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# FROM COEXISTENCE TO TOLERATION

OR

## Marranos (Pigs) in Spain

*How could a society as tolerant as Castile, in which the three great faiths of the West had coexisted for centuries . . . how could a clergy that had never lusted for blood except in war (Queen Isabella thought even bull-fighting too gory), gaze placidly upon the burning alive of thousands of their fellow Spaniards?*

—Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain* . . .

### THE END OF *CONVIVENCIA*

For hundreds of years, Muslim Spain was the most tolerant place in Europe. Christians, Muslims, and Jews were able to live there together more or less peacefully. The three religious groups maintained a *convivencia*, or coexistence, thanks partly to a twofold distinction among kinds of people that was essential to the particularist doctrine of Islam influential in Spain. Islamic doctrine distinguishes first between Muslim and non-Muslim peoples and second between those non-Muslims who are, like Muslims themselves, “peoples of the Book” (i.e., Christians and Jews) and those non-Muslims who are “pagan.” These two distinctions, taken together, could amount to the difference between life and death. For example, Muslim courts ruled on the basis of the Koran that those “others” who were “peoples of the Book” could not legally be put to the sword for refusing to convert to Islam while those “others” who were pagan could be. Christians and Jews had to be put up with, and usually were.<sup>1</sup>

Spanish Islam’s limited tolerance toward religious heterogeneity and toward national differences was something that Spanish Christendom, when it conquered



*convivencia* never existed in anything like the way many Spanish nationalists have described it. In 1311 James II carried out the explicit orders of Pope Clement V when he prohibited the *çala* (the public prayer ritual in Islam that is mandatory for all Muslims) under pain of death. And while Muslim law categorized Christians, however bothersome, as “fellow human beings” and treated them as “a people of the Book,” Christian legal codes, which were linked to a religious universalism that could not easily recognize the existence of “others” who were not animal, “frequently classed Muslims in the category of ‘slaves, mules, donkeys, cows, or other animals.’”<sup>8</sup>

How the various peoples of Spain defined and treated one another critically influenced modern European Christendom’s understanding of caste and race.<sup>9</sup> And Spain at the time of the reconquest came to serve as a model for how the doctrine that “All human beings are siblings,” in its merging of the usual distinction between the human species and the family, negates concepts, like “people of the Book,” which mediates kind and kins and thus affect the politically sensitive definition of “nation.”<sup>10</sup> The reconquest of Spain during the seven centuries leading up to the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and of the Muslims in 1502 was the nationalist event in Spanish history. (On the very day in 1492 that Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos for what turned out to be the New World, he noted in his log the shiploads of Jews and *conversos* leaving their Old World home of a millennium under threat of death.) The expulsion of the Muslims consolidated a brutal ideology of who was in the one-family nation and who wasn’t. The official view became that Christians with only Christian ancestors were Spanish nationals and that all others were not. There was to be no such mediating concept as fellow “people of the Book.”

The crucial events in the gradual historical evolution of the exclusivist definition of the modern Spanish nation probably occurred during the hundred years between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. First, there was the introduction of the famous Statutes of the Purity of the Blood (*limpieza de sangre*) in Toledo in 1449—and elsewhere a little earlier or later.<sup>11</sup> These statutes distinguished between original Christians and *conversos*—those people who ostensibly had converted from Islam or Judaism or whose ancestors had converted—on the basis of blood lineage.

The statutes were at first denounced by the pope.<sup>12</sup> The Roman Catholic creed, after all, traditionally stresses essentially not kinship by consanguinity but rather rebirth and kinship through Christ.<sup>13</sup> Many powerful people with *converso* ancestry somewhere along the line argued for this tradition, as did the Dominican cardinal Torquemada in his *Treatise Against the Midianites and Ishmaelites*. But there were also racists influenced to some extent by the Christian doctrine of Arianism, according to which Jesus was not or not entirely consubstantial with God his Father, though he was consanguineous with Mary his mother. King Leovigild’s sixth-century Gothic Christianity did not disappear from Spain with the so-called Spanish Conversion to the Christian orthodoxy of his sons Hermenegild and Rec-

