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OTHER JEWISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO MODERN RACIST CURRENTS

Racial theories of intelligence were especially popular in the late 1800's and early twentieth century, ending -- we would have hoped -- with the Nazis' Master Race abominations in the 1940's. Born of colonialist and imperialist world-views, respected academics in the western world -- Jews among them -- spent a lot of time in those decades measuring brain sizes and skull capacities of different peoples, usually towards putting themselves on top of the human pyramid.

"Race," notes Michael Marrus, "... provides Jews with the means to express their sense of a distinct Jewish identity, a sense which was difficult to achieve in other terms, and which they themselves were not always ready to admit." [MARRUS, p. 10] "The Jewish race," wrote, Ben Mosche, a contributor to an 1893 Jewish Yearbook in France, "is not an ordinary race, let us admit it. It is endowed with a certain number of diverse characteristics ... which make it the most noticed and most envied of human families." [MARRUS, p. 18] Hannah Arendt noted the opinion of Benjamin Disraeli, the Jewish prime minister of Great Britain in the late 19th century, about his racial heritage:

"[Disraeli] was ready to assert that the Semitic principle 'represented all that is spiritual in our nature,' that the vicissitudes of history find their main solution -- all in race,' which is 'the key to history' regardless of 'language and religion,' for 'there is only one thing that makes a race and that is blood' and that there is only one aristocracy, the aristocracy of nature 'which consists of 'an unmixed race of a first-rate organization.'" [ARENDR, p. 73]

One of the most influential thinkers in the theory of a criminal typology in physical appearance was an Italian Jew, Cesare Lombroso (1836-1909). The founder of the "science of criminal law," Lombroso argued that "degenerate criminality" was expressed in physical traits (i.e., criminals *looked like* criminals). For example, in Lombroso's view, the same kind of ears were to be found in "criminals, savages, and apes." [MOSSE, G., 1978, p. 83-84] Lombroso wrote that criminals tend to be irrecoverably "born for evil;" their "atavism shows us the inefficacy of punishment for born criminals" and society should "eliminate them completely, even by death." He also labeled entire groups of handicapped people as criminals and that "almost every 'born criminal' suffers from epilepsy to some degree." Gypsies as a group were identified by Lombroso as inherently criminal: "They have the improvidence of the savage and that of the criminal as well." "The Nazi killers," says Henry Friedlander, "used the language of Lombroso to target the same victim groups, including Gypsies and the handicapped. Thus members of the judiciary considered the killing of convicted criminals if their 'physical shape no longer deserved to be called human.'" [FRIEDLANDER, p. 3]

Another Jew, Max Nordau (1849-1923), a friend of both Lombroso and right hand man for the Zionist leader Theodore Herzl, was the "real populizer of the concept of degeneration," defined by George

Mosse as "those who stood against scientific methods and middle class morality." [MOSSE, p. 84-85] (Nordeau's volume, Degeneration, was dedicated to Lombroso. Jewish scholar Mosse argues that Lombroso and Nordeau were not racists, (?) "but their ideas became a staple of racist thought." [MOSSE, G., 1978, p. 86] Both men's works were appropriated by Nazi ideology and institutionalized against Jews.

A turn-of-the-century Jewish doctor (and Zionist), Felix Theilhaber, published arguments that Jewish racial preservation was rooted in Jewish sexual law and ethics, limitations that maintained procreation within the expressly Jewish community: "the categorical imperative of Judaism." [EFRON, p. 147]

In 1907, Eliot Auerbach, a German-Jewish doctor, argued that a Jewish racial purity orientation was rooted in Jewish law and that "in the course of their entire racial history it has been the Jews themselves and not other peoples who have promoted the strongest resistance to racial mixing." [EFRON, p. 131] "Auerbach's hypothesis," says John Efron, "built on the mystical premise that there existed a Jewish racial instinct whose effectiveness had ensured racial exclusiveness and therefore Jewish racial purity, was reminiscent of much of the German Volkisch literature being disseminated by nationalist (and other anti-Semitic) groups." [EFRON, p. 136] Auerbach even used buzzwords of warlike defiance. In the contest between German and Jewish nationalism, he said, "it will be will against will. And the will to live will be more powerful than the will to go under." [EFRON, p. 136]

