

viduals who are most consumed with self-hatred and envy. He uses the French word *ressentiment* to describe such nauseating individuals and says that such *ressentiment* is “studied most easily in anarchists and anti-Semites.”<sup>93</sup>

Pathological dishonesty is a symptom of such repulsive characters: “An antisemite certainly is not any more decent because he lies as a matter of principle.”<sup>94</sup>

So, to summarize: Nietzsche saves some of his most condemnatory language for Germans who hate Jews—he considers them to be liars, stupid, disturbed, self-hating pathological cases for psychologists with strong stomachs to study.

So it seems a reasonable inference that Nietzsche would have been disgusted by the Nazis, for the Nazis absorbed into their ideology the worst possible kind of anti-Semitism and pursued their anti-Jew policies almost to the point of self-destruction.<sup>95</sup>

### ***31. On the Jews: admirable or despicable?***

But how does this fit with the harsh things we know Nietzsche said about the Jews? This takes us to a fourth point of difference between Nietzsche and the Nazis.

For all of the negative things Nietzsche says about the Jews, he also respects them and gives them high praise.

Here is a representative quotation from *Beyond Good and Evil*: “The Jews, however, are beyond any doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> GM 2:11.

<sup>94</sup> A 55.

<sup>95</sup> Connecting here to the fascinating “What-if” history question: What if the Nazis had put the Holocaust on hold and devoted the vast resources used there instead to military purposes where needed in WWII?

<sup>96</sup> BGE 251.

Here is another, from *The Antichrist*: “Psychologically considered, the Jewish people are a people endowed with the toughest vital energy, who, placed in impossible circumstances . . . divined a power in these instincts with which one could prevail against ‘the world.’”<sup>97</sup>

He again praises the Jews for having the strength to rule Europe if they chose to: “That the Jews, if they wanted it—or if they were forced into it, which seems to be what the anti-Semites want—could even now have preponderance, indeed quite literally mastery over Europe, that is certain; that they are not working and planning for that is equally certain.”<sup>98</sup>

And in another book, Nietzsche compares the Jews favorably to the Germans—in fact, he identifies a way in which the Jews are superior to the Germans: “Europe owes the Jews no small thanks for making its people more logical, for cleaner intellectual habits—none more so than the Germans, as a lamentably *deraisonné* race that even today first needs to be given a good mental drubbing.”<sup>99</sup>

But how can all this praise of the Jews fit with the rest of what he says about the Jews?

One important distinction here is between blaming the Jews of several millennia ago for devising the slave morality and foisting it upon the world—and between evaluating the Jews of today as inheritors of a cultural tradition that has enabled them to survive and even flourish despite great adversity. In the former case, Nietzsche assigns blame to the Jews and condemns them for subverting human greatness—but in the second case he would at the very least have to grant, however grudgingly, that the Jews have hit upon a survival strategy and kept their cultural identity for well over two thousand years. How many other cultures can make that claim? The list is extremely short. And for that the Jews deserve praise.

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<sup>97</sup> A 24.

<sup>98</sup> BGE 251.

<sup>99</sup> GS 348.