

STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATING RISK AMONG JEWISH GROUPS

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I. INTRODUCTION: JUDAISM AS A GROUP EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

Mainstream Darwinism has emphasized natural selection at the level of the gene or the individual, not the group. As a natural corollary of this model of individual selection, applications of evolutionary theory to human behavior have tended to focus on the individual. Individuals are viewed as free agents whose self-interested behavior has been shaped by evolutionary forces acting on psychological mechanisms. Human social relationships are viewed as permeated by conflicts of interest, but research has tended to focus on the individual actor confronting an infinitely fractionated social space. Within that social space, individual strategy is viewed as depending crucially on biological relatedness to other individuals (the result of kin selection theory [Hamilton 1964]), as well as on several other individual difference variables such as sex, age, and resource control. Within this individualist perspective the group is nothing more than a concatenation of self-interested individuals. Cooperation among individuals is understood as depending on perceived benefits to each individual.

The result is that we have paid scant attention to groups and how they are able to structure themselves in order to become an important force so that it is meaningful and important to talk about the group as the vehicle of selection (Wilson & Sober 1995). Within this conceptualization there is no requirement that human group evolutionary strategies have evolved as the result of natural selection favoring altruistic groups. The idea is that humans are able to create and maintain groups that minimize the differences between group and individual interests. I argue that in some of the more interesting examples, the fundamental mechanisms involved rely ultimately on human abilities to monitor and enforce group goals and to create ideological structures that rationalize group aims both to group members and to outsiders.

This perspective is consistent with the idea that natural selection has been most powerful at the individual level. The difficulty confronting those attempting to develop theories of groups is that there would always be natural selection within groups for selfish individuals. However, humans, presumably unlike other animals, are able to monitor the behavior of other members of the group and enforce sanctions against those who fail to adopt behaviors agreed to by other members of the group. In fact, traditional Jewish groups developed a wide range of sanctions against behaviors viewed as inimical to group goals (MacDonald 1994).

Within this perspective, the evolved goals of humans, such as achieving social status, were determined by our evolutionary past. But there are few, if any, constraints on how humans can *attempt* to achieve these goals. Of critical importance for understanding human adaptation in uncertain and novel environments is the evolution of domain-general cognitive abilities (MacDonald 1991; MacDonald & Geary 2000). There is little doubt that humans have evolved a set of domain-specific psychological mechanisms designed to solve recurrent problems in the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness (EEA)—the environment humans evolved in and

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presented the set of problems designed by the set of human psychological adaptations. However, the human EEA also consisted of novel, unpredictable problems best solved with domain-general mechanisms. These mechanisms, including especially the *g*-factor of intelligence tests, are not restricted to solving enable the attainment of evolutionary goals in unfamiliar and novel conditions characterized by a minimal amount of prior knowledge.

In the case of Judaism, the clearly articulated evolutionary goals of Judaism are enshrined in the Old Testament: obtain wealth, have large numbers of children, and marry only other Jews (MacDonald 1994). The means by which particular Jewish groups have attempted to achieve these goals have varied widely over historical time; in general, Jewish groups have been very flexible in responding to novel environments, such as the post-Enlightenment decline of more traditional forms of Judaism with their overtly separatist ways. However, in all historical periods, at least until very recently, the structure of the group has been critical to its success or failure. Jews who did not comply with the rules and standards of the community by, for example marrying non-Jews or informing on Jews, were excluded from the community.

I have developed the view that Judaism in traditional societies was characterized by efforts to resist genetic and cultural assimilation with surrounding populations; these efforts have been substantially successful, resulting in closer genetic relatedness among widely dispersed contemporary groups of Jews than between Jewish groups and the gentile populations they have lived among for centuries (see also, Hammer et al. 2000); (2) Jews have typically engaged in resource and reproductive competition with at least some sectors of gentile societies, often successfully; (3) there is a significant (but limited) degree of within-group altruism, traditionally enforced by powerful social controls and enshrined in religious ideology; and (4) there is a significant degree of role specialization, specifically specialization for a role in society above the level of primary producer that is facilitated by cultural and eugenic practices centered around intelligence, the personality trait of conscientiousness, high-investment parenting, and group allegiance (MacDonald 1994).

At a fundamental level, a genetically closed group evolutionary strategy for behavior within a larger human society, as proposed here for traditional Judaism, may be viewed as pseudospeciation: Creation of a closed group evolutionary strategy results in a gene pool that becomes significantly segregated from the gene pool of the surrounding society. Within the strategizing group, there is increasing specialization so that the group becomes highly adept at occupying a specific type of niche that is commonly available in human societies. If the strategizing group has undergone a Diaspora and therefore lives among a wide range of human societies, members of the strategizing group, like conspecifics in the natural world, will have greater genetic ties with the dispersed members of their ingroup than with the other members of the society in which they live. Moreover, the within-group genetic commonality predisposes strategizing group members to relatively high levels of within-group altruism and cooperation, while the genetic gradient between the strategizing group and the surrounding society facilitates instrumental behavior directed toward the latter.