cares I. Under Muslim rule, in fact, Gothic Christians kept their old law code—according to the Pact of Umar.<sup>14</sup> And they maintained the old Arian heresy according to which the Son, though He had a likeness (*homoiótēs*) to the Father, was not of absolutely the same substance (*homousios*). It would seem to follow that kinship in Christ does not fully transcend consanguinity, and that spiritual religion is not all that matters: blood counts.<sup>15</sup> (Similarly, the sixth-century Spanish Catholic Saint Isidore of Seville was interested in the potentially nation-forming opposition between *brotherhood-german* and *brotherhood-spiritual*. Orphaned as a young child and raised in a monastic brotherhood, Isidore was the brother-german of Brother Leander. Both loved their common sister-german Florentina and wanted her to become a Sister-in-Christ; Isidore's *Regula monachorum* was adopted by many Spanish Catholic Brothers in the seventh and eighth centuries.)<sup>16</sup> But even if Spanish Christendom were to have forgone entirely the Roman Catholic notion that Christianity transcends blood kinship—as Gothic Christians and so-called tribal pagans may have wanted Spanish Christendom to do—how then would it be a crime to be a Jew? After all, the Mother of God and all the apostles were Jewish—as the distinguished jurist Alfonso Díaz de Mantalvo put it.<sup>17</sup> And surely the Church was properly the home of the Jews, and the Gentiles were the outsiders who had been invited in—as argued the Bishop of Burgos, Alonso de Cartagena, in *Defensorium unitatis christianae* and Bishop Alonso de Oropesa in *Lumen ad revelationem gentium*.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the powerful arguments against the blood statutes that focus on the polar opposites of spiritual kinship (Isn't a convert a brother in Christ?) and consanguineous kinship (Wasn't Christ a Jew?), a nationalism of exclusion finally became dominant in Roman Catholic Spain in the latter part of the fifteenth century. The myth of pure blood (*sangre pura*), unmixed with Muslim or Jewish blood, took hold. The joint sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella benefited, perhaps, as they unified Spain into a nation of one blood, from a *Germania* or "union of siblings-german."<sup>19</sup> In later centuries, the Spanish myth of pure blood traced a tribal bloodline to a Gothic or Teutonic ancestor, Tubal, from the twenty-second century B.C.<sup>20</sup> The Spanish kept their fixations on blood purity even after there were in Spain virtually no more Jews and Moors. By 1788, the term *limpieza de sangre* had come to refer to class difference, the upper class maintaining its "purity" by refusing to do manual work because it was beneath their dignity and honor. Thus transformed to suit contemporary ideologies of social class, pure blood eventually informed the rhetoric of German Nazis and Spanish and Italian Fascists.<sup>21</sup> The latter sought to cut off blacks and Jews from pure-blooded Italian "Aryans" (see fig. 2).<sup>22</sup> And pure blood is still cherished among modern Spaniards. In 1988, the "blue-blooded" president of a Madrid-based institute to promote cultural exchanges between Spain and its Muslim neighbors asserted that the Spanish "take pride in our *sangre pura*, pure blood. No Catholic wants to face the thought of Moors on the family tree."<sup>23</sup>

The final consolidation of Spanish nationhood followed on the strict enforcement of the blood regulations under Philip II, in the latter half of the sixteenth cen-

