding men with a flux, "they render utensils unclean by contact; they render unclean the couch, seat, or saddle beneath them, making this also a Father of Uncleanness; and they convey *maddaf* uncleanness to what is borne above them" (p. 207). (*Maddaf* uncleanness refers to uncleanness of objects borne above a person with flux in which the uncleanness is conveyed to the foodstuffs and liquids inside the utensil.) Their spittle, urine, and semen are unclean, and any man who has intercourse with a gentile female is rendered unclean. Gentiles therefore are viewed as contaminating these objects so that any Israelite who contacts these objects is rendered unclean.

Gentiles are said not to be able to contract corpse uncleanness, the reason being that "it [the gentile] is like a beast which touches a corpse or overshadows it. And this applies not to corpse uncleanness only but to any other kind of uncleanness: neither Gentiles nor cattle are susceptible to any uncleanness" (p. 9). A further indication of the low status of

gentiles is that if thieves enter a house, only the areas trodden by the feet of the thieves are unclean, but if a gentile is with them, the entire house is unclean (pp. 246–247). Thus even Israelite thieves impart less uncleanness than gentiles.

Gentile land is also unclean, as is the airspace over gentile land, so that "as soon as anyone brought his head and the greater part of himself into the airspace of a heathen land he became unclean" (p. 43). Moreover, land in Israel where gentiles have lived also is unclean, because there is a fear that they might have buried their abortions there.

7. A Viennese guidebook during the early 20th century stated that the first question one asks when seeing someone on the street was, "Is he a Jew?" (Gilman 1993, 44). This comment reflects the extreme salience of group membership during this period of ethnic conflict.

8. In *PTSDA* (Chapter 4), it was suggested that an important aspect of Jewish religious writings in the ancient world, as well as among some modern apologists, has been to foster the idea that Judaism has been and continues to be highly permeable. The data summarized there and in Chapters 6 and 9 of this volume are highly compatible with the proposition that Judaism has at times presented itself as permeable, thereby mitigating anti-Semitism, while in practice retaining powerful sanctions against crossing group boundaries. See Chapter 9 for a discussion of the permeability of contemporary Judaism.

9. The finding that crowd members tend to engage in intensely motivated, impulsive collective behavior is highly compatible with the idea of an evolved facultative adaptation for self-sacrificing behavior on behalf of the group. Lorenz (1966) proposed an evolved system that underlies a specialized form of militant, emotionally intense communal aggression in the context of group conflict. The extraordinary susceptibility of crowd members to engage in collective behavior as a member of a group and their tendency to do so in an emotionally intense, impulsive, disinhibited manner strongly suggest an adaptation in which group interests are maximized to the possible detriment of individual interests. The lack of self-monitoring and self-awareness in crowd members (apart from their identity as crowd members) and the impulsive, irrational nature of crowd behavior are difficult to reconcile with selection at the individual level. One might suppose that the interests of the crowd would tend to coincide with self-interest. However, the implication of this research seems to be that individuals caught up in crowd behavior tend to fail to monitor their own interests and get carried along in the group activity. Since the proposed mechanism would not operate in the absence of an ingroup crowd and a perceived emergency, there is no implication that it would lead to a generalized altruism.

Of course, one could also propose that these phenomena are not an evolutionary adaptation but a maladaptive consequence of other evolved mechanisms confronting a novel environment. In any case, whether this type of collective behavior is the result of natural selection for group behavior is irrelevant to the fact that these phenomena are of considerable importance in understanding many historical instances of anti-Semitism; the mechanism is important independent of its putative status as a biological adaptation.

10. See discussion of crypto-Judaism in Chapter 6. The analysis of Netanyahu, Rivkin, and Roth is controversial because of their view that the vast majority of New Christians were sincere in their Christian beliefs and became crypto-Jews only as a result of the anti–New Christian prejudices. The point here is that even if their analysis is correct, the anti–New Christian sentiment is entirely rational from an evolutionary perspective. These views are discussed in more detail in the appendix to Chapter 7.

11. This statement is presumably an example of attempted deception, since the condemnation of lending money to gentiles was far from unanimous among Jewish religious authorities. See Chapter 2. In convoking the assembly, Napoleon's representative noted that "the conduct of many among those of your persuasion has excited complaints, which have found their way to the foot of the throne: these complaints were founded on truth" (*Transactions*, p. 131; Tama 1807). The editor of the *Transactions* notes "the enormous usury practised by the Jews, who have been known to take five and six per cent. per month upon bills of landholders, the payment of which was the more secure, as, by the present French laws, landed property is liable to those debts, and a man's estate may be sold there for the most trivial debt of that nature" (p. 32).

12. This is essentially a civil libertarian argument and underlines the political importance for Jews of having gentiles perceive them as individuals rather than as a cohesive group. As discussed in *The Culture of Critique*, a major strand of Jewish intellectual activity in the 20th century for combating anti-Semitism is to attempt to be perceived by the rest of society as a set of individuals rather than as a cohesive group.