Nevertheless, while the population genetic and historical data indicate that traditional Judaism actively maintained genetic barriers with surrounding populations, these barriers have been significantly breached in recent years, at least in Western societies, although opposition to intermarriage remains strong within all levels of the official Jewish community (Kosmin et al. 1991; Winer 1991). The result is that it is conceivable that in the future Judaism would denote a non-genetic, cultural strategy significantly divorced from genetic implications. However, because

evolved mechanisms typically work at the phenotypic level, it is expected that genetic assimilation may not affect the “riskiness” of Judaism. To the extent that the riskiness of Judaism comes from attributions of group membership, it is expected that there will continue to be significant risk even if genetic barriers are lowered. This is because at least some evolved mechanisms of ingroup-outgroup conflict are sensitive to group membership—a phenotypic property—rather than genetic distance.

Social controls on the behavior of group members are critical for the development of successful group strategies. For example, traditional Jewish groups were characterized by high levels of within-group charity maintained at least partly by social controls on individuals. Penalties for avoiding Jewish charity were severe. The following passage from the Frankfort synod of 1603 is an excellent example of social controls which resulted in high levels of within-group charity among Jews: Individuals were assessed a certain sum of money and threatened with expulsion from the community if they did not comply:

Whatever sum is decided on by us as necessary shall be collected each year, and each person shall pay the sum assessed against him. If any Jew fail to give their share and disobey the agent of the General Community, their names shall be announced in every community of Germany. The announcement shall take the following form: “The following men, who are mentioned by name, have been separated from the remainder of the Dispersion, they may not mingle or intermarry with us, neither they nor their children, and no person may recite from them the benediction of marriage. If anyone transgresses this order and does marry them, whether he act willingly or under compulsion, the marriage is declared void. (In Finkelstein , 1924, p. 260).

Interestingly, the penalty described in the regulations of the Frankfort Synod is phrased as applying to all members of the violator’s family, not just the violator. Thus an individual could not flaunt this regulation by simply accepting his own expulsion while assuming that his children could remain Jews. Such a person had essentially forfeited any future membership in the community for himself and his entire family—clearly a recognition by the authorities that (as expected by an evolutionary theory) penalties to relatives would be a potent source of motivation for individuals.

The extension of penalties for violating group norms to the violator’s extended family appears to be a general aspect of social controls within traditional Jewish society: For example, marriage to a gentile or conversion to another religion was a blot on the entire family which would have a profound effect on the marriage prospects of the remaining members of the extended family and their descendants (see MacDonald 1994, p. 88). Such a policy would doubtless have very powerful emotional consequences, and at a level of evolutionary theory, the policy clearly raises the cost of individual defection from the group to a very high level indeed, since it effectively penalizes one’s relatives.

II. JUDAISM AS A RISKY STRATEGY: THE PERVASIVENESS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Whenever the quantity of Jews in any country reaches the saturation point, that country reacts against them. . . . [This] reaction . . . cannot be looked upon as anti-Semitism in

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the ordinary or vulgar sense of that word; it is a universal social and economic concomitant of Jewish immigration and we cannot shake it off. (Chaim Weizmann; *Trial and Error* 1949, 90).

[Anti-Semitism] has demonstrated a remarkable ability to persist, to revive time and again through the ages (Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused*; New York 1991, 280).

The roots of antisemitism are universal in character and as incomprehensible as they are deeply ingrained. (H. Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*; 1965, 15)

Ultimately . . . the suffering of no other nation can compare with the uniqueness of the Jewish experience, and not just in the Nazi period. This is true not simply because of the amount of suffering entailed, but also because of its frightening recurrence over time, which lends it the character of utter inescapability. (Jacob Katz, “Misreadings of Anti-Semitism,” 1983, 44)

In 1936 Chaim Weizman observed that “The world seems to be divided into two parts—those places where the Jew cannot live, and those where they cannot enter” (in Abella & Troper 1981, 51). Weizman’s comments illustrate a remarkable aspect of the Holocaust and the years leading up to it: The pervasiveness of anti-Semitism throughout Europe, North America, North Africa, the Middle East and Latin America was an important contributing factor in condemning Jews to Nazi genocide (e.g., Breitman & Kraut 1987)..

These are remarkable examples of the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism. While I will not attempt to develop a theory of anti-Semitism here, elsewhere I have concluded that anti-Semitism will be a common characteristic of human societies for the following reasons deriving from contemporary research in social psychology (MacDonald, 1998a): 1.) Jewish cultural separatism results in both Jews and gentiles developing stereotypically negative attitudes toward outgroup members and the culture of the outgroup; 2.) resource and reproductive competition between groups has been a common component of Jewish/gentile relationships; 3.) because of Jewish within-group cooperation and altruism, as well as eugenic and cultural practices tending to result in high levels of intelligence and resource acquisition abilities among Jews, Jews are highly adept in resource competition with gentiles (MacDonald 1994).

A more general formulation is that anti-Semitism arises when there are perceived conflicts of interest between the Jewish community (or segments of the Jewish community) and the gentile community (or segments of the gentile community). Because of Jewish within-group cooperation as well as eugenic and cultural practices that have resulted in an IQ of at least 1 standard deviation above the Caucasian mean, (see MacDonald 1994), 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 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.

