

STUDIES IN PREJUDICE SERIES

DYNAMICS
OF
PREJUDICE

A Psychological and Sociological
Study of Veterans

BY

BRUNO BETTELHEIM

AND

MORRIS JANOWITZ

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**DYNAMICS OF
PREJUDICE**

STUDIES IN PREJUDICE

EDITED BY MAX HORKHEIMER
AND SAMUEL H. FLOWERMAN

THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

*by T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik,
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DYNAMICS OF PREJUDICE

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B-E

THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO UNDER A GRANT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.

FOREWORD TO STUDIES IN PREJUDICE

At this moment in world history anti-Semitism is not manifesting itself with the full and violent destructiveness of which we know it to be capable. Even a social disease has its periods of quiescence during which the social scientist, like the biologist or the physician, can study it in the search for more effective ways to prevent or reduce the virulence of the next outbreak.

Today the world scarcely remembers the mechanized persecution and extermination of millions of human beings only a short span of years away in what was once regarded as the citadel of Western civilization. Yet the conscience of many men was aroused. How could it be, they asked each other, that in a culture of law, order and reason, there should have remained the irrational remnants of ancient racial and religious hatreds? How could they explain the willingness of great masses of people to tolerate the mass extermination of their fellow citizens? What tissues in the life of our modern society remain cancerous, and despite our assumed enlightenment show the incongruous atavism of ancient peoples? And what within the individual organism responds to certain stimuli in our culture with attitudes and acts of destructive aggression?

But an aroused conscience is not enough if it does not stimulate a systematic search for an answer. Mankind has paid too dearly for its naive faith in the automatic effect of something called prejudice: incantations have really never dispelled storms, disaster, pestilence, disease or other evils; nor does he who torments another cease his torture out of sheer boredom with his victim.

Prejudice is one of the problems of our times for which everyone has a theory but no one an answer. Every man in a sense believes that he is his own social scientist, for social science is the stuff of every-day living. The progress of science can perhaps be charted by the advances that scientists have made over commonsense notions of phenomena. In an effort to advance beyond mere commonsense approaches to problems of intergroup conflict, the American Jewish Committee in May, 1944, invited a group of American scholars of various backgrounds and disciplines to a two-day conference on religious and racial prejudice. At this meeting, a research program was outlined which would enlist

scientific method in the cause of seeking solutions to this crucial problem. Two levels of research were recommended. One was more limited in scope and geared to the recurring problems faced by educational agencies; e.g., the study of public reaction to selected current events, and the evaluation of various techniques and methods such as those involved in mass media of communication as they impinge upon inter-group relationships. The other level suggested was one of basic research, basic in that it should eventually result in additions to organized knowledge in this field. The first level frequently consists of a large number of small studies, limited in scope and focussed sharply on a given issue. In practice, we have found that the "goodness" of our smaller studies was proportional to our ingenuity in so devising them that they, too, could contribute basically to knowledge. The chief difference between the two levels of research—sometimes loosely called "short-range" and "long-range" research—seems largely to be due to the immediacy of implementation of findings as program-related or unrelated, rather than to differences in methodology, skills and techniques. On both levels, it is necessary to pursue an interdisciplinary approach to research problems.

To further research on both levels, the American Jewish Committee established a department of scientific research, headed in turn by each of us. The department saw its responsibility not only in itself initiating fundamental studies into the phenomena of prejudice, but also in helping to stimulate new studies.

The present series of volumes represents the first fruits of this effort. In a sense, the initial five volumes constitute one unit, an integrated whole, each part of which illuminates one or another facet of the phenomenon we call prejudice. Three of the books deal with those elements in the personality of modern man that predispose him to reactions of hostility to racial and religious groups. They attempt answers to the questions: What is there in the psychology of the individual that renders him "prejudiced" or "unprejudiced," that makes him more or less likely to respond favorably to the agitation of a Goebbels or a Gerald K. Smith? The volume on *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford, based upon a combination of research techniques, suggests one answer. It demonstrates that there is a close correlation between a number of deep rooted personality traits, and overt prejudice. The study has also succeeded in producing an instrument for measuring these traits among various strata of the population.