Also influenced by the racist ideas in the air at the time, in 1910 an Austrian Jewish doctor, Ignaz Zollschan, published a "sensational" volume arguing that "Judaity was based strictly upon biological criteria." Without the separatist possibilities of future Zionist nationalism, he argued, Jewry would either dissolve away or, in intermarriages with non-Jews, face "physical degeneration." [TRAVERSO, p. 30]

The well-known German socialist, Karl Kautsky, attacked the growing interest of some Jews in racial theories, sarcastically wondering:

"If this [racist] theory permits Christian-Teutonic patriots to declare themselves demi-gods, why should Zionist patriots not use it in order to stamp the people chosen by God as a chosen race of nature, a noble race that must be carefully guarded from any deterioration and contamination by foreign elements?" [EFRON, p. 124]

In England, another Jewish "racial scientist," Joseph Jacobs, argued that "brain activity" could increase brain size and this had evidenced itself in Jews who had to live by their wits and intelligence amidst persecution by non-Jews during former centuries. Jacobs therefore argued that the cubic capacity of Jewish skulls were "larger than that of their neighbors." One of his studies, for instance, purported to prove that, on the average, Jews have 4% more "brain ability" than Bretons and 2% more than Scots. [EFRON, p. 86-88]

Third World Hottentots and the like were routinely dismissed by Gentile racial theorists as brainless bumpkins, but Jews -- with so much economic and cultural impact in western countries -- were less easily dismissed as brain dead. Even hostile Gentile observers had little choice but to accord them some degree of respect. A variety of theses were invented to explain Jewish achievement (by both non-Jews and Jews) in hereditary terms, often focusing upon presumed "traits" for their remarkable "parasitic" assimilation in host lands, social Darwinism where only the smartest Jews survived Gentile hostility to them over the ages, or a genetic hybridization of centuries-old interbreeding of scholarly elite within the Jewish community.

Sander Gilman, a Jewish scholar, argued in 1996 that "the myth of Jewish superior intelligence has its origins in the age of biological racism. It is part of the discussion of Jews as a racial category." As Gilman copiously notes, there certainly was a deluge of academic speculation about the subject, by both Gentile and Jews, for a number of years, but Gilman -- following the standard "Jews as consummate victims" scenario -- places the origin of such myth entirely into Gentile hands in the late 1800's. It is true that both Nazi-oriented writers and prideful (or worried) Jews wildly speculated about the relationship between Jewish intelligence and their social, economic, and cultural achievements, but obsessions with innate "superiority" and "racial" distinction go back further to seminal Jewish religio-nationalism, and its tribal founding as the Chosen People.

Mordechai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism, suggests that modern Jewish preoccupation with their self-perceived communal superiority over others really reflects a malaise of insecurity. He writes that

"To the modern Jew who boasts of the Jews being the Chosen People, this belief expresses itself, for the most part, in scanning every bit of news from the sport sheets to the financial columns for success stories of Jews that might serve to better bolster up his pride in the sense of inferiority that his position as a Jew imposes." [KAPLAN, p. 94]

A Jewish researcher, Miles Storfer, as recently as 1990 (in his book published by a respected academic publisher, Jossey-Bass) harkens back to the Chosen People root for Jewish intellectual (and moral) superiority. His thesis is that "even though human intelligence is primarily a function of heredity," (STORFER, p. xiv) and that an "**exceptionally large percentage of Jewish people ... score at or near the genius level**" on intelligence tests, [Storfer's emphasis, p. 320] others can get their IQ scores up a few degrees if they follow the Jewish model for child rearing:

"What an optimistic scenario this Jewish model offers the human race! If the child development principles employed by the Jewish family can generate such a **multifold increase in the rate of productive genius**, [Storfer's emphasis] then understanding and utilizing this knowledge for the betterment of all mankind could and should be viewed as a golden opportunity -- not just an

opportunity to develop a future population of highly intelligent people but, most importantly, an opportunity to use these heightened gifts of intellect to promote the kinds of achievements exemplified by the Jewish mission." [STORFER, p. 330]

Storfer's parochial, chauvinistic, selfish, messianic, and sometimes racist world view finds common expression in all realms of Jewish discourse, from the religious to the political. Shalom Carmy, for instance, noted to his 1992 Jewish scholarly audience an apparent in-house truism:

"Honesty, fidelity, modesty, conscience, courage, altruism, love are not unknown in the gentile world past and present. That these qualities have survived and sometimes even prospered is largely due to the insertion of the Jewish people into history." [CARMY, p. 45]

After indirect Israeli army culpability was established in the 1982 massacre of hundreds of Palestinian refugees in Lebanese refugee camps, Rabbi Walter Wurzberger, former President of the Rabbinical Council of America, expressed shock, publicly noting that "we [Jews] are the people who established the standards of morals." [JEWISH WEEK, 10-11-82]

Completely ignoring the self-obsessed and self-absorbed essences of Jewish tradition and religious law, even a left wing ideologue like Michael Lerner cannot resist but to gush elitist Jewish messianism:

"The universalistic dream of a transformation and healing of the world, that belief that peace and justice are not meant for heaven but are this-worldly necessities that must be fought for, **is** the particularistic cultural and religious tradition of the Jews." [TIKKUN, v.1, no. 1]

Meanwhile, one of Lerner's (politically) ideological opposites, Israeli right-winger Yehuda Etzion, one of the masterminds behind a 1984 plot to blow up Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock (the third holiest Muslim shrine in the world) to usher in a planned world war, international chaos, and Jewish redemption, also subscribes to the Jewish self-conception of a 'community of fate':

"For Gentiles, life is mainly a life of existence while ours is a life of destiny, the life of a kingdom of priests and a holy people. We exist in the world in order to actualize destiny." [SPRINZAK, p. 258]

For far too many Jews, all valuable qualities in their human capacities revolve in their minds around the fact that they are Jewish. Will Herberg proudly proclaims that

"The Jewish socialist, too, reveals the Messianic origins of the impulse that animates him, and, indeed, often relates his 'idealism' to 'Jewish

ethics,' just as the Jewish scholar or scientist will find his intellectual concern quite natural in view of the 'Jewish tradition of learning' and the 'Jewish zeal for the truth.' I have myself heard Jewish labor leaders, men remote indeed from the faith and practice of Judaism, explain confidentially that their 'progressivism' was somehow the consequence of their being Jewish. These things are matters of common experience, and I have yet to find a Jew who does not in some manner or form exhibit this profound sense of 'difference' and special vocation."

[HERBERG, p. 275]

Versions of messianic arrogance are expounded by Jews of all political persuasions, everywhere, internationally, addressing even their victimization mythology in Russia and Eastern Europe. In this context, Israel Shahak writes that

"The whole racist propaganda on the theme of the supposed superiority of Jewish morality and intellect (in which many Jewish socialists were prominent) is bound up with a lack of sensitivity for the suffering of that major part of humanity who were especially oppressed during the last thousand years -- the peasants." [SHAHAK, p. 53]

Even Michael Goldberg, a scholar who incisively argues for a reevaluation of the myths of Jewish victimization, cannot himself shake the millennia-old chauvinism. Goldberg critically points out that Jews who complain about non-Jews holding the modern state of Israel to a higher moral standard than other nations are on shaky ground, since current Jewish views of themselves supposedly affirms such a higher moral standard anyway. But after this ironic insight, Goldberg swallows the whole arrogant myth of Jewish superiority and separateness as his own -- even fattening it to its obnoxious maximum, claiming:

"In the last analysis, to be a member of the House of Israel [i.e., Jews] is to bear a family resemblance to its most venerated and beloved relation, God. To be a member of the community of Israel means being a resemblance to no other community on earth." [GOLDBERG, p. 149]

The curious expression of all proclamations of Jewish superiority over others, (even when it is cloaked in its most supposed benevolent form that *they* have bestowed to mankind the possibility of righteousness, justice, and universalism) is an absolute guarantee to invoke anti-Jewish sentiment in non-Jews. Gentiles are not -- and never will be -- fond of being systematically slighted, degraded, and insulted by Jews, who position themselves as a special caste at every turn, currently and historically. An added curiosity is that the foundation for an endemic Jewish self-celebration has an intra-Jewish chauvinism as well. In the intelligence realm, all such claims for innate Jewish intellectual superiority rest upon the visible status-laden achievement of successful Jews in various fields in the Western world, or in "scientific tests" that measure the exceptional skills of, specifically, Ashkenazis (Jews of European

descent). Jews who lived for centuries in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Middle East (the Sephardim, technically meaning Spanish Jews, but colloquially encompassing Jews from the "Orient"), and other countries, in recent decades reunited with their historic brethren in modern Israel, are never part of the "God's intellectual gift to mankind" scenario. In fact, Sephardic Jews (who are second-class citizens, economically and otherwise, in Israel) measure poorly against Ashkenazis on intelligence tests and other measures of achievement. It should be no surprise that those in Israel who dictate the parameters of "intelligence" measurement in the first place, and who legislate the whole country for that matter, are Ashkenazi.

In 1994 Richard Herrnstein, a Jew, and his non-Jewish co-author, Charles Murray, came out with a controversial book, The Bell Curve, hell-bent on again resurrecting in new form the old racist and classist argument that intelligence is hereditary in that some "races" are inherently smarter -- and some, conversely, stupider -- than others. But the authors are especially particular about Jewish superiority. "Ashkenazic Jews of European origins," they say, "test higher (for intelligence) than any other ethnic group." Such Jews "constantly show their disproportionate level of success, usually by orders of magnitude, in various inventories of scientific and artistic achievement."

So what might the obvious explanation for this discrepancy, per "intelligence," between Ashkenazi and Sephardim, (let alone non-Jews) be? Both groups are, supposedly, of ancient common origin as Jews, the Sephardim of the Middle East are usually even closer to their racially "Semitic" origins than the Ashkenazi. So what is different about them? Europe, of course. Setting aside the possibilities that purely cultural motivators expressed as ambition, aggressiveness, opportunity, encouragement, and other such traits may play a major role in the displaying of "intelligence" as it relates to, and is evidenced by, accomplishment, if an argument for innate "Jewish (Ashkenazi) superiority" is to be taken seriously at all the explanation must focus on the fact that A) Ashkenazi Jews interbred over hundreds of years with Europeans and acquired European genes, or B) that Ashkenazi Jews developed the way they did -- intellectually or otherwise -- due to conditions in relation to -- and/or the influence upon them by-- the surrounding European culture. Neither one of these obvious explanations for Jewish "genius" is an expression of Jewish superiority; rather, European "blood" and/or culture are afforded major shares of responsibility. It's not difficult to discern that the whole argument explicating some kind of innate Jewish superiority is unsupportable. If simply being Jewish meant one was genetically "smart," what happened to the Sephardim (the most purely Semitic of Jews), who apparently are "innately" disposed to be, intellectually, "like normal people?"