There is evidence for anti-Semitism in a wide range of Western and non-Western societies, in Christian and non-Christian societies, and in pre-capitalist, capitalist, and socialist societies (see MacDonald 1998a). Indeed, there is considerable evidence that Jews themselves were aware that their group strategy entailed a great deal of risk:

And the LORD shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth And among these nations shalt thou have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot; but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and languishing of soul. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say: 'Would it were even!' and at even thou shalt say: 'Would it were morning!' (Deu 28: 64-67)

Indeed, Jews generally perceived anti-Semitism to be more or less normative and expected. Jewish writers "treat Judeophobia as an inevitable reality that Jews have to learn to live with without giving up in despair on the one hand, or trying in vain to 'correct' its causes on the other" (Peli (1991, 110)

III. JEWISH STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATING RISK

Richard Alexander (1979) argues convincingly that humans are "flexible strategizers" in pursuit of evolutionary goals. Within this framework, one expects that strategies for combating anti-Semitism will be highly variable and able to respond adaptively to novel situations in contrast to genetically determined responses to a few evolved cues. Domain-general cognitive processes—prototypically the *g*-factor of IQ tests—can be utilized to develop a wide array of survival strategies in response to specific situations that could not have been recurrent features of the human environment of evolutionary adaptedness.

There is, of course, no guarantee that any given strategy will be successful. Rather, it is expected that unsuccessful strategies will be replaced in a trial and error process or insightful manner, and there will be a continual search for new strategies to encounter new, perhaps unforeseen difficulties. A group strategy that tends to result in intra-societal hostility is like a widely dispersed fleet of ships attempting to navigate a hostile environment while keeping in touch. Different ships in the fleet encounter different local problems and must develop their own solutions.

Moreover, different members of a ship's crew may advocate different solutions to the same problem, and, in the absence of a strong centralized authority, the crew of one ship may fractionate and pursue their own solutions by, in effect, constructing their own ships (e.g., Reform, Conservative, Neo-Orthodox, secular, and Zionist solutions to the assimilatory pressures resulting from the Enlightenment). And, as will be apparent in the following, different sub-groups of Jews may develop different and incompatible strategies for confronting anti-Semitism, leading to conflicts among groups of Jews.

1.) The Role of Economic Cooperation and Within-group Charity in Mitigating Risk in Traditional Jewish Society. Traditional Judaism was characterized by high levels of within-group charity and economic cooperation. From an evolutionary perspective, high levels of within-group cooperation and charity are critical components in developing highly cohesive groups able to overcome the powerful centrifugal forces of individualism assumed by many

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evolutionists to be a critical component of the evolved psychology of humans (see MacDonald 1994, Ch. 7).

It is noteworthy that this charity mitigated not only risks resulting from anti-Semitism, but from general economic uncertainty as well. Hundert (1992) notes the perception among Jews in Poland that wealth was ephemeral, and Katz (1961a) notes that Jewish capital in traditional Poland was always precarious, since it was liable to expropriation by the authorities. Jews often specialized in obtaining forms of wealth that could be concealed and that “could be quickly switched from a point of danger to a point of resettlement” (Johnson 1987, 246).

Moreover, in traditional societies the economic basis of wealth among gentiles has often been the control of large areas of land—a relatively stable source of wealth. But, among Jews, the economic basis of wealth has been much more likely to depend on trade and commerce—occupations which are more prone to economic fluctuations, and Jews were often prohibited from owning land. Economic success in trade and commerce would also be facilitated by a safety net, which would encourage Jews to take economic risks. Engaging in economically risky behavior has been noted by many writers as being characteristic of Jewish economic activity throughout history (e.g., Johnson 1987; Mosse 1987, 314ff).

Within-group economic cooperation mitigated general economic risks among Jews. Several writers have noted the high degree of commonality of interest and lack of class conflict in traditional Jewish Diaspora societies. In traditional Poland, Jewish “communications and interests were similar, as were their fears and hopes, despite increasing socioeconomic stratification (Weinryb 1972, 96). In the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, “Generally speaking, [Jewish society] conformed hardly at all to the Marxist notion of class differentiation and struggle. Almost always, the vertical ties which lent Jewish society its inner cohesion—commercial collaboration and the patronage network implicit in Jewry’s institutions, charities, and welfare system—were of much greater significance than any occasional friction between rich and poor” (Israel 1985, 171). The Court Jews of 17th century Europe overwhelmingly employed their relatives and other Jews in their operations on behalf of various governments. Jewish economic activity during the period is described as a complex interdependent pyramid in which all classes benefited from each other’s activities: “From Court Jew to peddler these divergent groupings penetrated and depended on each other economically” (Israel 1985, 171).

Economic success can be short-lived for all groups, but the ephemeral nature of economic success is likely to be particularly salient to Jews since they have often been subject to capricious seizures of property, expulsions, and confiscatory taxation. A medieval German synod enacted a law that required the entire Jewish community to pay when the king required a Jew to pay a capricious contribution, the only exception being in cases where the Jew was at fault (Finkelstein 1924, 60). In other words, if a Jew was penalized capriciously because of his group membership, the entire group was expected to pay. Regulations such as this could be an important concomitant of a group strategy, since the risks of group membership were spread throughout the entire group and individuals who were subject to such capricious acts were less likely to defect because their individual losses were minimized.

