



Pathologizing dissent: Identity politics, Zionism and the ‘self-hating Jew’

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This article discusses problems with Kurt Lewin’s notion of self-hatred among Jews (Lewin, 1941/1948), and illustrates the ways in which the concept is used in identity politics. It argues that the way the notion of self-hatred is often used makes it problematic as a psychological concept because it requires that we accept particular definitions of group identities and particular political positions as central to those identities. Often, however, such issues are disputed by group members. Examination of the literature illustrates that it is rarely a straightforward decision whether those behaviours or attitudes identified as manifestations of self-hatred are best explained in this way. The function of the self-hatred concept in current debate over Israeli policy is described as an example of how arguments over identity are part of political conflict. In the case of current Middle Eastern politics, the concept of self-hatred is used by right-wing Zionists to label those who criticize policies of the current Israeli government as disloyal and pathological.

The notion of self-hatred and anti-Semitism among Jews began to be discussed by German writers such as Theodor Lessing, Fritz Wittels and Otto Weininger in the first decade of the 20th century (Baron, 1981; Gilman, 1986). This was followed by a number of German publications on the subject, culminating in a book by Lessing in 1930, *Der jüdische Selbsthass* (*Jewish self-hate*). In 1941 (republished 1948), Kurt Lewin wrote an account for an English-speaking audience. Social psychological studies of intergroup relations and stigma frequently cite Lewin as evidence that people may attempt to distance themselves from membership in devalued groups because they accept, to some degree, the negative evaluations of their group held by the majority and because these social identities are an obstacle to the pursuit of social status (e.g. Allport, 1954; Brown, 2000; Goffman, 1963; Horwitz & Rabbie, 1982; Johnson, Schaller, & Mullen, 2000; Jost & Thompson, 2000; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995). However, whilst the doll studies of Clark and Clark (1947), and studies which claim to show evidence of ‘Black self-hatred’, have been subject to much criticism of their methods and conclusions (e.g. Baldwin, Brown, & Hopkins, 1991; Banks, 1976; Cross, 1991;

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Katz & Zalk, 1974; Nobles, 1995; Owusu-Bempah & Howitt, 1999), Lewin's assertions have received less criticism in the social psychological literature (although see the historians Janik, 1987; Robertson, 1985). This article critically reviews Jewish self-hatred as a psychological concept, examining in particular the criteria used to identify its presence in individuals. I will argue that a lack of clarity over this issue means that the term is often used rhetorically to discount Jews who differ in their life-styles, interests or political positions from their accusers, and that such misapplications of the concept result from essentialized and normative definitions of Jewish identity. In describing the use of the concept in debates over Israeli policy, this article also provides an example of how psychological constructs are used in political arguments, and how definitions of social categories are used to manage both inter- and intragroup relations.

Lewin's description of self-hatred among Jews

Lewin asserted that there is a tendency for some members of underprivileged groups to display a degree of hatred towards their own group. Although his account particularly concerned Jews, self-hatred was said to be found in many underprivileged groups, such as African Americans and Polish, Italian and Greek immigrants to the USA. He suggested that self-hatred could be found at both group and individual levels. At the group level it was seen in hostility between different Jewish groups (e.g. between German and East European Jews in Europe, and between Spanish and German Jews in the USA). At the individual level, it was seen in hostility towards 'the Jews as a group, against a particular fraction of the Jews, against his own family, or against himself. It may be directed against Jewish institutions, Jewish mannerisms, Jewish language, or Jewish ideals' (Lewin, 1948, p. 187).

Lewin's paper is a theoretical account rather than a report of empirical research. Jewish self-hate, which 'is well known among Jews themselves' (p. 186), is demonstrated by the existence of hostility between Jewish groups, and in a series of anecdotes. For example, Lewin had met a Jewish refugee from Austria who defended Hitler on the basis of 'the undesirable characteristics of the German Jew' (p. 187). He pointed out that examples such as this, where self-hatred is expressed directly, are rare, and that in most cases expression is subtle; hatred is blended with other motives so it is hard in any one case to say whether it is really present. For example, he describes a Jewish atheist who had told him about the pain he felt when he saw a talith (a prayer shawl). Lewin asks, 'Have we to deal here with a form of anti-Jewish sentiment or just the great aversion of the atheist for religion?' (p. 187). He goes on, 'Does the rich Jewish merchant who refuses to contribute anything to a Jewish charity hate his own people or is he just miserly?' (p. 187).

When giving anecdotes such as these, Lewin acknowledges that the subject of the story may say they have other reasons for their behaviour besides a dislike of being Jewish, but 'there are certain facts which make one wonder' (p. 188). These facts, again anecdotal, include that the Jewish atheist does not feel the same aversion to other religious symbols, and the Jewish businessman spends lavishly on 'every non-Jewish activity' (p. 188). 'It occurs infrequently - although it does happen once in a while - that a Jewish person frankly admits that he hates to be together with Jews. Most of the people who avoid Jewish associations have "good reasons". They are so busy with non-Jewish associations that they "simply don't have the time"' (p. 187).

The most compelling part of Lewin's argument is his account of the process by which self-hatred is produced rather than the evidence that it exists. In any group there

are forces drawing people into the group (e.g. attraction to other members, agreement with the ideology of the group), and forces drawing them away (e.g. the attractiveness of other groups, the existence of disagreeable features within the group). Given a situation in which the need for status is an important determinant of behaviour, the 'member of an underprivileged group is more hampered by his group belongingness' (p. 192). As a result, some members desire to leave the group, but since the majority prevents them from leaving they are left on the periphery of the group.

In order to identify who is trying to distance themselves from the group, Lewin assumes that groups have culturally central and peripheral strata, and the 'central stratum contains those values, habits, ideas and traditions which are considered most essential and representative for the group' (p. 192). Loyal members value these central aspects more highly, and this 'chauvinism' is important to group cohesiveness. Those who would like to leave the group attempt to distance themselves from the group by rejecting Jewish values and customs. Two factors serve to aggravate this 'negative chauvinism' (p. 193). Firstly, the frustration felt by individuals who are prevented from leaving the minority group leads to aggression, and because the person is not inclined to direct this towards the majority group, who they wish to join, it is directed instead at the self or at the in-group. Secondly, Lewin assumes that members of minority groups tend to accept the values of majority groups, and therefore 'he sees things Jewish with the eyes of the unfriendly majority' (p. 198).

Lewin's account is similar in many ways to more recent social psychological literature on social identity. The idea of a motivated disidentification from negatively evaluated categories is found in many taxonomies of identity management strategies (e.g. Allport, 1954; Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; Goffman, 1963; Taylor & McKirnan, 1984), where the distinction between collective action and social/individual mobility is made. The similarities to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) are apparent, particularly the ideas of positive and negative social identities, social mobility, and permeability of boundaries (see Ellemers, 1993; Lalonde & Silverman, 1994; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Tajfel and Turner (1979) write, for example, 'Tendencies to dissociate oneself psychologically from fellow members of low prestige categories are known to many of us from everyday experience' (p. 42). A recent and more subtle development is the idea of categorization threat (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999), in which a person is assumed to react against being categorized in a way they judge irrelevant in the situation. In addition, the idea that minority groups might take on the attitudes of the majority towards themselves is described in contemporary social psychology variously as self-stigmatization, internalized oppression, and false consciousness.

