The Use of "Race" as a Psychological Bulwark for Anti-Semitism

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It is my contention to show in this paper the subtlety and surety of the concept of "race" as a conditioning and determining factor in the creation and retention in the popular imagination of the stereotypes of antisemitism. When a minority group can be built up and represented to the rest of the population as being alien in any way the suspicion of the majority is aroused. Partially due to several unfortunate misinterpretations of statements by Max Mueller, the idea of "race" was made an integral part of everyday thinking. In trying to clear up the misunderstanding Mueller said, "I have declared again and again that when I say 'Aryans (Aryans) I mean neither blood nor bone nor hair nor skull; I mean simply those who spoke an Aryan language." (Mueller as cited by 2, p. 12). But his previous remarks has been misconstrued and misinterpreted to the public in such a way that the myth of "race" was raised once and forever. The "fact" of "race", once accepted, resulted in the mental separation of one group from another. As various theories accumulated each nation began to feel itself a "race", inviolate and separate, and any persons belonging to a different "race" were automatically placed in a different category from that of the main social group, and as outsiders, members of an outgroup, or alien "race", they were thought of as not having the rights, social prerogatives, and preferential status as those in the majority, the ingroup, the dominant "race". It is necessary that attitudes of this sort once created be strengthened and formed into stereotypes if they are to have continued existence and the "fact" of "race" was an immediate and determinable label to put on a group of people for by it they were at once separated and distinguished from the bulk of the community or nation.
The historian, Eduard Meyer, once said, "The popular view that antagonism to the Jews, 'Antisemitism', is a racial antagonism, and has anything to do with race, is entirely erroneous." (Meyer as cited in 13, p. 139). However erroneous this may be, it has become widely accepted that the Jewish people are a "race," and it is as a "race" that they have been persecuted and forced into every torture and degradation known to man. A person of intelligence, a man trained in the techniques of archeology and philology as Professor Meyer was, could not ascribe his personal antagonism to anything so scientifically inaccurate as "race," but, since his time, the imagination of the public all over the world has been captured and affected by the misuse of "race" and Jews are stigmatized because of it.

The use of "race" and the explanation of it as a psychological bulwark for antisemitism must start with the ingroup-outgroup relationship in society.

THE CREATION OF AN OUTGROUP

In a basic analysis of any society it will be found to be characterized by particular group relationships. These group relationships or associations are characterized, in turn, by ingroups and outgroups. When Eubank paraphrases Sumner (4, p. 165) the social significance of these groups can readily be seen:

"Each person naturally divides his world of men according to the egocentric test of whether or not they belong to the same groups as himself. Those who do, constitute a we-group; any group to which he does not belong is an others-group. One's attitudes and behavior toward the first are characteristically different from those toward the second."

Any groups in a specific society which can be characterized by particular features, manners, mores, customs, culture or religion can be made into an outgroup if the proper conditions arise. In respect to the Jewish people, the restriction of their industry and the centralization of their community ghettos made them an especially vulnerable minority on whom the stigma of outgroup has been historically almost always applied.
James Parkes (11) has traced Jewish history from the Middle Ages when as the members of an outgroup they could be accused of starting the Black Death of 1348 up until the present when as scapegoats of the modern world they could be used as the powerful ingroup directed for its own aggrandizement.

Throughout the history of the Jews in Europe they have been a group set apart, restricted legally and traditionally, and perfectly delineated outgroup-ingroup situation has existed.

STIGMA ATTACHED TO AN OUTGROUP

Because of these socio-economic restrictions upon Jewish life there grew up, or rather continued, a cultural-religious life which was different from that which surrounded it. The attitude of the population toward the Jew was much the same as it would be towards any stranger in the society except that it was strengthened by economic motives; the desire to curb or completely control any competition. As Wiese-Becker stated (1, p. 284):

"The chief reason for the persistence of the feeling of enmity towards the stranger appears to mental immobility i.e., the persistence of neurophysic patterns which have been developed in isolation and which therefore cannot be changed without intense emotional resistance."