There are also many examples of general within-group charity in widely dispersed Jewish groups. “A Jewish wayfarer was assured of protection and welcome among his brethren in any part of the world. The essential unity of Jewish life in the Middle Ages transcended geographical boundaries and rendered Jews one sympathetic community in which the Oriental, African, Spanish, Italian and German brethren were perfectly at home with one another” (Neuman 1969,

I:171). There are numerous examples of Jews supporting the poor in distant Jewish communities in the medieval Arab world. “Gifts were sent to localities in which the need was greatest” (Goitein 1971, 95), so that, for example, Jews in Cairo contributed to ransoming Jews in Byzantium, Spain, and other parts of Europe.

At times, charity between widely dispersed Jewish groups mitigated not only economic risks, but also the risks of anti-Semitism. During the anti-Semitic uprisings of the 17th-century in Poland, Jews were welcomed as refugees in other Jewish communities in Poland and were ransomed by other Jewish communities from Italy, Constantinople, Amsterdam, and Hamburg (Weinryb 1972). Taxes imposed on the communities of central Europe during the 17th century intended to free captives in the Mediterranean area (Israel 1985); Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire “taxed themselves very heavily” in order to ransom Jewish slaves in the entire period from 1300 to the 19th century (Shaw 1991, 74).

2.) *Abandoning Phenotypic Characteristics that Provoke Gentile Hostility.* Jews have tended to use distinctive languages, clothing and personal appearance to separate themselves from the peoples they live among (MacDonald 1994, Ch. 4). These Jewish characteristics tend to emphasize the foreignness and separateness of Jewish populations, and, as expected on the basis of social identity theory (e.g., Hogg & Abrams 1987), the salience of group separatism has been linked with anti-Semitism—a result that is highly compatible with an evolutionary interpretation of group conflict (MacDonald, 1998a). The result has been a powerful trend since the Enlightenment to minimize those phenotypic features which have sharply distinguished Jews from gentiles in traditional societies in order to minimize the risk of anti-Semitism (MacDonald 1998a). There was a “dynamic—albeit contradictory—process in modern Jewish life between efforts to decrease visibility in order to reduce hostility to the group and the need for public perpetuation and legitimization of the Jewish religion and community, pressure on the powerful to aid Jewish interests, and the desire for a good image of Jews. . . . Much of the content of American Jewish culture can be seen as an outcome of different strategies of image management” (Zenner 1991, 141).

I propose that this attempt to maintain separatism and group cohesiveness while nevertheless making the barriers less visible is the crux of the problem for post-Enlightenment Judaism, at least during periods of anti-Semitism. While never abandoning the ideology of genetic separatism and group continuity, the Reform movement in Judaism beginning in the 19th century has been characterized by an attempt to eradicate civil disabilities and defamation directed at Jews while simultaneously de-emphasizing the appearance of differences between Judaism and other religions in order to change negative images of Jews held by gentiles (Endelman 1991, 195). Reform Jews hoped to retain traditional genetic and cultural separatism but “as to outward appearances, [they would] differ from any Christian church to no greater degree than did the various Christian denominations among themselves” (Patai 1971, 37–38).

Reform Judaism in contemporary societies may thus be viewed as a “semi-cryptic” Jewish strategy, which like other religious forms of Judaism acts as what Daniel Elazar terms a “protective coloring” (Elazar 1980, 9) adopted because “it is a legitimate way to maintain differences when organic ways [i.e., kinship and ethnic group affiliation] are suspect” (Elazar 1980, 23). While Judaism in other parts of the world was and remains openly ethnic, Judaism in the West developed a religious veneer because of its usefulness in facilitating perceptions of

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surface similarity with other, non-ethnic religions. In Israel, where there is no need for semi-crypsis, Reform Judaism is virtually non-existent.

Jews have also responded to anti-Semitism by abandoning overt behavior that would give rise to charges of dual loyalty. In the mid- to late-1920s an upsurge in anti-Semitism resulted in American Jews abandoning Zionism because of a heightened concern with charges of dual loyalty: “Anti-semitism obliged all Jews to adopt a lower profile . . . [and avoid] a movement that might cast doubt on their Americanism” (Sachar 1992, 505). “Even the Jews closest to President Roosevelt often went to excessive lengths to avoid identification with ‘parochial’ interests” (Sachar 1992, 552).

Indeed, avowals of religious belief were often made in order to escape the charges of Jewish nationalism—another example of the role of religion as a “protective coloring” for Jewish ethnic/national interests. In the World War I era in Germany, “liberal laymen . . . were in the mass irreversibly secularized Jews, who called themselves religious principally to escape suspicion that their Judaism might be national” (Meyer 1988, 212).