Problems with Lewin's account

Lewin acknowledged that he had rarely come across direct expressions of self-hatred among Jews. For the most part he found it in behaviours in which it was 'indirect, undercover' (p. 187). That is, the behaviours which Lewin singled out were not unequivocal rejections of Jewish identity, nor were they necessarily anti-Semitic. The Jews he identified were taking part in mainstream activities and associations, those who had negative attitudes to particular groups of Jews other than their own, those who did not assert their Jewish identities in the public forum, those who did not support the organizations that Lewin favoured, and young Jews who were leaving old customs

behind, or who were questioning or criticizing aspects of Jewish culture. In all such cases, however, there are a variety of more mundane and less damning explanations for the person's behaviour.

The problem with Lewin's identification of who is displaying self-hate arises because of two sets of normative assumptions: (1) that there is a correct manner and degree to which people should express their Jewish identities in public, and (2) that there is a set of core values and institutions which one should favour. The first set of assumptions is seen in his assertion (discussed below) that hostility between groups of Jews is evidence of self-hate, an interpretation that can only be made if one assumes that a superordinate Jewish identity should take precedence over other groupings of Jews. It is also found in a different form in an earlier article (Lewin, 1940/1948) in which he stated that there are three groups of Jews, those who overemphasize their Jewish identity, those who behave normally, and those who underemphasize their Jewish identity. Lewin essentializes Jewish identity, assuming that because it is or should naturally be a primary identity, what he calls 'under-emphasis' is the result of a purposeful rejection (see Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000, for a discussion of naturalness and entitativity as different aspects of category essentialism). However, Jewish identity might not be asserted for other reasons. Firstly, people may not emphasize their membership of groups which are discriminated against in order to avoid prejudice; this might be a conscious, pragmatic choice taken by people who are privately committed to their Jewish identity. Novick (1999), for example, describes how in the USA many leaders of Jewish organizations in the 1930s did not campaign more vociferously for increased Jewish immigration because they feared an anti-Semitic backlash. Secondly, Jewish identity might not be asserted simply because other identities seem more relevant at the time. The extent to which one expresses or acts upon one's Jewish identity will depend on the competing categorizations and identities that are relevant in the particular context (an issue which is acknowledged elsewhere by Lewin, 1935/1948), the degree to which the person is physically and culturally different from others in their communities, as well as a host of individual differences in family background, upbringing, religious belief, and politics. These explanations can be offered without supposing a motivated flight from Jewish identity. This is particularly the case when we consider the effects of anti-Semitism, which many commentators have argued has historically strengthened the identification of Jews as a separate group, both from without and within (e.g. Deutscher, 1968; Herzl, 1896, 1988; Sartre, 1948). In increasingly secular times, a decline in anti-Semitism can therefore result in a decline in Jewish identity (Novick, 1999).

The second set of assumptions concern Lewin's suggestion that there is a set of core values and institutions to Jewish identity, and those who do not support them are purposefully rejecting their Jewish identities. However, people may decide not to follow old customs or ascribe to beliefs for many reasons: because of a more general secularization in Western societies (see Pollak, 1987); because previously close-knit communities (such as the ghettos of Eastern Europe) became dispersed through urbanization or emigration (Goldstein, 1995); because younger generations were more critical of the aspirations or values of an older generation (Diller, 1980); or because large-scale immigration meant that people were often born into a different country or society from their parents. To adopt the practices of the majority culture, to take part in its institutions, or to be part of broader social tides does not necessarily imply a hatred of one's ancestral culture (see Cross, 1991, for this point in relation to 'Black self-hatred'). In order to show that there really was self-hatred at work, it would be necessary to show, among other things, that Jews were rejecting the customs, beliefs or associations of

previous generations to a greater extent than people of Catholic or Protestant background. Lewin did not attempt to do this. His claim was, rather, that there is a correct way of being a Jew, and people who deviate from this are therefore distancing themselves from their Jewish identity. But because a person's level of identification as a Jew is assumed from their behaviour in relation to a set of core values, who is and is not exhibiting self-hate depends on how the commentator represents the category, what they define as its essential properties, institutions and political positions, and what level of public identification they judge to be correct. This means that the line between self-hatred and what Lewin labels 'sound self-criticism' is problematic, since these issues are often disputed within social categories (Billig, 1987; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Reicher, Hopkins, & Condor, 1997; Sani & Reicher, 1998, 2000; Staub, 1997). Indeed, definitions of Jewish identity have changed over time and have been the subject of much debate amongst Jews themselves. Examples include the changes in the centrality and meaning of the Holocaust for Jewish identity in the last half of the 20th century (Novick, 1999), the debates between spiritual, religious, and political Zionists over the nature of the Jews (Hertzberg, 1959), and the controversy of Zionism and its changing relation to Jewish identity over the last century (Wheatcroft, 1996). In two earlier papers, Lewin (1939/1948, 1940/1948) himself wrote about the difficulties in defining Jewish identity, particularly for those Jews from the mid-western USA who did not have a large Jewish community around them and who did not differ tangibly from non-Jews: 'There are, I think, few chores more bewildering than that of determining positively the character of the Jewish group . . . No wonder many Jews are uncertain what it means to belong to the Jewish group' (Lewin, 1940/1948, p. 180). Lewin suggests that these Jews may have few religious, physical or cultural similarities with Jews from New York or other parts of the world, and that their only strongly shared characteristic was the interdependence of fate which resulted from anti-Semitism (this point is also made by Deutscher, 1968). Indeed, this was the idea Lewin thought should be used to rally American Jewry in support of those suffering under Hitler and against the anti-Semitism found in the USA in the 1930s.

Self-hatred in historical context

Gilman (1986) presents a detailed historical examination of the expression of anti-Semitism among Jewish writers in Germany from the 13th to the 20th century. Jews were persecuted throughout this period, and there were mass expulsions, massacres and torture across Europe and North Africa (Gilbert, 1978). From the 13th to the 16th century in Western Europe there was considerable pressure from the Christian authorities for Jews to convert, either voluntarily or by force. Gilman describes the writings of a number of converted or 'baptised Jews' (often priests or monks) which explicitly criticize Jews. Various the Jews are described as deceitful, stubborn, vindictive, closed-minded, blind to the truth of Jesus Christ, and materialistic, beliefs that reflected dominant Christian views. For example, Josef Pfefferkorn, who was born a Jew in Nuremberg but became a Dominican monk, wrote a pamphlet in 1509 that outlined the immorality of 'Jewesses', condemned Jewish usury and warned that Jewish doctors were poisoning Christians. 'After I converted together with my wife and children from the Jewish error to the Christian faith, I looked within myself to understand why the Jews continue to hold and disseminate their evil, destructive, perverted ways' (cited in Gilman, 1986, p. 45). In a later pamphlet he wrote, 'One must

drive the old Jews out like dirty dogs and baptize the young children . . . ' (cited in Gilman, 1986, p. 54).