13. Navasky (1980, 116) describes a memo by Andhil Fineberg of the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee) staff on the repercussions of the fact that the great majority of communist spies were Jews. In a comment that reflects an unconscious understanding of social identity theory, Fineberg suggested that the best way to combat this threat to Jews was to de-emphasize Jewish group identity of "good Jews" like Bernard Baruch as well as bad Jews like the communist spies. Identifying people like Baruch as Jews "reinforces the concept of group responsibility" and "the residue in the mind of the average person whom the editorial is intended to influence, is likely to be, 'But why is it all those atomic spies are all Jews?' " (in Navasky 1980, 116). Fineberg argued that an attempt by Communist Party members to portray their persecution as anti-Semitism would be "devastating" to Jews generally and recommended that the AJCommittee reply to charges linking Jews and communism to the effect that "criminals operate as individuals, not as members of religious or racial groups" (p. 116). Good advice.

14. The involvement of Conversos in modernizing intellectual movements was real enough. Conversos were intimately involved in the University of Alcalá as a bastion of nominalism in the sixteenth century (González 1989). Nominalism was widely viewed as subversive of religion at a time when the intellectual basis of religion had become identified with Aristotle and Aquinas. Opposition to nominalism eventually came to be a matter of Catholic religious orthodoxy. Heredia (1972) essentially argues that the intellectual atmosphere of University of Alcalá was the result of a conspiracy by Converso-Nominalists to control the intellectual life of Spain.

15. Several authors (e.g., Crespo 1987; Haliczer 1989; Lea 1906–1907) have attributed the decline of Spain and Portugal to the extreme level of thought-control and social conformism (i.e., a collectivist, anti-individualist from of social structure) resulting from the Inquisition. Crespo (1987, 185) notes the "intellectual endogamy" brought on by the Inquisition, with its resulting "intellectual fossilization."

It gravely weakened the principle of academic authority and strengthened official, institutional authority as the sole criterion of truth. As a consequence, the censors' successive confrontations with the most innovative schools of thought of the period such as mysticism, humanism, philological criticism, Erasmianism, Hebraism, rationalism, the Enlightenment or the first manifestations of bourgeois liberalism, were carried out not from the perspective of an intellectual struggle but from a dogmatic position supported by a powerful judicial institution.

16. Research supporting the importance of self-esteem as underlying the motivation for social identificatory processes has not been entirely supportive (e.g., Hogg & Abrams 1993). Hogg and Abrams (1993) attempt to elaborate the motivational basis of social identity theory by proposing that ingroup membership reduces subjective uncertainty (by agreement with other ingroup members), with concomitant increases in positive mood and feelings of power and control, self-efficacy, a sense of personal meaning, self-esteem, etc. An evolutionary approach would emphasize the importance of evolved emotional systems as central to motivation generally (MacDonald 1991), but there are a variety of emotion systems that could be involved, including those mentioned by Hogg and Abrams. Evolved motivational systems often include both positive and negative emotions (e.g., anxiety in the presence of danger and relief consequent to deliverance [MacDonald 1995a]). I suspect that studies of naturally occurring groups with a very high degree of group commitment (such as Judaism) would reveal not only very strong positive emotions associated with group membership but a strong role also for negative emotions, such as guilt, for motivating non-defection from the group and compliance with group goals. Indeed, Baumeister and Leary (1995) and Trivers (1971) emphasize the importance of positive emotions of affection, intimacy, and empathy as well as the negative emotion of guilt for cementing ingroup relationships and preventing defection.

17. Freeman (1995, 130ff) has also proposed specific adaptations that function to make individuals into cohesive groups. He stresses the role of music in producing emotionally intense group identification, as in many preliterate societies and in evangelical congregations.

18. It is interesting that among the psychological traits found in collectivist societies is a bifurcation of the real and the social selves (Triandis 1991). Here the ritualized form of conversation among Jews in a traditional society suggests that the social self was completely conventionalized and socially prescribed.

19 . A modern case: On March 25, 1997, the *Los Angeles Times* (p. A29 OC) reported that Avi Kostner, a Jew from Hackensack, New Jersey, had pleaded insanity after saying that he killed his two children because his ex-wife intended to raise them as Christians. The defendant failed in his plea and was sentenced to life in prison.

20. Galanter (1989a, 85ff; see also Wenegrat 1989) proposes that the tendency to form cohesive groups as typified by religious cults is a universal, innate psychological adaptation among humans. While I agree that there is a universal mechanism underlying group conflict, my perspective differs in that I also emphasize individual differences in the trait, including genetic and environmental sources of variation. The proposal is that Jews are higher than average on this system, and that in general there are individual differences in the extent to which people are attracted to highly collectivist groups and the extent to which threatening circumstances give rise to the desire to join such groups. People from individualist societies, as typified by Western societies generally (see *PTSDA*, Ch. 8), are expected to be relatively low on this system compared to Jews.

21. The Sephardic philosopher Baruch Spinoza is a famous example of a non-conformist who was expelled from the Jewish community.