This mental immobility is a product of cultural fixity and the rigid social control which arises from isolation. Thus, within both the ingroup and outgroup, hostility towards any stranger, any other group separated from their own, is created and maintained. Soon, because the outgroup cannot be annihilated or driven away, prejudices develop as a common reaction to the situation.

E. A. Ross said (Ross as cited in 1, p. 185):

"Each people notices and plumes itself upon cases in which its standard is higher or more exacting than that of another people, and overlooks cases in which it is lower."

The members of the ingroup surround themselves with a wall of rationalizations. Trivial differences then assume importance as facts in the assumption of
the superiority of their group and the deficiency and ignorance of the other or outgroup. This is a continual process that once started induces a chain reaction whereby "new grounds for segregation, ostracism, aversion, and self-aggrandizement are quickly searched for and easily found." (1, p. 186). The Jewish people have been no exception to this general pattern and the stigma attached to any outgroup has persistently been a part of their heritage.

THE USE OF "RACE" AS A TERM CLASSIFYING THE OUTGROUP

Outgroups are not always classified as "races", but when they can be their position as an outgroup is strengthened and they become even more alien to the majority population. Certain physical characteristics of the Jews were cited such as the "Sephardic" nose which is now presumed to be a genetically dominant superposition of the convex nasality of an Asia Minor population (possibly Armenoid, probably the Iranian Plateau type) (2, p. 54).

The stigma of "race" applied to an outgroup reinforces certain uses of the outgroup to the ingroup. An example of this is the use of an outgroup as a scapegoat on which to vent frustrations by action without the possibility of retaliation. The Jews have been historically a group set aside to absorb any blame of the majority and there has always been a vicarious pleasure in kicking them about. This projection of blame to an outgroup wipes the blame out by transferring it. In this respect outgroups are useful and, if, in addition the outgroup is a separate "race", the attitude of prejudice is given new incentive, new meaning, and a greater orientation in the life of ingroup members. As Hertzler states: "This identification (racial) singles them out, makes them conspicuous, and attracts attention to and exaggerates any other differences, such as religious or the cultural, which they may have" (5, p. 78).

Thus, "race" is made a ground in itself for antagonism, distrust and
This basis of hatred has been cleverly used and augmented by all of the known propaganda techniques until it has become, in modern life, the cause, the reason, and the great separator of peoples.

THE OPPROBRIUM OF "RACE": NASCENT RACISM.

In recent times "race" has been transmuted to racism which as Benedict says "is merely a pretentious way of saying that "I" belong to the Best People" (2, 99). Anyone of a different "race" clearly becomes inferior by means of racism. Benedict continues that there is in this ideology a certain simplicity which makes it an invaluable political asset. Wiese-Becker remarks (1, p. 185):

"Political groups in particular have at all times and places fostered the feeling among their members that they alone are perfect, elect, destined to victory, and morally superior"(1, p. 185).

This opprobrium has become a weapon insuring superiority and having its own technique of social action.

THE TECHNIQUE OF "RACE" STIGMA

Racial stigma is manifested in many ways. While discussing the Jews, Chamberlain, (3, pp. 329-393) declares they are biologically different from other "races" and that it is their "blood" which is the accountable factor for this difference. He further states that the Jews have polluted all the peoples with whom they came into contact. This "blood" made the Jews a "mongrel race" and I quote (3, p. 368):

"As a matter of fact the current opinion is that the Semite and even that the purest Bedouin type are the most absolute mongrels imaginable, being the product of a cross between negro and white man."

Chamberlain continues spilling the seeds of hate and the Jews become "lazy, deceitful, cruel, greedy, cowardly, and are rightly regarded by all nations as the scum of mankind" (3, p. 368). These seeds falling upon fertile ground caused the popularization of "race", and their bitter fruit enabled men like
Hitler and Streicher to point up the whole technique of racial stigma which was to become an insidious and all-permeating practice. Chamberlain also wants to enforce the idea of their cultural separateness on the public consciousness and he says (3, p. 359):

"The real Jew only developed in the course of centuries by gradual physical separation from the rest of the Israelite family, as also by progressive development of certain mental qualities and the systematic starving of others; he is not the result of a normal national life, but in a way an artificial product, produced by a priestly caste, which forced, with the help of alien rulers, a priestly legislation and a priestly faith upon a people that did not want them."