Within a more limited range of inquiry, the same question was asked with respect to two specific groups. The study on *Dynamics of Prejudice*, by Bettelheim and Janowitz, considers the connection between personality

traits and prejudice among war veterans. Here the investigators were able to examine the impact of the war experience, with its complex anxieties and tensions, as an added factor of major significance affecting tens of millions of people. *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder*, by Ackerman and Jahoda, is based upon the case histories of a number of individuals, from different walks of life, who have received intensive psychotherapy. The special significance of this study lies precisely in the analytical source of the material, in the availability of a body of evidence dealing with phenomena beneath the realm of the conscious and the rational, and illuminating the correlation established in more general terms in the basic investigation of the authoritarian personality.

The other important factor in prejudice is of course the social situation itself, the external stimuli to which the predispositions within the individual have reacted and continue to react. Nazi Germany is the vivid example of the effect of the social situation, and it is to the understanding of roots of Nazi anti-Semitism and thence to the present task of democratic reorientation in Germany that *Rehearsal for Destruction* by Massing is directed.

In *Prophets of Deceit*, by Lowenthal and Guterman, the role of the agitator is studied. The agitator's technique of persuasion, the mechanism of mediation that translates inchoate feeling into specific belief and action make up the theme of that volume. As mediator between the world and the individual psyche, the agitator molds already existing prejudices and tendencies into overt doctrines and ultimately into overt action.

It may strike the reader that we have placed undue stress upon the personal and the psychological rather than upon the social aspect of prejudice. This is not due to a personal preference for psychological analysis nor to a failure to see that the cause of irrational hostility is in the last instance to be found in social frustration and injustice. Our aim is not merely to describe prejudice but to explain it in order to help in its eradication. That is the challenge we would meet. Eradication means re-education, scientifically planned on the basis of understanding scientifically arrived at. And education in a strict sense is by its nature personal and psychological. Once we understand, for example, how the war experience may in some cases have strengthened personality traits predisposed to group hatred, the educational remedies may follow logically. Similarly, to expose the psychological tricks in the arsenal of the agitator may help to immunize his prospective victims against them.

Since the completion of these studies the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee has moved ahead into areas of research in which the unit of study is the group, the institution, the

community rather than the individual. Fortified by a better knowledge of *individual* dynamics, we are now concerned with achieving a better understanding of *group* dynamics. For we recognize that the individual *in vacuo* is but an artifact; even in the present series of studies, although essentially psychological in nature, it has been necessary to explain individual behavior in terms of social antecedents and concomitants. The second stage of our research is thus focused upon problems of group pressures and the sociological determinants of roles in given social situations. We seek answers to such questions as: Why does an individual behave in a "tolerant" manner in one situation and in a "bigoted" manner in another situation? To what extent may certain forms of intergroup conflict, which appears on the surface to be based upon ethnic difference, be based upon other factors, using ethnic difference as content?

The authors of the volumes and the many colleagues upon whose experience and assistance they have been able to draw have widely differing professional interest. This is immediately reflected in the various techniques they have used, even in the way they write. Some of the books are more technical, others more "readable." We have not sought uniformity. A search for the truth conducted with the best techniques of contemporary social sciences was our sole aim. Yet through all this diversity of method a significant measure of agreement has been achieved.

The problem requires a much more extensive and much more sustained effort than any single institution or any small group such as ours, could hope to put forth. It was our hope that whatever projects we could undertake would not only be contributions in themselves, but would also serve to stimulate active interest in continued study by other scholars. With deep satisfaction we have watched the steady increase in scientific publications in this field in the past few years. We believe that any study that bears upon this central theme, if carried out in a truly scientific spirit, cannot help but bring us closer to the theoretical, and ultimately to the practical, solution for reducing intergroup prejudice and hatred.

This foreword to *Studies in Prejudice* would not be complete without a tribute to the vision and leadership of Dr. John Slawson, Executive Vice-President of the American Jewish Committee, who was responsible for calling the conference of scholars and for establishing the Department of Scientific Research. Both editors owe Dr. Slawson a debt of gratitude for the inspiration, guidance, and stimulation which he gave them.