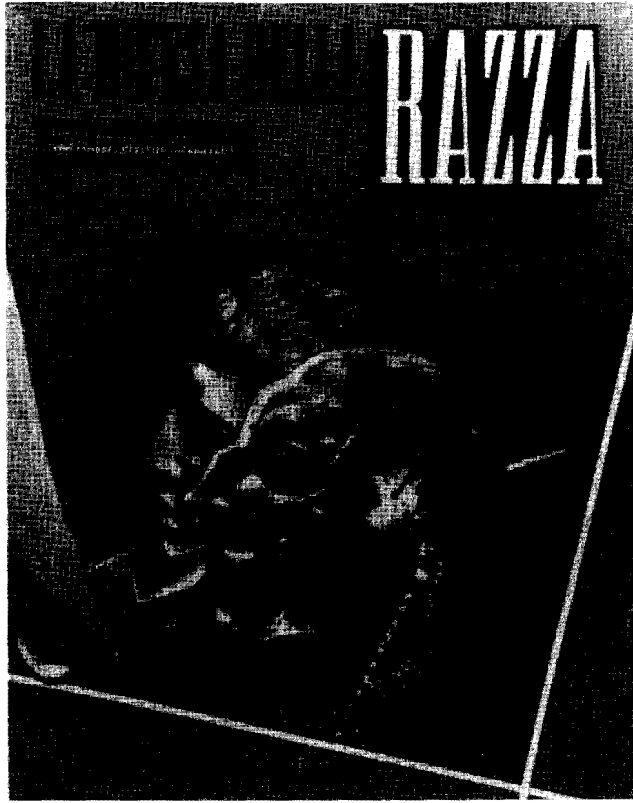


Fig. 2. Cover of the journal *La Difesa della Razza* for August 20, 1938. (Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York)

ture.<sup>24</sup> One drop of “Jewish blood” might make a person non-Christian in Spain just as, in parts of the United States in the 1800s, one drop of “black blood” made a person nonwhite. “If it were proved that an ancestor on any side of the family had been penanced by the Inquisition or was a Moor or Jew,” writes Kamen, “the descendant could be accounted of impure blood and disabled from office.”<sup>25</sup> The official Instructions of 1561 thus stipulated that “all the [penitential garments imposed by the Inquisition to bring shame on the wearer] of the condemned, living or dead, present or absent, be placed in the churches where they used to live . . . in order that there may be a perpetual memory of the infamy of the heretics and their descendants.”<sup>26</sup> Juan Escobar de Corro later argued in his *Treatise on Testing for Blood Purity and Nobility* that “purity” and “honor” are exactly synonymous and that any stain on an impure lineage was ineffaceable and perpetual.<sup>27</sup> Costa Mattos wrote that “A little Jewish blood is enough to destroy the world.”<sup>28</sup>

Cervantes’ tale in *Don Quixote* of people of Arab “race” whose families had converted under Christian rule to Christianity (Moriscos) may help to illustrate the

dilemma. The tale concerns a young Morisco woman who learned her Christianity from her mother just as she had sucked milk from her. "Mamá la Fé catolicá en la leche." In terms of spiritual kinship she was a sister in Christ, and in terms of col-lactaneous kinship she was a Christian daughter in milk. But according to the statutes of pure blood, she was no Christian. The Roman Catholic Inquisitors—and some of her consanguineous Muslim kinspersons as well—claimed that her Christian belief was a mere fiction (*invención*). The young Morisco was thus expelled from Spain due to the "crime" of a nation (*nación*) to which she felt she belonged only by fiction. And her Christian lover suffers an imprisonment in Algiers like that of Cervantes himself.<sup>29</sup> Cervantes says in the "Prologue" that he created the book as out of an imprisonment and that he stands in relation to its hero, Don Quixote, not as a father to a consanguineous son who is "like" his father and part of his father's nation, but as a stepfather (*padrasto*).<sup>30</sup> Cervantes knows the folly and horror of such attention to pedigrees as Don Quixote discusses in "One of the Most Important Chapters in this History": "From all this I wish you to infer, my dear sillies, that the subject of genealogies is a most confused one."<sup>31</sup> Fernando de Rojas, whose background was *converso*, wrote his famous *Celestina* a year after the expulsion of the Jews. There, he seems similarly to "attack the concepts of external honor and purity of blood (always behind the mask of a servant or prostitute). In this he lent his voice [as Stephen Gilman says] to the protest of his fellow conversos whose blood was not pure and who, like the prostitute Areusa, demanded that honor be attached to deeds and not to the distinction of birth."<sup>32</sup> She paraphrases the complex historic proverb "When Adam delved and Eve span / Who was then a gentle man?"<sup>33</sup>

But the blood statutes and the Inquisition's peculiar attention to genealogy "triumphed and became the law of the realm in Spain and later in Portugal. They spread their rule over other races as well (black African, Chinese, and Moors) and into the Iberian colonies," with dire consequences to the so-called indigenous populations of the New World and peoples in the Orient.<sup>34</sup> The boundary of the Christian "nation" became no more than race and genealogy, shorthand reports of which gave Spaniards easy access to a breederlike knowledge of who was in the *Germania* and who wasn't. Blood now defined the nation: national kinship was literalized as consanguineous and consanguinity itself was upheld as ascertainable (even as fears of bastardy and of foundlings increased).<sup>35</sup> Diego Laínez was right to denounce the cult of blood purity as "the national humor or error."<sup>36</sup> And Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (in 1540) who refused to associate himself with most racialist aspects of the Inquisition, also said that the Spanish cult of blood purity was "the Spanish characteristic."<sup>37</sup>