Chamberlain, moreover, was a rather astute person. He realized instinctively that one of the most efficient methods for getting his ideas of "race" accepted was to create an aura of mystery, of the fear-inspiring unknown, and of strangely manifested internal powers. To do this he used the difference in religion to cause distrust of the Jews and to firmly implant his racial ideas in the minds of his readers. The following illustrates this (3, p. 336):

"Outwardly his inheritance was the same as ours; inwardly it was not so; he inherited quite a different spirit. One single trait is all that is necessary to reveal in an almost alarming manner to our consciousness the yawning gulf which here separates soul from soul; the revelation of Christ has no significance for the Jew."

But, for all this, Chamberlain was only a beginner; a popularizer of fairytales who could not see the furnaces they led to and the methodical piles of clothing and personal effects which cast a shadow over Germany and the whole world.

Others followed Chamberlain and his statements that European nations were "willing slaves of Jewish usury" (3, p. 330) and that "all branches of our life have become willing slaves to the Jews" (3, p. 330).

In America, Grant Madison, was stirring up feeling against new immigrants. The pure Teutons, whoever they were, were called upon to resist change,
immigration, and thus retain their dominant position. Of course, the Jewish people were especially set apart and stigmatized. The Quota Act followed five years later and checked the rapid immigration (2, p. 125).

It can easily be seen that the technique of "race" stigma, the deliberate maligning of an outgroup, by means of popular writings, was built up from these insidious and carefully worked out beginnings to become the method that Hitler was to use in Germany with the myth of "aryan" superiority and the "facts" of "blood".

THE USE OF "RACE" IN THE HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM

"Race" first begins to be felt as an important factor in antisemitism after the publication of Gobineau's, Essay on the inequality of the human races. Gobineau (13) very scientifically sought to establish, as did Chamberlain later, that of all the "races" of men the white "race" was the only one which was civilized. A portion of the white "race", the Aryans, were the most fitted for life and civilization. The Germanic, of course, was the most Aryan but he considered "the sordid, selfish, swarthy, undersized Semite a parasite on civilization" (Gobineau as cited in 13, p. 141). Gobineau was probably not primarily interested in attacking the Jews but he was interested in preserving the old landed, feudal aristocracy which was in danger of losing its power. The assumption that the Jews were inferior, and that, in general, there were biologically superior and inferior groups of people did much to sustain a dying status group. After Gobineau racism as a product of "race" became "a national battlecry in this era of nationalism" (2, p. 128).

But it is specifically in Germany after 1920 that the use of "race" was most evident. Gerhard Jacoby's report to the American Jewish Congress states (7, p. 11):

"the original program of the National Socialist Party, adopted in
Munich on February 24, 1920, laid down the iron rule that Jews could not be regarded by Germans as kinsmen and should be treated as aliens.

Immediately after Hitler took power a wave of mild persecution began and on April 1, 1933 there was a boycott aimed at Jewish middle class and professionals. Shortly after this books written by Jews were burned all over Germany and personal assault became more frequent. Dr. Helmut Nicolai, a Nazi spokesman said (Nicolai as cited by 12, p. 91):

"Race stamps this code (the new German code). Our whole new legal system is constructed on the cornerstone of race."

These new laws, the "aryan" laws were designed in part to expell all persons with one or more Jewish grandparents from public life in Germany. By 1935, these new laws had drastically curtailed professional Jewish life and citizenship was gradually being denied them. Of course, by this time most schools had been closed to them and the pattern was created by which all the Jews in Germany were to be made slaves. This was done in the name of "race". The official handbook for German youth states (14, p. 78):

"For us fostering race is one and the same thing with defensive warfare against mind and blood contamination by the Jews."