Whoever they originally are, there are, in fact, some very *negative* consequences of, and evidence for, Jewish genetic separateness from the non-Jewish European gene pool over many centuries. Ashkenazi Jews have high incidences of about a dozen hereditary diseases. Referring to Tay-Sachs disease, Eve Glickman notes that the "inbreeding of Jews in Eastern Europe over generations explains the disease's bloodline." [GLICKMAN, 1997, p. 45] Citing a research article in the medical journal Nature Genetics, the Baltimore Jewish Times suggested that the insular, and fast-growing, Jewish community of Eastern Europe "reinforced genetic mutations in the originally small -- and homogenous -- population, accumulating defective genes that 'inter-breeding' might have diluted." [MARCUS, A., 1996, p. 62]

Ashkenazi Jews have a 1 in 7 chance that they carry the gene for the diseases Tay-Sachs, Canavan, Gaucher (the most common Jewish genetic disease), Niemann-Pick, or cystic fibrosis. Other genetic diseases found in the Ashkenazi population are Dystonia, Mucopolysaccharidosis 4, and Familial Dysautonomia. If both male and female partners carry the same disease gene, there is a 1 in 4 chance their child will develop the disease, and a fifty percent chance he or she will carry the gene. [GLICKMAN, 1996, p. 45] As noted in a study by the journal Nature Genetics, Jewish women of Ashkenazi descent also "have a much greater risk of developing early onset hereditary breast cancer." [PR NEWSWIRE, 4-29-96] In the early 1980s Rabbi Joseph Ekstein founded the Dor Yeshorim Committee for the Prevention of Jewish Genetic Diseases, which features testing programs for marriageable men and women in the Orthodox Chasidic community. [OSTRER, H., 1996, p. 9]

Jewish author Dan Rottenberg notes Jewish interwoven consanguinity in the late 19th century:

"In the past, Jews have married their near relatives more often than the rest of the world has done. A study in England in 1875, for example, indicated that 7.5 percent of all English Jewish marriages were among first cousins -- a proportion that was about three times as great as that among gentiles. Marriages of first cousins and even of uncles to nieces are common among Jews and quite legal according to Jewish law." [ROTTENBERG, D., 1977, p. 47]

Complicating Jewish genealogy debates even further, there are even some Jewish authors -- Alfred Lienthal, A. N. Poliak (a former professor of medieval Jewish history at Tel Aviv University), and Arthur Koestler among them -- who have published arguments that most Ashkenazis are probably not even truly racially Jewish, or at least have little Jewish genes in them, and that they are largely descended from Turkish and Slavic converts to Judaism: mostly the so-called Khazars of the eighth century. "A substantial part," suggests Koestler, "and perhaps the majority of eastern [European] Jews -- and hence of world Jewry -- might be of Khazar, and not, Semitic origin." [KOESTLER, p.17] Another Jewish scholar, Paul Wexler, has written two volumes even arguing that -- based on largely linguistic analysis -- most Ashkenazis and Sephardim are not of authentic Jewish "stock." In Wexler's view, even the Sephardim are "primarily descendants from Arabs, Berbers, and Europeans." [WEXLER, p. 1-12] In such research, Wexler follows the terrain of other Jewish scholars obsessively searching for authentic-- usually racial Jewish pedigrees by following linguistic clues.

"It is very probable," notes French Jewish scholar Maxine Rodinson, "-- and physical anthropology tends to show that this is true -- that the so-called Arab inhabitants of Palestine (a majority of whom, moreover, are people who have 'become Arabs'), have much more of the ancient 'Hebrews' blood than most of the Jews of the Diaspora." [RODINSON, p. 79]

A little known African tribe, the Lemba, can even make stronger genetic claims to being Jewish than can many European Jews. In scientific testing of DNA samples, the Lemba have been discovered to have markers on their Y chromosome that are comparable to Jews of the *kohanim* (the traditional Jewish

priest caste, a degree of Jewishness attainable, by Orthodox rules, only by birth. Common *kohanim* surnames in the Western world include Cohen, Kahn, Kaplan, Rapaport, Katz, Azoulay, and Harunoff). The Lemba, who are today mostly Christian, nonetheless believe themselves to be racially Jewish. Lemba tradition asserts that their forefathers emigrated to Yemen 2,500 years ago, later forging to Zimbabwe and South Africa. [HIRSCHBERG, P., 1999, p. 30-32]