Gilman describes his book as a study of 'how Jews see the dominant society seeing them and how they project their anxiety about this manner of being seen onto other Jews as a means of externalising their own status anxiety' (p. 11). The examples he describes certainly seem to equate to Lewin's description of self-hatred, although analysis of the psychological processes of those dead for centuries is of course rather difficult (Janik, 1987). Some of these writers, particularly those converts from Medieval times, were clearly attempting to escape being identified as Jews in the public domain, espoused anti-Semitic views, and lived in societies where being Jewish was to be in danger (see Robertson, 1985, for further examples). These, however, are rather extreme examples. Many of the later writers Gilman discusses, although criticizing other groups of Jews, were clearly not disowning their own Jewish identity. Indeed, as Gilman points out, many of the writers of the 18th to the 20th century were distinguishing between those they considered 'good' Jews, invariably those acculturated, sophisticated German Jews, and 'bad' Jews from the Eastern European countries who were poorer, spoke Yiddish or heavily accented German, and who were less a part of mainstream German life (see also Gay, 1978; Robertson, 1985; Weitzmann, 1987).

Gilman makes several assumptions which are problematic. The first is similar to Lewin's assertion that there are core values that one must adhere to: he suggests that, for those writers who have publicly criticized aspects of Jewish culture, involvement in progressive movements and literary forms is in itself an indication that one is trying to avoid identification as a Jew. Gilman depicts Jews who were on the forefront of the Enlightenment (e.g. Moses Mendelssohn) as adopting progressive literary forms and discourses in order to escape the previous discursive forms associated with the Jews (either the language, the accent, the mode of argument, or the subject matter). Contrast this with how we might understand Christian writers' participation in such movements - Enlightenment writers who rejected tradition, superstition or religious values criticized Christian practice and belief, but are not labelled self-hating Christians. The problem that identity politics poses for progressive Jews is that any movement or form they adopt in opposition to establishment forms is unlikely to be a predominantly Jewish phenomenon. Simple demographics dictate that they will be allied with Gentiles (for examples of this in German culture at the end of the 19th century see Gay, 1978). This means, however, that there is always the potential to be labelled disloyal.

The second assumption is that when a person rejects or criticizes a particular aspect of an identity they are criticizing that identity *per se* (see Andrews, 1997; Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999; Staub, 1997, for a similar point in relation to the concept of patriotism). Those who accuse others of being self-haters search for examples of when they have criticized Jews or Judaism but ignore examples of when those they criticize have shown they value being a Jew. A good example is Freud, who was accused by Vogel (1975) of rejecting his Jewish identity. Vogel's accusation is based on Freud's analysis of Judaism in the book *Moses and monotheism* (1938), because he promoted psychoanalysis in a way that minimized the contribution of Jews to its development, and because of his hostility to Zionism. However, Billig (Billig, 1997; see also Gay, 1978; Le Rider, 1993) has described how Freud did not deny his Jewish identity, indeed as anti-Semitism increased in Vienna, so did his identification as a (secular) Jew. Billig also describes how Freud recognized that if psychoanalysis became identified as a Jewish discipline it would not be treated seriously in an anti-Semitic culture.

Hostility between Jews

Lewin, and other writers on Jewish self-hatred (e.g. Booker, 1991; Gay, 1978; Gilman, 1986; Patai, 1977; Robertson, 1985), make much of the conflict between different Jewish groups, particularly those who had come into contact with each other as a result of immigration. Examples include the hostility of assimilated German Jews to newly-arrived Eastern Jews at the beginning of the 20th century, and the reactions of different groups of Jews in the USA to each other as successive waves of immigration occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries from Europe. These accounts suggest that criticizing other Jews, who were in many cases culturally, religiously, and linguistically very different (Booker, 1991; Weitzmann, 1987), either reveals hatred of one's own Jewish origins and/or a desire to integrate into mainstream society. The normative assumption here is that the Jews are a salient superordinate category and that this is a primary identity for the Jews. This is therefore the level of categorization on which the analyst must base their interpretation and the individual should base their identity. Failure to identify in this way is interpreted as active rejection. Gay (1978), for example, describes the Jews of Germany before the Second World War as engaging in a 'self-deluding attempt to escape their destiny as a people' (p. 186). However, although the Holocaust makes this destiny appear obvious with hindsight, it should be noted that it was the Nazis and other anti-Semites who imposed a common destiny on the Jews of Germany. The distinction between a psychological group and a sociological group is important here: for many secular Jews before this, the Jews were not obviously a single people. Bauman (1989), for example, describes how the established Jews of Nazi-occupied Western Europe did not believe they would be treated in the same way as the Eastern Jews, because of the great cultural and political differences between them.

Accounts of self-hate which use hostility between groups of Jews as evidence, then, ignore important differences in identity based on class, culture, religious outlook, and education between those labelled self-haters and those they criticize. Gay (1978), for example, describes the great differences between the assimilated Jews of Berlin and the Eastern European immigrants (the *Ostjuden*) in the early 20th century, which produced an 'intermittent civil war' (p. 185) between the different Jewish communities. It seems quite reasonable that people may identify more closely with smaller categories of Jews than with the superordinate category that Lewin assumed should be salient. In-groups and out-groups are phenomena that do not only occur at one level of categorization, as self-categorization theory has pointed out (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Just as they can be salient at the level of Jew/Gentile, they can be salient at the level of Russian/German Jew, Orthodox/Secular Jew, Zionist/Anti-Zionist, or in the case of the USA, newly arrived Eastern European Jews as opposed to the settled Jews of Sephardic, Austrian or German origin. These are not pathological levels of categorization and do not require a pathological identity to make them salient. In addition, in any category there are some subgroups who believe they are better examples of the group, who behave better than others, or who embody the principles of the group more (e.g. Sani & Reicher, 1998, 2000). To criticize a subgroup does not imply a criticism of the superordinate category. Indeed, the accusations of the Jewish writers described by Gilman are often similar to those of commentators throughout history who find fault with the morals, manners, superstitions, or language of the poor of their own countries (e.g. the many foolish characters with heavy 'Mockney' accents in British adverts and television comedies). This is particularly noticeable in the distaste of assimilated German Jews in the 19th century for Yiddish.