3.) *Political Strategies for Minimizing Anti-Semitism.* In a statement that would apply to Jewish responses to anti-Semitism throughout history, Lindemann (1991) portrays Jews “individually and collectively, as active agents, as modern, responsible, and flawed human beings, not merely as passive martyrs or as uncomprehending objects of impersonal forces” (p. 279). A very wide array of political strategies have been pursued with varying success. Jews in traditional Poland responded to anti-Semitism with strategies such as physical defense, attempts to fill indispensable functions for the king, cultivating friendly personal relationships with the powerful, and paying bribes and protection (Weinryb 1972). This led to the perception of Jews among Polish writers as controlling the nobility and the political process (see also Goldberg 1986, 49–51)—charges that have been common in other times and places as well (Ginsberg 1993).

Jews engaged in a wide range of activities to combat anti-Semitism in Germany in the period from 1870–1914, including the formation of self-defense committees (e.g., the *Zentralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*), lobbying the government, utilizing and influencing the legal system (e.g., taking advantage of the laws on libel and slander to force anti-Semitic organizations into bankruptcy), writing apologies and tracts for distribution to the masses of gentile Germans, and funding organizations opposed to anti-Semitism which were not overtly Jewish (Ragins 1980, 23ff).

Similarly, in the early 20th century, the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee) engaged in a wide range of activities to minimize anti-Semitism and pursue Jewish interests:

The distribution of articles on czarist Russia, the exposure of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and the analysis of the economic effects of immigration were all directed to mobilize mass sympathy for immediate and concrete problems. Studies like *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States* and *Jews in the Eastern War Zone* were circulated among government officials as a prelude to Committee requests for diplomatic intercession. The Committee even had ready a scholarly rebuttal when criticism of the ritual method of animal slaughter arose. Less immediate but more ambitious was Joseph Jacob’s study *Jewish Contributions to Civilization*,

answering the “higher anti-Semitism” propagated by Werner Sombart, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and their ilk. (Cohen 1972, 34)

4.) *The Uses of Universalism.* Jews attempting to appeal to gentiles have often framed their interests in universalist terms and/or recruited prominent gentiles to publicly back the cause. From an evolutionary perspective, the intent is to make the Jewish cause appear to be in the interests of others as well. When goals are cast in ethnic or national terms they are not likely to appeal to those outside the group. Indeed, such obviously self-interested goals would be likely to alert outsiders to conflicts of interest between the group and outsiders, and could well be a source of animosity between the groups.

The attempt to cast particularistic interests in universalist terms has appeared periodically beginning in the ancient world (MacDonald, 1998a, Ch. 7). A typical strategy has been to portray Judaism as “a light unto the nations”. For example, a major aspect of Reform ideology, especially during the 19th century, was to recast the traditional messianic hope of Judaism into universalist terms and to de-emphasize the ethnic/national character of Judaism while nevertheless maintaining traditional Jewish cultural separatism. The traditional hopes for the restoration of Jewish political power were replaced by the hope of a world of peace and justice for all of humanity.

This use of a universalist ideology has also been apparent in the statements of Jewish political organizations. There are many instances in which Jewish organizations have attempted to include statements which explicitly advocate universalist aims for human rights and de-emphasize the ethnic character of Judaism (Patai 1971). A good example is the series title “Studies in Prejudice” for the books on anti-Semitism commissioned by the AJCommittee. The title was chosen (rather than the more descriptive “Studies in Anti-Semitism”) “in the hope that democrats would be more likely to respond to a call to fight prejudice and social discrimination in general than they would be to a call to fight anti-Semitism” (Wiggershaus 1994 409). In the words of Max Horkheimer, the editor of the series, the purpose of the studies was to provide experimental proof of the threat that anti-Semitism poses to democratic civilization” (in Wiggershaus 1994, 418).

Within this perspective, opposition to anti-Semitism is conceptualized as in the interests of all. For example, Jewish organizations in Germany in the period 1870–1914 argued that anti-Semitism was a threat to all of Germany (Ragins 1980, 55). Anti-Semitism was argued to be a form of anarchy and fundamentally “un-German:” “It followed that those Jews who now banded together to oppose anti-Semitism did so out of concern for their nation and in order to make a contribution to the welfare of their fatherland. In their dedication to defense, Jewish citizens gave proof of their patriotism and deep devotion to the national interests of Germany.”

Another use of universalism has been to recruit gentile leaders to endorse Jewish causes. From an evolutionary perspective, this technique takes advantage of the importance of similarity in inducing positive attitudes and altruism (Rushton 1989). An individual is more likely to agree with and have positive attitudes toward similar others than dissimilar others, so it is expected that gentiles would be more likely to be persuaded to go along with Jewish political causes by gentile political leaders than by Jews whose actions would be more likely to be viewed as self-interestedly ethnocentric.

This type of activity can involve deception, as occurred in the ancient world where there developed an entire apologetic literature written by Jews adopting gentile *noms de plume*

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(Schürer 1986, 617ff). By adopting a gentile pseudonym the author hoped to make gentiles more sympathetic to Jewish ideas, particularly the superiority of Jewish religious beliefs (e.g., Jewish ethics and monotheism), as well as to defend Jewish honor against gentile criticisms. For example, the famous Letter of Aristeas defends the Jewish law of purity and “tends to glorify the Jewish people with its excellent institutions and its sumptuous prosperity” (Schürer 1986, 678).