In the medical realm, other genetic evidence about Jews in general, particularly the Ashkenazim, is contradictory. While some argue that fingerprints, enzyme markers, and other genetically-based evidence points to a common gene pool, there is also evidence that questions Jewish Ashkenazi racial lineage to Abraham. "A genetically controlled enzyme deficiency, G6PD," notes Joshua Halberstam, "is rare among both Ashkenazis and Eastern European non-Jews but common among both Mediterranean Jews and Mediterranean non-Jews. Nor do Jews appear related by blood. Blood types are variably distributed around the world, and here again Jews most closely represent their host population." [HALBERSTAM, p. 76]

If such evidence -- linguistic and genetic -- is what it obviously seems, for many people in the world who call themselves "Jews" their important hereditary connection to Abraham as members of the Chosen Race is illusory, just another in the many paradoxes of Jewish identity. Nonetheless, personal and communal conviction are powerful things. Whatever it is, the incessant obsession with the mythic, pan-Jewish self, distinct from others, endures and is well reflected in this impassioned appeal from a prominent Jewish fund-raiser, Jacob Loeb, in 1925 Chicago:

"From [a Jew's] obligation as a Jew, to Jews, there is no escape. There is no escape from his ancestry, there is no refuge from himself. His kinship with his people is deeper than he knows, deeper far than he dares acknowledge. He is shackled forever from the past from which he comes... This is a drive for Jews to carry the burden of Jews. It matters terribly that we should know -- that we should ask, one of the other, "Are you a Jew?" [LOEB, in WIRTH, p. 277]

"There is no way to stop being Jewish," says Charles Silberman, "... [because] Judaism defines itself not as a voluntary faith but an involuntary community of fate." [SILBERMAN, p. 70] Eugene Borowitz even argued in the 1970s that Jews were deluding themselves with their assimilation into American culture. Borowitz argued that Jews were wearing non-Jewish masks, deceiving themselves and others. "We are not," he wrote, "... who we say we are. The truth about us ... is that we are more fundamentally Jewish than we are willing to admit ... We have repressed an inner identity. The time has come to end this inauthenticity ... We are Jews." [BOROWITZ, p. 10]

Not all those born of Jewish descent, however, rush to the call of the Clan. Robert Moses, for example, a prominent urban planner in New York City threatened to sue the editors of the Jewish Encyclopedia if they claimed him in its pages. [SILBERMAN, p. 65] In 1930 a German refugee scientist, Karl Landsteiner,

filed an injunction against inclusion in Who's Who in American Jewry. [WHITFIELD, p. 12] Clifton Fadiman, the quintessential "Jewish intellectual" of the 1930s and 1940s, "for years refused to let Who's Who list him as Jewish." [GOLDEN, H., 1973, p. 57]

"Few cultures," writes Amos Funkenstein, "are as preoccupied with their own identity and distinction as the Jewish. It asserted and reasserted its uniqueness in every mode of creative expression, not the least in the liturgy, which includes a daily Thanksgiving to the Creator 'that he did not make us like all the nations of the land, and did not set us up like other families of the earth.'" [FUNKENSTEIN, p. 1]

In this context then (the endless avalanche of Jewish self-obsession and superiority claims at every turn through history), it is amusing to find in the pages of the journal Judaism the dredging up of a Gentile hack to do some of the difficult apologetic work of the Jewish traditional worldview for its Jewish editors. "There is," says the non-Jewish professor, Bernard Harrison, (with presumably a straight face), "built in the very structure of Judaism, what I can only call a certain epistemic modesty which I have always found both charming and admirable." [HARRISON, p. 8]