



# Separation and Its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism

*Kevin B. MacDonald, Kevin MacDonald*

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MacDonald develops a theory of anti-Semitism based on an evolutionary interpretation of social identity theory--a major approach to group conflict in contemporary social psychology. Beginning in the ancient world, anti-Semitism has existed under a variety of religious and political regimes. MacDonald explores several theoretically important common themes of anti-Semitic writings such as Jewish clannishness and cultural separatism, economic and cultural domination of gentiles, and the issue of loyalty to the wider society. Particular attention is paid to three major manifestation of Western anti-Semitism: the development of institutionalized anti-Semitism in the Roman Empire, the Iberian Inquisitions, and the phenomenon of Nazism. All of these movements exhibited a powerful gentile group cohesion in opposition to Judaism as a group strategy, and MacDonald argues that each may be analyzed as a reaction to the presence of Judaism as a highly successful group evolutionary strategy. Because of the repeated occurrence of anti-Semitism, Jews have developed a highly flexible array of strategies to minimize its effects. These include: crypsis during periods of persecution, controls on Jewish behavior likely to lead to anti-Semitism, and the manipulation of gentile attitudes toward Jews. This controversial work challenges prevailing views; students and scholars involved with evolutionary approaches to human behavior and Jewish Studies will be interested, as will social scientists and historians in general.

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