This is not to deny that there were Jews who lived in anti-Semitic cultures who accepted and/or espoused anti-Semitic stereotypes; the literature is full of such examples. The question of when this amounts to self-hate is not easy to assess, however, although it may be more appropriate in cultures which had both widespread and dangerous anti-Semitism and in which boundaries between Jews and Gentiles were dissolving, such as German culture at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (see Le Rider, 1993, for a description of the dilemma facing Viennese Jews in the 1880s when political anti-Semitism began to develop). Names such as Otto Weininger, Karl Kraus, and Josef Pfefferkorn are notable for the generality and harshness of their accusations against Jews and in their active disavowals of Jewish identity (examples can be seen in Gay, 1978; Gilman, 1986; Le Rider, 1993; Robertson, 1985). Their statements seem consistently dangerous and damning of all Jews and there is little evidence that they also valued aspects of being a Jew. There is a large grey area, however, where we should be hesitant about assuming that negative statements about other Jews represent self-hatred. Criticism of subgroups of Jews which drew on anti-Semitic rhetoric were common in 19th and 20th century arguments over Jewish identity, and have been used variously to argue for and against the Enlightenment, for and against Zionism, for revolutionary socialism, for Orthodoxy, for assimilation, and for immigration restrictions. Whether the use of such stereotypes is branded self-hate usually depends on whether the commentator agrees with the wider argument. For example, Zionism promoted the idea of the 'strong Jew' in explicit contrast to a number of unfavourable characteristics that Jews were felt to have acquired from living in anti-Semitic cultures (see Baron, 1981; Elon, 1975; Robertson, 1985; Stewart, 1981, for examples). Because of the similarities between their rhetoric and that of the anti-Semites, the early Zionists were sometimes accused of self-hatred (see Baron, 1981; Gilman, 1986). Even Theodor Herzl was described as being a self-hating Jew for an article he wrote entitled 'Mauschel' (Kike), which severely criticized a section of the Jewish community for, among other things, being 'unspeakably mean and repellent' (Herzl, 1897, cited in Elon, 1975, pp. 251-252). His critic was Karl Kraus, who has himself been branded a self-hating Jew (Gilman, 1986; Le Rider, 1993; Robertson, 1985).

The logical problems of explaining hostility between Jews as the result of self-hatred can be illustrated if a further step is taken. Another historical Western stereotype of Jews, found in the 19th and early 20th centuries, was that they were more prone to suffer from physical and mental illness (Gilman, 1986; Le Rider, 1993). Gilman describes how the notion of self-hatred, as a psychopathological complex, developed partly in order to counter suggestions that this supposed predisposition was due to inbreeding. The notion of self-hatred, then, is based on the stereotype that Jews are prone to mental illness, and can therefore be seen as an example of itself. Within the logic of the concept, those who accuse others of being self-hating Jews may themselves be self-hating Jews. Indeed, this is Gilman's argument. He sees those who accuse others of self-hatred as suffering the same identity conflict as the Enlightenment writers who located the negative aspects of Jewish identity in Eastern Jews; they also create the 'good Jew'/'bad Jew' dichotomy, except now the latter are those labelled self-hating.

In summary, a range of behaviours has been identified in the literature on self-hate which could be explained in other ways. Hostility between Jewish groups, the repetition of unfavourable stereotypes, and low levels of public identification are not in themselves evidence of self-hate unless we make essentialist assumptions about a superordinate Jewish identity and discount other bases of categorization and explanations of public behaviour. A similar problem is found in the suggestion that

there is a set of core values against which a person's identification as a Jew can be judged. The problem here is the normative assumption about what the content of a Jewish identity should be.

Self-hatred and identity politics

Given the problems of the concept as a description of identity, it is worth stepping outside the question of who is or is not exhibiting self-hate and looking instead at what is being accomplished by making such a claim in a debate. Although Lewin's article was republished in the book *Resolving social conflicts: Selected papers on group dynamics* (1948), which was intended for a social psychological audience, the original 1941 article was in the journal *Contemporary Jewish Record*, and was, in part, an exhortation to Jews to identify more strongly with the group. His motivations were understandable. Identity politics was an important matter for the Jews at the time, and Lewin himself had emigrated from Germany in 1933 after Hitler had come to power (Morrow, 1969). Lewin's description of self-hatred is clearly a judgment about disloyalty and is a rallying call to American Jews. To dissent, to criticize the group or to focus on its internal differences, weakens it, and, particularly given the historical context in which he was writing, where Jews were discriminated against in America and murdered in Europe, it endangers the group: 'It is a well-known fact that the task of organizing a group which is economically or otherwise underprivileged is seriously hampered by those members whose real goal is to leave the group rather than promote it' (Lewin, 1948, p. 195). In the article, Lewin explicitly criticized leaders of the American Jewish community for failing to support Jewish interests and organizations adequately in the public arena. This occurs in spite of 'the disastrous consequences which this policy had for the Jews in Germany' (p. 197). Lewin concluded his paper on self-hatred by suggesting that Jews should be asked to sacrifice more for the group.

The term *self-hate* is still commonly used in the Jewish press. In a similar way to Lewin's article, it is used to criticize Jews who behave in ways the commentator believes is harmful to the interests of the group, to enforce a particular definition of the group by suggesting that some institutions or political positions are central to Jewish identity, and to encourage Jews to identify more strongly as Jews. Searches of the websites of *The Jewish Week* (New York) and *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel) reveal its use in several contexts: to criticize a performer or artist who portrays Jews negatively; as a short-hand description of supposed psychological conflict in fictional characters; in articles about the erosion of tradition (e.g. marrying out and circumcision); and to discount Jews who criticize Israeli policies or particular Jewish practices. Two books on the subject of Jewish self-hatred have been published in the last 20 years, Gilman's historical study and Janice Booker's *The Jewish American princess and other myths: The many faces of Jewish self-hatred* (1991). In this book she discusses Jewish stereotypes (e.g. the Jewish mother as domineering, the young Jewish woman ('princess') as selfish and pampered, the Jewish businessman as avaricious) and criticizes artists and performers who draw on these caricatures or who portray Jewish characters in other negative ways (e.g. Philip Roth, Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Joan Rivers, Lenny Bruce). For Booker, these Jewish writers and performers have absorbed anti-Semitic stereotypes and then presented them back to the general public, providing more ammunition for the anti-Semites. Her book also criticizes feminists, left-wing activists, and opponents of Israeli policies for not recognizing the Jews as an oppressed group struggling for nationhood.

Although Booker explains these behaviours using Lewin's social psychological analysis (as well as 'identification with the aggressor' — Sarnoff, 1951), she identifies self-hatred not when the processes supposedly underlying it are found, but when a person's actions are perceived to be harmful to her idea of the interests of the group (for a similar explanation of a further range of behaviours see Kalmar, 1993). Booker's book can be distilled into a set of rules, all aimed at encouraging group consciousness and distinctiveness: do not portray Jewish characters in negative ways; do not 'bash' Israel; if you're a left-winger, talk about the Holocaust and include the Jews as one of the oppressed peoples; if you're a feminist, do not single out Jewish culture for criticism; do not reject traditions or particular aspects of the culture; do not become a humanist; overcome cultural differences with other Jewish groups and focus on the superordinate category; beware of assimilation — maintain a boundary with the non-Jewish culture. For Booker, the political positions that are synonymous with Jewish identity are self-evident.