MAX HORKHEIMER

SAMUEL H. FLOWERMAN

CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO STUDIES IN PREJUDICE	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF CHARTS	xv
PREFACE	xvii
I. DYNAMIC APPROACH TO INTOLERANCE	1
II. PATTERNS OF ETHNIC INTOLERANCE	7
The Plan of the Research	
Design of the Interview	
Degrees of Intolerance	
Content of Interview	
Typical Examples	
Comparison of Anti-Semitic and Anti-Negro Attitudes	
III. STEREOTYPING THE MINORITY	32
IV. SOCIAL STATUS	48
V. THE WAR EXPERIENCE	62
VI. ANXIETY AND INTOLERANCE	74
Fear of Unemployment	
Political Attitudes	
VII. TOLERANCE: A FUNCTION OF CONTROL	94
Correlates of Control	
Case Material	
VIII. CONDONING INTOLERANCE: ANTI-NEGRO ATTITUDES	141
IX. REFLECTIONS, AND APPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL ACTION	162
The Individual	
Toward the Future	

APPENDIX

187

The Interview	
Sampling Procedure	
Comments on the Interview Situation	
Defining the Patterns of Intolerance	
Reliability of Analytic Procedures	
Schedule of Interview Questions	
Supplementary Tables	

INDEX

225

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER II

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Distribution of Anti-Semitism | 16 |
| 2. Distribution of Anti-Negro Attitudes | 26 |
| 3. Attitudes Toward Minorities
(on Selected Questions) | 29 |

CHAPTER III

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Distribution of Stereotypes | 36 |
| 2. Stereotypes Characterizing Jews | 37 |
| 3. Stereotypes Characterizing Negroes | 38 |
| 4. Characterization of Soldiers | 44 |
| 5. "How Did the Fellows in Your Outfit Get Along With the
Jews (With the Negroes)?" | 46 |

CHAPTER IV

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Social Correlates of Anti-Semitism | 50 |
| 2. "How Did the Fellows Feel About Religion?" | 51 |
| 3. Socioeconomic Correlates of Anti-Semitism | 56 |
| 4. Anti-Semitism and Social Mobility | 59 |

CHAPTER V

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. "Do You Feel That You Got a Bad Break in Your Army
Career?" | 64 |
| 2. "Do You Think the Time You Spent in the Army Set You
Back in Any Way?" | 66 |
| 3. Army Experience and Feelings of Deprivation | 68 |
| 4. Acceptance of Army Life | 69 |
| 5. "Who Gained Through the War?" | 73 |

CHAPTER VI

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Optimism | 76 |
| 2. "Do You Think Enough Is Being Done for the
Veterans Now?" | 77 |
| 3. "Do You Think Enough Is Being Done for the
Veterans Now?" (By Income) | 78 |

4.	Apprehension About Unemployment	80
5.	Recollections of the Depression	83
6.	"Do You Think That What the Government Has Been Doing These Days Is Affecting the Liberties of the Ordinary People?"	88
7.	Attitude Toward Parties in General	88
8.	"What Do You Think Are the Chances for a Long Peace?"	92
9.	Reference to the Common Man	93
CHAPTER VII		
1.	Opinions About Army Discipline	98
2.	"How Did the Fellows in Your Outfit Get Along with the Officers?"	99
3.	Attitudes Toward Controlling Institutions	101
4.	Comparison of Attitudes Toward Political Parties and Controlling Institutions	102
5.	"Do You Think the Ordinary Individual Has Any Chance to Influence Politics Nowadays?"	103
6.	Recollection of Parental Attitudes	105
7.	Overall Evaluations—Factors Positively Related to Tolerance	108
8.	Overall Evaluations—Factors Negatively Related to Tolerance	108
9.	Tolerant Men Whose Controls Were Adequate (32 Men)	109
10.	Tolerant Men Whose Controls Were Inadequate (7 Men)	110
11.	Intolerant Men Whose Controls Were Inadequate (30 Men)	111
12.	Intolerant Men Whose Controls Were Intermediate or Adequate (17 Men)	112
CHAPTER VIII		
1.	Attributes of Intolerance	149
2.	Anti-Negro Attitudes and Social Mobility	150
3.	Attitudes Toward the Negro and Toward Controlling Institutions	154
APPENDIX		
1.	Distribution of Ethnic Origin Among the Sample	191
2.	Veterans' Reactions to the Interview	193

LIST OF TABLES

xv

3. Reliability of Analytic Procedure	212
4. Religious Denomination of Veterans' Parents	218
5. "Do You Think Your Attitude Toward Religion Was Changed in Any Way by Army Life?"	218
6. Ethnic Origin of Parents	219
7. Salary Range	219
8. Current Occupation	220
9. Type of Army Service	220
10. Illness and Injury During Service	220
11. Length of Army Service	221
12. "Now That the Veterans Are Back, How Do You Think They Are Going to Get Along?"	221
13. Anti-Negro Attitude and Ethnic Origin of Parents	221
14. Anti-Negro Attitude and Age	222
15. Anti-Negro Attitude and Education	222
16. Anti-Negro Attitude and Party Affiliation	222
17. Anti-Negro Attitude and Religious Denomination	223
18. Anti-Negro Attitude and Favorite Newspaper	223
19. Anti-Negro Attitude and Divorce in Veteran's Family	223
20. Anti-Negro Attitude and Current Salary	224
21. Anti-Negro Attitude and Socioeconomic Status	224