This whole process, which had a good start before Hitler, was given an intensified "racial" significance by him. And it is with Adolf Hitler that the definition of the Nazi attitude on "race" rests. He states (5, pp. 232, 312):

"their whole existence is based on one single great lie, to wit, that they are a religious community while actually they are a race — and what a race?"

"race, however, does not lie in the language, but exclusively in the blood."

It was thus, on the presumption of a racial identity including all of the Jewish people, that antisemitism became the strongest force in the Nazi ideology. Antisemitism, based on racial, not religious or cultural differences,
had been given so much impetus and force that by September 1, 1943 there were
only 5,000 Jews left in Germany as compared with the 564,379 who had lived
there in 1925 (7, p. 9). Destroyed or extirpated and forced into exile
German Jewry has all but vanished.

THE JEWS AS MEMBERS OF A "RACE"

It is now necessary to see whether this attack upon a people can be scien-
tifically accurate on racial grounds. If it can be proven that the Jewish
people are a separate "race" then the possible validity of much of the German
propaganda will be shown. Terms such as "blood" and "pollution" will be better
understood in this light. If, however, the Jews have no "racial" identity
then it will be seen that the stigma of "race" as a separating quality is a
fabric of lies.

It has long been a matter of knowledge to Biblical scholars that "the
Jewish people originated in Palestine through a mingling mainly of the follow-
ing nations and tribes" (13, p. 135). Valentin continues (13) citing the
following as those groups which over a period of years merged to form the
original Jewish state: Hittites, Hametic Egyptians, Bedouins, Canaanites, Amor-
ites, Philistines, and other Aralo-Iranian peoples. Montagu further indicates
(10, p. 220) that Hivites, Amalekites and Kenites were also included in this
early group. Furthermore, he goes on to state that the Amorites, who adopted
Judaism and became a part of the Jewish people, had a "high frequency of red
hair" (10, p. 220). The Hittites, however, were of two types and one of these
was a "moderately tall, beardless type with thick lips, a straight nose and
wide nostrils, and sunkin eyes" (10, p. 220).

On the evidence of this it appears that early in their history the Jewish
people were a highly diversified group about which the generalization of
"national type" could not be made. After the Diaspora the Jewish people were
scattered completely and intermixed with the peoples of the lands in which
10

they settled. They had not had homogeneity in Palestine and they did not have it later. It is known that, by admixture with the Kurds and Slavs, a blond strain, thought by Valentin (13, p. 136) to be new, was introduced.

This is summed up by Montagu who says (10, p. 226):

"From the standpoint of scientific classification, from the standpoint of physical anthropology, and from the standpoint of zoology there is no such thing as a Jewish physical type, and there is not, nor was there ever, even anything remotely resembling a Jewish "race" or ethnic group."

And again as Krogman says (9, p. 54):

"there is no Jewish or "Semetic" race- there are only groups of people who profess Judaism and who are thus united by common socio-religious ties."

This is indication enough that the concept of a Jewish "race" is a fabric of lies. This elaborate tapestry of lies was projected on the people, and still is being projected, in the desire to build up in the imagination of the populace a certain necessary psychological immunity from any blame connected with the destructive discrimination of a group that is an outgroup and as such assumes an alien identity.

THE VULNERABILITY OF "RACE"

It has been shown time and again that the idea of "race", the identity of "race", in so far as the Jewish people are concerned, has no meaning and is an entirely false concept. From every standpoint the "racial" position is vulnerable and yet it persists. In spite of scientific evidence, educational propaganda, and logical procedures of thinking bases on these, the idea that, "I know a Jew when I see one;" persists as a stereotype so strongly indoctrinated in the popular imagination that no amount of scientific statement can dislodge it.