Spain, formerly the European model of *convivencia* and intellectual progress, had become in the sixteenth century the least tolerant place in all Europe, and soon it was to become one of the most backward. Once there had been an influential Muslim ideology where there were human others (fellow "peoples of the Book" and pagans) as well as human brothers (fellow Muslims), and some of those others had

to be lived with, no matter how distressing their existence might be. But now, with the rise of specifically Spanish Christendom, all humans were brothers and all others were animal or may as well have been. Spain fulfilled its national aspiration in the reconquest only at the loss of any specifically human term mediating between Christian human beings and other creatures.

## THE TAUREAN NATION

From this loss came the nationalist ideology of the bullfight. The rise in sixteenth-century Spain of the unique prominence of the bull festival, rightly called *Fiesta Nacional* or *Fiesta Brava*—not a mere sport (*deporte*)—corresponds to the rise of the ideology of the modern Spanish “nation.” The killing of bulls in urban arenas was developed to its still-present zenith during the last years of the reconquest, which is associated with “the idea of the growth of some form of Spanishness.”<sup>38</sup> *Taurofilia* and bullfighting in Spain express a national ideology of otherhood and brotherhood.

The Spanish fighting bull, like the creature in the ancient Minoan ritual of bull-leaping that some ethnographers say grounds the bullfight historically,<sup>39</sup> helps to define the difference between humankind and animalkind—who is a bull and who is merely a taurean human being—and between human kin and nonkin—who is in my family, hence lovable only in the chaste way, and who is not? The Minotaur, son of the bestializing Pasiphaë and her bull-lover, straddles the line between human and nonhuman kind: he has a head at once human and bovine. And the Minotaur’s family straddles the line between family kin and nonkin: his “sister” (or half-sister) Phaedra has an incestuous passion for her “son” (or stepson) that would be nonincestuous only if her family kin were not her species kind.

Campos de España writes that “in the bullfight the Spaniard has found the most perfect expression for defining his human quality.”<sup>40</sup> The bullfight helps to fix ideologically the difference between national and nonnational. What is the unique *nación* of the *toro bravo* and the quality of its treatment by the *nación* of Spanish Christians? *Nation* means “a particular class, kind, or race,” not only of persons but also of animals.<sup>41</sup> *Bravo*, the term that the Spanish use to describe the nation they admire, means “wild.”<sup>42</sup> Yet the *toro bravo* is not a “game” animal, like a deer, or a “domestic” animal, like a llama, or an animal *sauvage*, like a mountain lion. The *toro bravo* is distinguished among animals both domestic and wild in that, according to a long tradition of breeding, it is actually cultivated so as to be or become “wild,” or artificially natural. The bullfight itself, the great national festival of Spain, is merely a *desbravando*. The animal, bred artificially to be *bravo*, is “civilized” in the ring. The bullfighter’s technical term *rompiendo*, or “breaking,” is thus appropriate, as is Hemingway’s remark about the matador’s “educating” the bull almost as if it were a man.<sup>43</sup> And so the bull, in a *corrida* that will “break” it as on the rack, is given a humanoid name.<sup>44</sup> The bullfighter follows definite regulations

to torture the bull, "outmaneuvering" it with the aid of painful harpoonlike pikes (*banderillas*) in the neck muscles and the *picador's* bloodletting spikes in the enlarged hump on the neck. He "prepares" (*lidiar*) the bull for butchering as a sacrificial victim.<sup>45</sup> (Easter Sunday is when the bullfighting season begins.)<sup>46</sup> The bullfighter butchers or sacrifices the bull according to prescribed rites and with prescribed implements; if he should fail in this respect, the spectators call him *asesino*, "murderer," as if the dead bull had been a human king and the matador a mere "assassin," a term that derives from the Arabic *hashshashin*.<sup>47</sup> Strikingly, parts of the dead bull—principally the "ears"—are distributed as awards, and several parts are eaten.<sup>48</sup> Thus Spanish Christians, who are theoretically omnivorous—for them, all food is legally edible—transform the Minoan rite of bull-leaping into a national festival incorporating such regulations regarding butchering and such restrictions regarding what can legally be eaten as generally characterize only particularist religions like Judaism and Islam.