LIST OF CHARTS

A. Interrelation Between Anti-Semitic Attitudes	28
B. Distribution of Anti-Semitic Attitudes	197
C. Distribution of Anti-Negro Attitudes	204

PREFACE

ALTHOUGH the plan of this study reflects the period in which it was conceived and executed, the problems of intolerance and ethnic prejudice are, unfortunately, not bound to any year, or world political constellation. A study of war veterans, their anxieties about adjustment in a postwar world, and how they related to intolerance, showed that in the end these anxieties have much deeper roots than the fear of immediate tasks. It also showed that intolerance is as likely to be present in times of war as of peace, of full employment as of depression, since it fulfills important functions in maintaining the integration of the intolerant person.

In 1944, Max Horkheimer, then Director of the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish Committee, developed plans for a comprehensive study of the problem of anti-Semitism. He hoped that such an investigation would add not only to our understanding of this particular and important problem of human relations, but would also permit greater insight into intolerance, "fascist" agitation, and, last but not least, into the structure of a society which permits so asocial a phenomenon as ethnic intolerance to persist. The task at hand seemed too extensive for any one group of researchers, and it was decided to set up a series of projects, each of which would select a specific area for independent investigation.

At Mr. Horkheimer's invitation Bruno Bettelheim undertook to serve as director for one of these research projects. Various plans were investigated at first before a final decision was reached. For example, the possibility was initially explored of comparing the ethnic attitudes of psychotic individuals with those of a normal group of people of comparable intelligence, education, family background, etc. The purpose would have been to learn whether a disintegrated person would prove free of ethnic intolerance, or whether, in his case, intolerance would take different forms from those observed among normal persons.

Interesting as this and several other alternative projects seemed, they were discarded as a basis for this research—particularly after the surrender of Germany and the prospect of peace. With the end of the war in view, and in terms of the then prevalent assumption that readjustment

to a peacetime economy would be difficult, it was felt that recently discharged veterans might become a group of much social import. It was therefore decided to single them out for careful study as to the origin, nature, and external forms of their ethnic intolerance. Once the study was under way, it became clear that a cross section of such veterans would be tantamount to a cross section of the younger age groups of our male urban population.

Edward A. Shils joined the project as codirector shortly after its inception. Full credit is due to him for an equal share with the director of the project in the construction of the original hypotheses, the selection of the variables and indices to be studied, the construction of the interview schedule, and the execution of the study. Unfortunately other duties took him to London after the data had been collected and after the main decisions regarding their coding and tabulation, in which he assumed a major responsibility, had been completed. He cannot be blamed for the shortcomings of this report, since he could not participate in the evaluation of the findings, as they are contained in this book.

Morris Janowitz, who joined the study in its early stages, assumed major responsibility for the actual collection of the data and their analysis.

Ruth Shils assisted in the construction of the interview schedule and in the training and supervision of the interviewers. Sebastian de Grazia directed the interviewers for a short period of time during the pilot phase of the project. Lucia Ackron, Susan Caudill, Ruth Chapin, Jane Luebbing, Meryl Rogers, and Betty Jane Tullis interviewed the men. Natalie Rogoff participated in the coding and analysis of the interview records and in the construction of the main indices.

The study itself was sponsored by the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago and the authors wish to express their gratitude to Ralph W. Tyler, chairman of the Committee, for his valuable suggestions and active support of the project.

The American Jewish Committee financed the study by a grant from its Department of Scientific Research. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Horkheimer, who first as director and later as chief scientific consultant of the Department, but much more so as a friend, helped in developing the plan for the research, and made invaluable suggestions during its execution. The cooperation of Theodore W. Adorno in shaping the plan of the study is also deeply appreciated. After Samuel H. Flowerman joined the Department of Scientific Research of the American Jewish

Committee, of which he later became director, his patient understanding and helpfulness gave us support in presenting in this book a large segment of the material accumulated. We are especially obliged to Ruth Soffer for her endless battle for clarity of style which she waged so kindly.