In this type of argument, the self-hatred concept has several benefits. It implicitly asserts that the writer's definition of Jewish identity is correct and natural, and at the same time provides a set of rules governing group members' behaviour. It labels the opinions or behaviours it targets as received, as the simple, uncritical absorption of attitudes from a powerful and determining majority culture. The attitudes themselves are therefore not the result of critical analysis. The concept also says something about those it is directed at. On the one hand they have succumbed to the might of the oppressor, and their disloyalty is in part the result of weakness. This counters the alternative judgment of the target, that they are showing independence and strength through criticizing the group. On the other hand, the attitude is presented as the expression of psychopathology, and therefore not worthy of serious consideration. In Janik's (1987) terms, describing a position as self-hating is 'a way of rejecting an argument without examining its merits' (p. 85), and is a type of 'psychologization', which has been identified as potentially reducing the power of minority opinions in studies of social influence (Mugny & Perez, 1987; Papastamou, 1986).

The novelist Philip Roth (1975), who has regularly been accused of being a self-hating Jew for the Jewish characters in his novels, defends himself in a way which reveals Booker's analysis as simply one of a number of possible positions with regard to the politics of Jewish identity. Roth points out that novels deal with human dilemmas and weaknesses whatever the religion, race or culture of their characters, since these are facts in the life of all groups. Those who would like him to portray only positive Jewish characters for fear of fuelling anti-Semitic stereotypes are adopting a weak, defensive, and reactive position with regard to their Jewish identities. In response to one such critic, he writes, 'For what he is suggesting is that some subjects must not be written about, or brought to public attention, because it is possible for them to be misunderstood by people with weak minds or malicious instincts. Thus he consents to put the malicious and the weak-minded in a position of determining the level at which open communication on these subjects will take place. This is not fighting anti-Semitism but submitting to it: that is, submitting to a restriction of consciousness as well as communication because being conscious and being candid are too risky' (Roth, 1975, p. 163). In this account, it is Roth's response to anti-Semitism which is the stronger. His response to the critic's suggestion that he had earned the gratitude of those whose ideas of the Jews led to the murder of 'six million', is '... the death of all those Jews seems to have taught my correspondent, a rabbi and a teacher, little more than to be discreet, to be foxy, to say this but not that. It has taught him nothing other than how to remain a victim in a country where he does not have to live like one if he chooses. How pathetic.

And what an insult to the dead. Imagine: sitting in New York in the 1960s and piously summoning up the “six million” to justify one’s timidity’ (p. 165).

Jewish self-hatred and Zionism

Currently, it is in debates over Israel that the idea of self-hate is perhaps most often found. In these debates the accusation is used by right-wing Zionists to assert that Zionism and/or support for Israel is a core element of Jewish identity. Jewish criticism of Israeli policy is therefore considered a turning away from Jewish identity itself. To understand this more fully, the development of political Zionism will be briefly described.

As a result of continued persecution and discriminatory laws in many countries around the world, a number of organizations in the 19th century began promoting the idea of organized Jewish settlement in Palestine (Gilbert, 1978). In 1896, Theodor Herzl published *The Jewish State*, which provided a practical programme for how it could be achieved, and followed this by organizing the first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897. Herzl argued that despite the best attempts of Jews to be good citizens in the countries in which they lived, they were never fully accepted. Jews were still persecuted, particularly in Russia, where riots, expulsions and murders had regularly occurred. Even in more tolerant countries anti-Semitism was a part of mainstream life. The Zionist Congress adopted the Basle Programme, which stated that the task of Zionism was to secure a publicly recognized home for the Jews in Palestine (Gilbert, 1978, p. 51). In order to achieve this, a number of aims, such as the encouragement of Jewish workers to settle in Palestine, were decided upon. A further declared aim was that Zionism should ‘Dedicate itself to strengthening Jewish consciousness and national feeling’ (Elon, 1975; Gilbert, 1978; Stewart, 1981).

According to Gilman, the concept of self-hatred developed at a similar time to political Zionism. Indeed they were often linked. This is hardly surprising, since Zionism was an important part of the vigorous debates that were occurring amongst Jews at the time about anti-Semitism, assimilation and Jewish identity. Herzl used the phrase ‘anti-Semite of Jewish origin’ (1896/1988, p. 81) to describe assimilated Jews who might wish to remain in their home countries while at the same time encouraging the Jewish proletariat to emigrate. Theodor Lessing, whose book on Jewish self-hatred, published in 1933, is the only academic study cited by Lewin, and is described by Gilman as ‘the paradigmatic study’ (p. 300), was a Zionist (Baron, 1981). Gilman (1986) describes German articles on self-hatred by writers such as Robert Weltsch, Theodor Lessing, and Hans Kohn in the 1920s and 1930s, all of whom used the concept to argue that assimilation was corrupting for the Jews, could only produce self-hatred, and that the solution for Jews was to assert their Jewish identity, primarily through the nationalist project. Lewin was also a Zionist, and spent several years gathering a group of sponsors in the USA to try to fund a Psychological Institute at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Morrow, 1969). Although he did not use the 1941 article on self-hate to argue for Zionism, it is reasonable to assume he was aware of these arguments. For example, Max Nordau, a close associate of Herzl in the development of political Zionism, used the opening speech at the first Zionist Congress to argue that assimilation resulted in a ‘spiritual misery’ for the Jews. This extract anticipates almost perfectly Lewin’s later formulation of the group dynamics leading to self-hate:

Such is the contemporary situation of the emancipated Jew in western Europe. He has abandoned his specifically Jewish character, yet the nations do not accept him as part of their national communities. He flees from his Jewish fellow, because anti-Semitism has taught him, too, to be contemptuous of them, but his gentile compatriots repulse him as he attempts to associate with them . . . he has lost his connection with other Jews . . . His best powers are dissipated in suppressing and destroying, or at least the difficulty of concealing his true character . . . he has become a cripple within, and a counterfeit person without, so that like everything unreal, he is ridiculous and hateful to all men of high standards (Nordau, 1897, in Hertzberg, 1959, p. 239).