Jewish organizations opposed to anti-Semitism had an active role in establishing and maintaining predominantly gentile organizations opposed to anti-Semitism in Germany in the period from 1870–1933 (Niewyk 1980, 88; Ragins 1980, 53–54; Schorsch 1972, 79ff), leading to accusations among anti-Semites that such organizations were “no more than a front for ‘moneyed Jewry’” (Levy 1975, 147). Much earlier Moses Mendelsohn obtained the services of Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, a prominent gentile historian and diplomat, to argue the cause of emancipation of the Alsatian Jews (Schorsch 1972, 79). One reason why gentiles were attractive spokesmen for Judaism was that for Jews to openly fight against anti-Semitism was in effect “a repudiation of concealment as the price for equality” (Schorsch 1972, 12)—a comment which shows the importance of adopting a semi-cryptic profile during this period in which emancipation was viewed as a *quid pro quo* for assimilation. Similar strategies were common in the U.S. during this period: “Jews offered to provide the professional staffs and most of the financing if prominent Gentiles would grace the organizational letterheads” (Dinnerstein 1994, 147).

5.) *Strategies for Combating Anti-Semitism Focusing on Controlling Behavior within the Jewish Community.* Jews have often taken actions within their own community designed to limit anti-Semitism. Such measures are theoretically important because a successful group strategy must be protected from invasion by deceivers, exploiters and those who endanger the community (MacDonald 1994, Ch. 7). This type of activity is important because psychological research on social identity processes has indicated that the negative behavior of a few outgroup members tends to be uncritically generalized to all of the outgroup (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1987). As a result, a strategizing group is well-advised to have mechanisms which control the behavior of individual members likely to draw general hostility.

One of the most important roles of Jewish self-government was to regulate the personal behavior of Jews so as not to needlessly offend gentile sensibilities. In the communal reorganizations of 15th-century Spain there were laws that prohibited extravagant dress and entertainment, the purpose of which was partly “to prevent householders . . . from arousing Christian envy and hatred ‘on account of which new edicts are enacted against us’” (Baer 1961 II, 269). A commentary on the Jews of Cairo in the 19th century noted that wealthy Jews dressed well at home, but put on “plain or shabby dress” when they went out. Similarly, “though their houses have a mean and dirty appearance from without, many of them contain fine and well-furnished rooms. . . . They are careful, by every means in their power, to avoid the suspicion of being possessed of much wealth” (in Stillman 1979, 327). Another 19th century commentator on Jews in the Ottoman Empire noted that “at weddings they make a dangerous display of their wealth” (in Stillman 1979, 339)—dangerous because the Turks were always looking for an excuse to extort money from them.

Besides the flaunting of wealth, Jewish writers in Spain prior to the Inquisition often directed their hostility against the wealthy Jewish courtier class because their activities, such as moneylending and tax farming, were potent sources of anti-Semitism (Baer (1961, I:257ff). A regulation of the Synod of Frankfort of 1603 stated that “No member of our community whether

young or old, shall be permitted to lie to Gentiles or deceive them, whether in regard to what Jews buy from them or in regard to what the Jews sell them. Those who deceive Gentiles profane the name of the Lord among the Gentiles” (from Finkelstein 1924, 280). Resolutions also prohibited large groups of Jews from congregating in public. “In general, any action that might arouse the notice, the envy, or the anger of the Gentile population was deprecated” (Finkelstein 1924, 88).

Despite the decline of the *Kehilla* system, there have been continuing attempts to restrain other Jews in the interests of lowering anti-Semitism. The “extraordinarily large representation of Jews among traffickers and their victims” (Niewyk 1980, 118) in international prostitution from 1870-1939 was a major source of negative stereotypes by gentiles (Bristow 1983), and in the early 20th century America, Jews were active in attempts to eradicate Jewish prostitution and Jewish control of prostitution, Jewish street crime, and gangster activities (see Sachar 1992). In New York in 1912, the Bureau of Social Morals was established by Jewish philanthropists to provide information to the district attorney regarding Jewish criminal activities.

Attempts to moderate Jewish economic behavior have also continued in the modern world. In the 1930s in England, Neville Laski, President of the Board of Deputies, set up a subcommittee to “to deal with such social conditions as sweatshops, bad employers, landlords and price-cutting in the East End.” The committee attempted to raise the public image of Jews by making Jews more aware of the effect their “individual malpractices” had on fomenting anti-Semitism and pressuring them to change their behavior.