EMOTION VS SCIENCE

It is one thing to conclusively prove by scientific evidence that there
is no such entity as a Jewish "race" and another problem to get the majority of the people to accept this fact. That the Jews have "racial" identity has become so much a part of people's attitudes that the various stereotypes created from a fictitious abstraction of "Jewishness" remain unmodified by experience. And really the only value an abstraction of any sort has is as it changes and is modified by experience. Any stereotype is an assumption based on things taken for granted, an easy method of thinking which gives rise to rationalization. Stereotypes also determine action, therefore, the basic necessity is to modify the stereotypes. Science has the answer to "race" and must, in its own way, combat the previous indoctrinations. The purpose of these stereotypes and prejudices which grow from them is to preserve the status quo and enhance self-interest. With this in mind, there must be created situations and conditions under which it is to the individual's self-interest to give up his prejudice and change his rationalized attitudes. There must be, from this, an extension from the individual to the community, the nation, and finally, the world. The information about the non-existence of the Jewish "race" has to be closely associated with interest and action on every level of human commerce if there is to be any permanent value derived from the scientific studies. Prejudice is a menace to civilization whether applied to "race" or to other necessary situations in societal living. Under the influence of prejudice and the ensuing rationalizations excuses are made which come to equal objective reasoning. Convenient niches are found for all varieties of similar things and all discriminations become invalid when made according to stereotypes.

The lines of future action are clear: science must take the lead in objective reeducation to free men from prejudiced and stereotyped thinking. If the recent war has taught the world anything: let us hope it is this fact.

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AND RELIGION AS SEPARATE FROM "RACE"

As, and if, men slowly become emancipated from the stereotypes of "race"
they will, in all probability, substitute the term "ethnic group" for the poor, overworked, misused term "race". Montagu offers a highly acceptable definition (10, p. 72):

"An ethnic group represents one of a number of populations, which together comprise Homo Sapiens, but individually maintaining their differences, physical and cultural, by means of isolating mechanisms such as geographic and social barriers."

If this definition were at present popularly accepted and substituted for the various misleading meanings of "race" there would be no need to show culture and religion as separate because they are integrated in this inclusive, yet actually rather simple, definition. But, as men do accept "race" as separate from cultural phenomena, it is necessary to see what is more generally considered a definition. Krogman (9, p. 49) has perhaps one of the most complete definitions available:

"A race is a sub-group of peoples possessing a definite combination of physical characters, of genetic origin; this combination serves, in varying degree, to distinguish the sub-group from other sub-groups of mankind, and the combination is transmitted in descent, providing all conditions which originally gave rise to the definite combinations remain relatively unaltered; as a rule the sub-group inhabits, or did inhabit, a more or less restricted geographical region."

Scientifically speaking, this is a biological classification. Culture, in contrast, has nothing to do with biology. As formulated by Kluckhohn and Kelly (8, p. 98) the definition is:

"A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit design for living, which tend to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group."

Under this definition religion, which seems essentially to be an attitude by which man's highest intellectual and emotional goals are fulfilled, could be included.

These definitions lead to the conclusion that any validity there is in "race" must, scientifically at least, be considered as quite distinct and
apart from culture and religion.

The majority of the population probably does not understand this because the presence of stereotypes leads to the spurious manner of thinking in which terms, concepts, and ideas with any trace of fictitious similarity are lumped together and considered as identical.

The creation of attitudes whereby distinctions can be objectively made comes under the educative sphere of science. Indeed, anthropologists and sociologists, in fact, social scientists of all kinds, have devoted the greatest part of their energy and time in an attempt to reeducate and reinform the public by destroying the myths and attitudes which have in such a large part determined thinking.

"Race" has been used to put a psychological prop under prejudice and it is a determinable fact that it is still being used as such but with a different outgroup.

As long as there are outgroups there will be those in the ingroup who will use them as objects of stigma, ostracism and hate, to further their own aggrandizement and self-interest. But let us hope, as a result of our reaction to the Nazi ideology and the subsequent crushing of its exponents, that the use of "race", in so far as the Jewish people are concerned, will no longer be a moral and psychological crutch supporting antisemitism.

The tragedy of the misuse of "race" is that no sooner is one outgroup shown not to be a "racial" body than another outgroup is found to bear the burden of man's social immaturity. How solve? — Your solution thus far? 

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