Just as nationalism in general created problems for the Diaspora, the Diaspora created a problem for the new Jewish nationalism – for over two thousand years the Jews had been scattered throughout the world, and had formed distinct communities depending on the countries in which they lived. The differences between these communities are reflected in the attitudes that different groups of Jews had towards each other (see Gay, 1978; Gilman, 1986; Weitzmann, 1987). The nationalist movement required that such differences be minimized, and the Jews represent themselves as sharing a single identity (see Billig, 1995; Hobsbawn, 1992, for this point in relation to nationalism in general). Although the early Zionist movement had supporters around the world, it was endorsed more by Eastern European Jews, where persecution was greatest at the turn of the 19th century, than by those living in Western Europe (Elon, 1975), the majority of whom opposed the idea of a Jewish state (for a detailed description of this, see Wheatcroft, 1996). There were many reasons why this idea was opposed, the primary one being that there was already a long-established Arab population living in Palestine. Jewish anti-Zionists had additional reasons for rejecting Jewish nationalism. Many felt strong attachments to their existing nationalities and argued for assimilation, believing that it was not impossible to be both a Jew and, for example, an Englishman, a Frenchman or a German (Gay, 1978; Weitzmann, 1987). They also feared that Zionism would only increase anti-Semitism. Others, notably those Jews who played a major role in the revolutionary socialist movements, favoured a more general secularization which would diminish the importance of all religions and nationalisms for identity and social organization (Deutscher, 1968; Gilbert, 1978; Pollak, 1987). Many prominent rabbis argued that Zionism was not consonant with the Holy Scriptures (Elon, 1975; Wheatcroft, 1996). A further argument of Jewish anti-Zionists was that the Jews were not a homogeneous people. In 1915, for example, a Jewish Minister in the British Cabinet, Edwin Montagu, wrote in a memo opposing the setting up of a Jewish state that there was ‘no Jewish race now as a homogenous whole . . . It is quite obvious that the Jews in Great Britain are as remote from the Jews in Morocco or the black Jews in Cochin as the Christian Englishman is from the Moor or the Hindoo’ (cited in Gilbert, 1978, p. 84; for other examples see Gilman, 1986; Wheatcroft, 1996).

Herzl himself agreed with this, arguing that what bound the Jews together was not necessarily that they themselves identified strongly as Jews (although this would come), nor was it on the basis of a shared religion (since many Jews including Herzl did not practice Judaism), nor was it on the basis of being a single race, but that they were identified by non-Jews, and in particular by the forces of anti-Semitism, as distinct (Elon, 1975; Stewart, 1981). For Herzl, the Jews were ‘one people – our enemies have made us one without our consent . . . Distress brings us together, and, thus united, we suddenly discover our strength’ (Herzl, 1988/1896, p. 92). As described above, Lewin made the same point using the phrase ‘interdependence of fate’ (Deutscher, 1968; Sartre, 1948, also make this suggestion).

As well as attempting to foster a single national consciousness in such a disparate social category, the Zionists had to present themselves as the genuine voice of the Jews. To achieve this, those who opposed Zionism were dismissed as assimilated Jews, on the peripheries of the group, who were no longer representative of Jewish interests. Chaim Weizman, the first president of Israel and one of those involved in convincing the British government to endorse the Balfour Declaration, wrote in a memo to the War Cabinet in 1917 that the anti-nationalists were 'a small minority of so-called assimilated cosmopolitan Jews, most belonging to haute finance, who have lost contact with the development of Jewish life and ideas' (cited in Gilbert, 1978, p. 101). Herzl made the same point: 'Hence, if all or any of the French Jews protest against this scheme on account of their own "assimilation", my answer is simple: The whole thing does not concern them at all. They are Jewish Frenchmen, well and good! This is a private affair for the Jews alone' (1896/1988, p. 80). In these arguments, the authentic voice of the Jews is the separatist.

Israel and the self-hating Jew

Zionism has always been a controversial movement because the territory in which the Jewish homeland was to be established already had a population, a majority of which were Arabs. Many political battles were fought in the first half of the 20th century, among them to persuade the British government to declare their support for a Jewish home in Palestine (the Balfour Declaration), and after the British Mandate was established to fight against controls on Jewish immigration and against the establishment of a local representative authority in Palestine until such a time as the Jews formed the majority. The continued persecution of the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, the Holocaust, and the reluctance of many Western countries to increase Jewish immigration, ensured that the fight for a national homeland for the Jews remained an important political issue. Now, over 50 years since the foundation of Israel, the continuing bloody conflict with the Palestinians over claims to the land has ensured that Zionism is still a source of political conflict and the relation of Israel to Jewish identity remains controversial.

It should be no surprise, then, to find the notion of Jewish self-hatred frequently used in debate over Israeli policy. Gilman, who rejects the concept as meaningful for contemporary American writers, believing it to be more appropriate to pre-Holocaust German culture, suggests that 'one of the most recent forms of Jewish self-hatred is the virulent Jewish opposition to the existence of the State of Israel' (1986, p. 391). Similarly, for Booker self-hatred is a fundamental explanation for why Jews might criticize Israel: 'While one may argue that these issues are only political, it is important to consider the component of Jewish self-hate that exists in the left-directed anti-Israel slant . . .' (1991, pp. 96-97). This statement can only be understood if one accepts the prior assumption that, 'It is a short step from a generalized anti-Zionism to anti-Semitism' (p. 96). The logic of this argument is as follows: Zionism is a core value of Jewish identity. Criticism of Israel is, therefore, anti-Semitism (Chomsky, 1989, provides further examples of this, describing this equation as an attempt to 'exploit anti-racist sentiment for political ends' [p. 316]). Jewish criticism of Israel must then be the result of the internalization of anti-Semitism. However, although Booker accepts on the one hand 'a large segment of American Jewish life who express a legitimate concern about Israeli

positions' (p. 99), she distinguishes this from those Jews who express consistent criticism. Exactly what counts as 'legitimate concern' is up to the author.

The equation of support for Zionism in general, or the policies of the Israeli government in particular, with Jewish identity is of course extremely controversial given the relatively recent history of political Zionism. There are many Jewish groups, both Zionist and anti-Zionist, which are critical of Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. Examples include Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK), Gush Shalom (Israel), Women in Black (Israel), the Tikkun community (USA), Rabbinical Students for a Just Peace (USA), Jews Against the Occupation (USA), Brit Tzedek (USA), Not In My Name (USA), the Yesh Gvul 'refusenicks' (Israeli army reservists who have refused to serve in the occupied territories), and the Orthodox sect Naturei Karta (for an introduction to the many organizations comprising the Israeli peace movement see Kaminer, 1996). For these groups, Jewish identity is not consonant with the policies of the current Israeli government, but is affirmed by opposition: 'Jewish opponents of Sharon's policies are affirming the highest values of their religion when they conclude that being pro-Israel today requires persuading Israel to end the occupation and break the cycle of violence on both sides' (Brass, 2002, p. 28; for a similar sentiment see Klaushofer, 2002). Gerald Kaufman, Labour MP (UK) and self-proclaimed lifelong Zionist, who has himself been accused of being a self-hating Jew for his criticism of Israeli policy, makes the same case: 'It is time to remind Sharon that the star of David belongs to all Jews, not to his repulsive Government. His actions are staining the star of David with blood. The Jewish people, whose gifts to civilized discourse include Einstein and Epstein, Mendelssohn and Mahler, Sergei Eisenstein and Billy Wilder, are now symbolized throughout the world by the blustering bully Ariel Sharon, a war criminal implicated in the murder of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila camps and now involved in killing Palestinians once again' (Speech to House of Commons, April 16, 2002).