I submit that the time has passed for us to pretend that we are a perfect community and to ignore the fact that not a day goes by without anti-Semitism being created by Jews themselves . . . a new generation of unethical Jewish traders are by bankruptcy, due to complete irresponsibility and lack of principle, causing hardship over a wide field and manufacturing anti-Semitism at high pressure. (M. G. Liverman, Chairman of the Defence Committee of the Board of Deputies, November 1938; in Alderman 1992, 294)

Another source of conflict has been over the external signs of Jewish group separateness. In the period from 1870–1914, Ragins (1980, 49) notes the effort on the part of liberal German Jews to actively dissociate themselves from Jews, especially Orthodox Jews, who refused to adopt the outward appearances of assimilation and thus justify the charge that Jews were foreigners. Active attempts were made to get other Jews to abandon typical Jewish gestures and social behavior because it was offensive to Germans: “(O)ne was required to be ever watchful and take great care to avoid all provocative behavior” (Ragins 1980, 88). Indeed, “as late as 1890 [Jews] were still consciously suppressing every conspicuous and distinctive Jewish trait” (Schorsch 1972, 66).

Concerns about the potential for anti-Semitism resulting from the external signs of group separateness were also behind the attempts by some of the more established German-American Jews to decrease immigration of their Eastern European co-religionists. Thus in the 1880s a Jewish spokesman tried to prevent European Jewish philanthropies from sending Eastern European Jews to America by noting that “the Jewish position in America was not yet secure. . . . American Jews could not ‘afford to incur the ill will of their compatriots’” (Sachar 1992, 124; see also Neuringer 1971, 15ff). A Jewish publication warned about the “uncouth Asiatics” from

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Russia, and there were concerns that the new immigrants would ultimately lower the social class of the established Jewish community.

A particularly potent source of conflict within the Jewish community occurred over the issue of Zionism. In 1914 at the outbreak of World War I, the German Zionist Federation (the main German Zionist organization) resolved that Jews had no roots whatever in Germany. Such declarations of Jewish nationalism and lack of commitment Germany were perceived as fanning the flames of anti-Semitism due to charges of Jewish disloyalty, and a major goal of the Reform movement was therefore to suppress public expressions of Zionism. Meyer (1988, 339) notes that two prominent German reform rabbis declared during this period that a Zionist newspaper was a “calamity” to German Jews: “As long as the Zionists wrote in Hebrew, they were not dangerous, now that they write in German it is necessary to oppose them” (in Meyer 1988, 209). A low profile Zionism was perceived as harmless, but these Jews perceived danger if gentiles become aware of strident assertions of Jewish nationalism.

The conflict between Zionists and anti-Zionists in America can be seen from the following quotations from *The American Hebrew*, a periodical that reflected the views of the older Jewish establishment represented by the AJCommittee that had become numerically overwhelmed by the recent immigration of Eastern European Jews inclined toward Zionism and political radicalism:

[The vast majority of American Jews] feel that they cannot participate in an undertaking predicated on what, in effect, would be an acknowledgment that they are a people apart from the rest of the population of the countries of which they are citizens and to which they owe their allegiance. (*American Hebrew*, June 15, 1923; p. 93)

Also related to charges of disloyalty, there was great concern within the Jewish community that the disproportionate representation of Jews within the American Communist Party (CPUSA) would lead to anti-Semitism from the 1920s through the Cold War period: “The fight against the stereotype of Communist-Jew became a virtual obsession with Jewish leaders and opinion makers throughout America (Liebman 1979, 515), and indeed, the association of Jews with the CPUSA was a focus of anti-Semitic literature at this time (e.g., Beaty 1951). Jewish organizations were well aware of that a majority of Communists were Jews, that an even greater majority of Communist leaders were Jews, that the great majority of those called up by investigative bodies of Congress were Jews, and that the great majority of those prosecuted for spying for the Soviet Union were Jews (Novick 1999). As a result, the AJCommittee engaged in intensive efforts to change opinion within the Jewish community by showing that Jewish interests were more compatible with advocating American democracy than Soviet Communism (e.g., emphasizing Soviet anti-Semitism and Soviet support of nations opposed to Israel in the period after World War II) (Cohen 1972, 347ff).

6.) *Offensive strategies for Combating Anti-Semitism: Cultural Critique and Pathologizing Anti-Semitism.* While the foregoing are fundamentally defensive strategies aimed at deflecting recurrent bouts of anti-Semitism, Jewish groups have also gone on the offensive in an effort to create social, political, and intellectual environments conducive to Jewish interests, particularly combating anti-Semitism (MacDonald, 1998b). For example, Jews have figured prominently in

movements of political radicalism beginning in the late nineteenth (Rothman & Lichter, 1996). While aimed at developing societies devoid of anti-Semitism, as indicated above, Jewish radicalism has been a potent source of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century and has resulted in a variety of defensive strategies aimed at dissociating Jews from radicalism, at least among non-Jews. Similarly, Jewish organizations have aggressively pursued immigration policies aimed at diminishing the power of European-derived groups and thereby preventing the recurrent bouts of anti-Semitism that have characterized European cultures (MacDonald, 1998b).

In the intellectual arena, individuals who strongly identified as Jews have been the main force behind several highly influential intellectual movements that have simultaneously subjected gentile culture to radical criticism and allowed for the continuity of Jewish identification, including Boasian anthropology, psychoanalysis, radical political ideology, the New York Intellectuals, and the Frankfurt School of Social Research (MacDonald, 1998b). (I am not implying that these movements involve most Jews, only that strongly identified Jews pursuing Jewish agendas were the prime moving force. The influence of these movements is independent of the number or percentage of Jews involved in these movements.) For example, the Frankfurt School centered around Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno developed the highly influential view that gentile ethnocentrism was a sign of psychopathology. They viewed the end of anti-Semitism as a precondition for the development of a utopian society and the liberation of humanity. Their utopian society was one in which Judaism would continue as a cohesive group but in which cohesive, nationalistic, corporate gentile groups based on conformity to group norms would be eradicated as manifestations of psychopathology. Through works such as *The Authoritarian Personality*, these intellectuals have had a vast and continuing influence on American social science and the humanities, and on popular attitudes regarding racial and ethnic conflict.

Finally, Novick (1999) shows that since the 1970s the Jewish community has promoted the Holocaust as part of the effort to combat anti-Semitism. This includes a large scale educational effort (including mandated courses in the public schools of several states) spearheaded by Jewish organizations aimed at conveying the lesson that “tolerance and diversity [are] good; hate [is] bad, the overall rubric [is] ‘man’s inhumanity to man’ ” (pp. 258–259). The Holocaust has thus become an instrument of Jewish ethnic interests as a symbol intended to create moral revulsion at violence directed at minority ethnic groups—prototypically the Jews.

IV. CONCLUSION: AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS UNDERLYING GROUP CONFLICT

I conclude that Jews have used a variety of strategies to minimize risks resulting from their group strategy. Jews have often been able to respond effectively to anti-Semitism arising in vastly different environments and for a variety of different reasons. Nevertheless, these strategies have not always achieved their aims. Strategizing groups must continually search for effective methods for preventing hostility or the effects of hostility, and there is no guarantee of long-term success.

I have tried to highlight the ways in which Jewish strategies to minimize risk have relied upon mechanisms revealed by contemporary psychological research as important to understanding group dynamics, particularly social identity theory and the importance of similarity in eliciting affiliation and trust. Both of these phenomena may be viewed within an evolutionary perspective. As noted above, Rushton (1989) has developed an evolutionary theory

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of the importance of similarity in human relationships. The empirical results of social identity research are also highly compatible with an evolutionary basis for group behavior. Current evidence indicates that the central findings of positive ingroup bias and negative outgroup bias 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 outgroup. An evolutionary interpretation of these findings is also supported by results indicating that social identity processes occur among primate species closely related to humans, 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 affective mechanisms. I would agree and suggest that in humans one affective mechanism is the self-esteem mechanism proposed by social identity theorists. Other affective mechanisms which may be involved are the social conscientiousness/guilt mechanism and the experience of psychological relief obtained by individuals who join highly collectivist, authoritarian groups (see Galanter 1989). 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.

Research supporting the importance of self-esteem as underlying the motivation for social identification processes has not been entirely supportive (e.g., Hogg & Abrams 1993). An evolutionary approach would emphasize the importance of evolved affective motivational systems as central to motivation generally (MacDonald 1991), but there are a variety of possible affective motivations which could be involved, including those mentioned by Hogg and Abrams. Evolved motivational systems often include both positive and negative components (e.g., anxiety in the presence of danger and relief consequent to deliverance [MacDonald 1995]). I suspect that studies of real-life groups with a high degree of group commitment (such as Judaism) would reveal not only strong positive affective motivations concomitant 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, Trivers (1971) and Baumeister and Leary (1995) emphasize the importance of guilt and empathy for cementing ingroup relationships.

The powerful affective components of social identity processes are difficult to explain except as aspects of the evolved machinery of the human mind. We have noted that the tendency to seek self-esteem via social identity processes is 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 immense affective and evaluative overtones involving the emotions of 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.

An evolutionary perspective is also highly compatible with the falsity and contradictory nature of many anti-Semitic beliefs. As Krebs, Denton, and Higgins (1988) note, 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. 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 group competition.

Finally, the fact that social identity processes and tendencies toward collectivism increase during times of resource competition and threat to the group (see Hogg & Abrams 1987; Triandis 1990; 1991) is highly compatible with supposing that these processes involve facultative mechanisms that emerged as a result of selection at the level of the group in the sense that the group becomes the vehicle of selection (Wilson & Sober, 1994). In other words, social identity processes show evidence of adaptive design as a mechanism underlying group conflict. Social identity processes are intensified during times of perceived danger. At such times, individuals more willingly submerge themselves in groups, develop a powerful sense of membership in a cohesive, morally superior group, and gird themselves to fight the morally depraved enemy.

Within this perspective, there is no conflict between selection at the level of the individual and the level of the group, because under conditions of external threat, individual self-interest increasingly coincides with the survival interests of the group. 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 increasing levels of leadership under conditions of external threat and/or opportunities for territorial expansion.

Similarly, students of anti-Semitism have often noted that anti-Semitism tends to increase during periods of political and economic instability. This suggests that during periods of perceived external threat, gentiles are more prone to forming cohesive, cooperative groups directed against outgroups, and especially against groups perceived as having a disproportionate influence on the economic circumstances of ingroup members. The result is an escalation of between-group conflict and a search among Jews for mechanisms that might mitigate the rising threat of anti-Semitism.

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