The existence of Jews who criticize Israel might call into question the assertion that Jewish identity is synonymous with the hawkish Zionism of the current (2003) Israeli government. Bar-Tal (1997) has observed that one of the consequences of the monopolization of patriotism is delegitimization of those who have differing views on the interests of the nation (see also Andrews, 1997). The accusation of self-hatred is an example of this process, since it suggests that critics of Israel are pathological and unrepresentative of Jewish identity. For example, the writer Jacques Givet (1979), in a polemic on those who oppose Zionism, states that such people are 'the rejects and the dross of a community undergoing a transformation, a community of which they are very far from being representative' (p. 10). Describing one's opponents as unrepresentative of the group has been identified elsewhere as a feature of political argument (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Thus 'The behaviour of anti-Zionist Jews clearly reveals a rejection of themselves as Jews and an unconscious acquiescence in the image which their enemies seek to project of them. The process is psychologically understandable but is a form of political defeatism' (p. 53). Givet uses Lewin's account to explain why Jews might be anti-Zionists: 'In all minority communities, certain individuals come to see themselves through the eyes of the majority and make desperate efforts to avoid identification with a disagreeable image' (p. 54). The use of a psychological explanation for Jewish anti-Zionism is a conscious one by Givet, who suggests that it offers 'more solid' grounds for his analysis than if he were to explain these as political choices.

Further examples from *The Jerusalem Post* (a popular right-of-centre paper in Israel) give a flavour of how this concept is used, particularly by those on the right-wing of Zionist politics. In the first case, the concept is directed at those Jews who criticize

particular actions of the Israeli government, such as military operations and support for the construction of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli peace group Gush Shalom, for example, which organized a boycott of goods produced by settlements in the Occupied Territories, were described as suffering from Jewish self-hate by a local Council spokesman, who said: 'They run to the goyim to turn them against Israel. They're the little Jew-boys that cooperate with the overseer. It gives legitimacy to anti-Semitism. The anti-Semites say, "hey, we can say what we want about Israel, even the Jews do it"' (Arnold, 1999). In 1992 Ariel Sharon, the defence minister during the 1982 massacre of Palestinian civilians at Sabra and Shatilla and the Likud prime minister at the time of writing this article, wrote a piece in the *Jerusalem Post* describing the Jewish left-wing who criticized the invasion of Lebanon as 'consumed by self-hate and the tendency to kowtow to the enemy, and the Arab nationalist parties' (Sharon, 1992).

Self-hatred is also used to reject those Jews who support peace initiatives that include an independent Palestinian authority or state (for further examples phrased in terms of patriotism, see Bar-Tal, 1997). In another article, this time criticizing the then Labour government for their participation in the Oslo peace process and for accepting the idea of an independent Palestinian Authority, Sharon writes, 'But history marches on. Terrible self-hate engulfs us. The terrorist organization's flag is unfurled in Tel Aviv's Malchei Yisrael Square. We plead with Arafat by phone, dispatch couriers post-haste. Our leaders talk to Arafat about disarming Jews and dismantling Jewish settlements' (Sharon, 1994; for a discussion of the attempts of the Israeli right-wing to delegitimize Prime Minister Rabin during the Oslo negotiations see Bar-Tal & Vertzberger, 1997). In another article in the paper in 2001, the columnist Uri Dan describes, 'Jews who have been infected with the malady of self-hate for a long time. In their blindness they are the first to adopt the sick equation that they sold to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat: freezing of settlements in return for the cessation of terrorism' (Dan, 2001).

Another context in which it is used is in response to Jews who stress that Palestinians have suffered injustice. Thus, Michael Freund, ex-deputy director of Communications and Policy Planning in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office (1996–1999) castigates journalists who suggest 'a moral equivalence' between Palestinian and Israeli violence, and writes: 'Though Israel may have left the Diaspora behind, it seems not to have shaken the Diaspora mentality, in which Jews would typically tear themselves apart with self-criticism, and even self-hatred, in the hope that our enemies would hate us less. Sadly, some of our journalists carry on this dubious tradition' (Freund, 2001). In a further example, a dispute arose in Israel in 2000 over a new history textbook to be used in schools which addressed the question of Palestinian refugees for the first time (described by Hoffman, 2000). Opponents, who demanded the book be withdrawn, warned that the book departed from traditional Zionist narratives. The book had been approved by the Education Ministry's committee of history academics. A Likud politician, Limor Livnat (Minister of Education, Culture and Sport in the Israeli government at the time of writing), said in the Knesset Education Committee that 'academia is infected by self-hatred and this is filtering down to the school system'. The Committee called upon the Education Ministry to remove the book from schools.

There is a more sinister side to this type of identity politics. Jews who publicly criticize Israeli policies regularly report receiving death threats and hate mail accusing them of being self-hating Jews (for examples see Engel, 2000; Klaushofer, 2002; Kuttub, 2000; Lerner, 2002). A recent article in the *Jewish Chronicle* (UK) has labelled this and other tactics which serve to stifle debate, as 'Jewish McCarthyism' (Brass, 2002). Internet sites of extremist organizations such as the Jewish Defence Organization,

Jewish Watch Dog, and Masada2000 post lists of the addresses and phone numbers of so-called 'self-hating Jews' who have spoken out against Israel. On these websites, in addition to being charged with self-hate, critics of Israel are described as 'anti-Jewish Jews', 'traitors', a 'fifth column', 'enemies of the Jewish people', and of 'siding with the enemies of the Jewish people'.

Two points can be noted in these uses of self-hate, both of which serve to conflate right-wing Zionism with Jewish identity. The first is the simple dichotomy that is set up between those who agree with the writer, presented as on the side of the Jews in general, and the 'enemy', the close associate of the self-hater in the quotes above. In these accounts there are no legitimate differences of opinion among the Jews, there is simply a hawkish version of Zionism on the one side, representing the authentic Jewish voice, and the enemy on the other. Critics of military actions, advocates of a negotiated settlement, and those who state that the Palestinians have suffered injustice are presented as committing an act of aggression against the Jews by allying themselves with those who would kill the Jews, either the terrorists or the anti-Semites in general. This is perfectly illustrated by Givet, who writes that Jews who criticize Israel show 'a shocking solidarity with those who bring death to their brethren' (Givet, 1979, p. 54). The second is that rather than acknowledging that differences of opinion might derive from a specific analysis of the current Middle Eastern conflict, the quotes broaden the issue and present those they criticize as suffering a complex related to their Jewish identities as a whole, a complex which blinds them. Thus words such as 'engulfed' and 'consumed' are used, references are made to the history of the Jews outside Israel (the goyim overseer, the Diaspora mentality), and pathology is indicated by the words *infected* (used in two of the quotes above), *malady*, *sick*, and by Givet's 'more solid' psychological analysis.

Whilst Lewin defined Jewish identity in terms of a set of core values, and the early Zionists by nationalism, the quotes above define an enemy as a central feature of Jewish identity. We have seen earlier how political Zionism defined Jews on the basis of their shared victimhood to argue for a Jewish homeland where they would no longer be victims. Segal (2002) notes how this identity as victim coexists with the model of the 'tough Jew' fostered by the early political Zionists and reinforced by Israel's military successes. The construction of Jews as perennial victims, whilst understandable given the centuries of persecution culminating in the Holocaust that they have faced, has important implications for identity politics and intergroup relations in the present, a point noted by Philip Roth above, Bar-Tal (1998) in relation to Israel, and Novick (1999) in his discussion of Jewish identity in the USA since the Holocaust. Novick describes how comparisons with the Holocaust were increasingly used from 1967 to mobilize support for Israel by portraying it as at risk of genocidal destruction by Arabs. The extracts above illustrate how Jews who speak out for Palestinian rights are often portrayed as siding with those who would wish to destroy the Jews. One vivid example of this is the portrayal of the Labour Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as a Nazi in demonstrations against the Oslo negotiations of the early 1990s (described in Bar-Tal & Vertzberger, 1997). Of course, who one defines as an enemy is subject to debate among many groups, but if one constructs this as obvious and unproblematic, then to sympathize with them must necessarily involve rejection of one's own identity, and, taken to its logical conclusion, as suicidal. Progress toward a negotiated settlement is obstructed when those in power refuse to debate the possibility that the Palestinians have suffered injustice, react to international criticism as if it were just another example of aggression against the Jews, and brand any discussion of this by Jews as self-hate.

Conclusions

This article has illustrated a range of problems with Lewin's, and others', use of 'Jewish self-hatred' as an explanation for the behaviour of particular Jews, namely its reductionism, its essentialist assumptions, and its selection of certain cultural values and political positions as central to Jewish identity. Although in some contexts people may denigrate aspects of themselves they believe to have come from their Jewish heritage, the examples described above rely instead on the accuser inferring self-hatred from behaviour which does not conform to their own versions of what Jewish identity should be, or how Jewish interests are best served. I have argued, therefore, that the notion of self-hate can be usefully understood as a rhetorical concept which serves to encourage certain expressions of group identity and to label others as treacherous and pathological. The functions of the concept for the early Zionist movement, and the use of the concept to discount critics of the policies of the current Israeli government have therefore been described.

Lewin was one of the great social psychologists and his commitment to studying and trying to solve social problems was unquestionable. His studies of group dynamics in real-world settings have had an influence outside academic psychology perhaps more than any other social psychologist. His motivations for writing about self-hatred are understandable. He was arguing that minority group members should have pride in their groups and should fight for their rights collectively, and he was encouraging Jews to take note of what was happening in Germany. Morrow (1969) describes the effort he put into trying to rescue family and friends from the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s. This article should not be read, then, as a general criticism of Lewin, but rather as an exploration of an idea that pre-dated his 1941 article and that has lived on outside psychological debate. I should also stress that the purpose of this article is not to deny that dominant discourses can affect minority identities and group behaviour. They certainly can. The Jews for centuries have been judged negatively, discriminated against and persecuted in most countries in which they lived, and examples of Jews repeating anti-Semitic attitudes and rejecting Jewish identity are easy to find. The problem comes when looking at individual cases, and here it is clear that the idea of self-hate is both overwhelming and imprecise: when does self-criticism become self-hate?; when does criticism of another Jew become criticism of the Jews as a whole?; when is a lack of identification self-hate rather than simply secularization, socialism, generational conflict, a strategic decision taken against potential or actual anti-Semitism, a reflection of the multiple identities available to a person?; what values or institutions really are essential to Jewish identity? Lewin does not provide a solution to these problems and this leaves the concept so flexible that it can be applied depending on the politics of the commentator. The potential for misapplication is clearly illustrated in its frequent use to discount Jewish critics of Israeli policy.

Although space does not permit a detailed description of how people respond to accusations of self-hate, the quotes by Roth, Brass and Kaufman provide some indication. Both Brass and Kaufman assert that Jewish identity is not synonymous with current Israeli policy towards the Palestinians, and they offer an alternative version of the Jews: Kaufman describes the enormous contributions Jews have made to Western culture, listing some of the great Jewish thinkers and artists, whilst Brass asserts that it is those Jews who urge Israel to stop the violence who really represent the values of Judaism. This theme is articulated by Lerner (2002), who responds to the accusation of self-hate by stressing his pride in being Jewish, and that it is the Jewish message

of justice, peace and social equality that require him to criticize Israeli policy. Roth has a different response, although he is accused of self-hate for his portrayals of Jewish characters in fiction rather than for his views on Israel. He describes his critics as adopting the identity of the victim, and argues that Jews in America should not curtail their behaviour by considerations of what the anti-Semites might say. These quotes illustrate two different responses, one asserting an alternative version of Jewish identity based on underlying principles of civilization and compassion, the other refusing to have Jewish identity determined by anti-Semitism. Other responses based on different identity claims, which may or may not involve rejecting the relevance of an overarching Jewish identity, are likely in other contexts (see Verkuyten, 2003, for a discussion of the variable use of both essentialist and de-essentialist discourses in talk about ethnic categories).

This paper adds to the literature pointing out that the definition and membership of social categories is often disputed by category members, and that this is important because such definitions have implications for political actions (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a, 1996b, 2001; Sani & Reicher, 1998, 2000). In a situation of violent conflict, progress towards a negotiated settlement can be blocked by definitions of group identity which function to label anyone who criticizes those in power as disloyal to the group. In the case of Israel, Jewish identity becomes defined (by those in power and other 'hawkish' Zionists) in terms of an enemy, and any statement by Jews of injustice to the Palestinians is labelled pathological, weak, and treacherous. This occurs against a cultural backdrop in which the concept of Jewish self-hate is well known, and is used in everyday contexts to discuss works by Jewish artists and in arguments encouraging Jews not to give up traditions or to dissolve boundaries with Gentiles.

When we get outside experimental contexts, who is and is not acting in the best interests of the group and who is or is not rejecting a group identity is no straightforward matter (Sani & Reicher, 1998, 2000). Social psychological processes such as dis-identification and social/personal mobility, whilst apparently relatively straightforward to identify in theory or experimental settings, are more problematic in real-world settings, since what seem to be clear examples may actually be arguments over the best interests of the category. Indeed, an accusation that an individual is distancing themselves from the group can be a rhetorical attempt to silence dissent, to cast some possible members as inauthentic, and to represent particular political positions as somehow essential to the categorical identity (Bar-Tal, 1997). Group identities are not simple variables (Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001); they exist in the life of the members as competing versions of the group and its interests. People may distance themselves from some versions of a group identity and ally themselves with others, and other people may brand them traitors for doing so. Finally, the concept of the 'self-hating Jew' illustrates the importance of recognizing that psychological concepts often develop in particular political contexts and are used by people to give those projects a supposed legitimacy outside of the political (Foucault, 1989; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1994; Hopkins, Reicher, & Levine, 1997; Kitzinger, 1987). By neglecting the problem of when social psychological processes such as self-hatred can be said to have occurred, we tend to overlook the value judgments involved in defining what those identities actually are and the debate within groups about the interests and essential characteristics of those identities. In the example given here, we are then liable to interpret dissent as identity conflict without realizing that to do so entails favouring one version of that identity over another.

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