In the sixteenth century, when the bullfight truly became the national festival, a universally proselytizing bullish Christendom freed itself from the discomfiting burdens of any sort of Muslim *convivencia* or Jewish tolerance. No longer was there in Spain a specifically human intermediate term between national kin and national nonkin, between Christian brothers and others who were not Christian. Islam had had such a term in its notion of a "people of the Book" that is neither Muslim nor pagan, neither brother nor other. And the ancient Jewish Commonwealth had its notion of a "strange people in a strange land," nevertheless protected as a human nation by distinctly humane laws and promised, as by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon of Córdoba (Maimonides) in the twelfth century, a share in the world to come.<sup>49</sup> But Spanish Christendom, in its unwaveringly universal aspect, had no such term—except in its peculiarly inhumane reworking of "pagan" bull-leaping. The Inquisition and its secular arm burnt alive those it called crypto-Jews and -Muslims, and those it did not burn to death it either proselytized or expelled wholly out of Spanish existence—much as Shylock is expelled from Venice in act 4 of *The Merchant of Venice*. (In 1594—a few years before Shakespeare wrote the play, with its themes of forced conversions, racial difference, and relations between the three peoples of the Book—Roderigo Lopez, court physician to Queen Elizabeth, born a Portuguese Jew but a convert to Christianity, was executed before a festive crowd which laughed at his dying assertion that "hee loved the Queene as well as Jesus Christ.")<sup>50</sup> Ferdinand the Bull, more taurine than humane, helped the Inquisition transform the idea of human others who are to be treated humanely into an ideology where all others are not fully human and must be either Christianized or—since the statutes of blood purity often made Christianization impossible—destroyed. At the well-known Festival of the Christians and Moors in Spain, even today the expulsion of the Muslims (1502) is reenacted annually in the same Spanish cities and villages where the bullfight plays its part in telling Spanish nationals who they really are.<sup>51</sup>



## AN AMSTERDAM OF RELIGIONS

T. S. Eliot got it right: "The Christian does not want to be tolerated."<sup>52</sup> He cannot tolerate difference without also wanting to sublimate (*aufheben*) that difference.<sup>53</sup>

The systematic political philosophy of religious toleration toward all men arose prominently in the seventeenth century thanks partly to certain thinkers' recognition that Christendom, unlike some polities or religions, requires an extra and perhaps extraneous theory of toleration, or "policy of patient forbearance in the presence of something which is disliked or disapproved of."<sup>54</sup> The New Testament says "All ye are brethren," but the politically needful policy of toleration would have to recognize that there are not only brothers in the world but also others who should be tolerated as they are, no matter how much they or their existence discomfort us. John Locke's treatises on the idea of religious toleration confront this tradition of a potentially intolerant Christianity—one that slips from the proposition "All men are my brothers," to the proposition "Only my brothers are men." Locke, who as a young man had rejected the idea of taking holy orders in the Church of England, gave expression in his treatises on toleration to the political dilemma inherent in any polity of universal brotherhood; his ideas are crucial to the development of pluralist and liberal toleration in the modern world.

The ideology of national toleration also has roots in the experience of the Iberian Marranos who fled the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. Many Spanish crypto-Jews went to Portugal, where they were called and called themselves "The Nation," as also in France and Amsterdam.<sup>55</sup> This "Nation" was caught between a world of Christians who derogatorily called them *marranos*, or "pigs," and a world of Jews, who called them *anusim*, or "compelled" and even "raped."<sup>56</sup> Yosef Yerushalmi explains that "the novelty of Marrano apologetics and polemics goes far beyond the relative degree of its Christian learning. The knowledge which these writers had of Christianity was derived not merely from books, but from their own personal experience of Christian life, ritual, and liturgy. They are thus the first body of Jewish writers *contra Christianos* to have known Christianity *from within*, and it is this which endows their tracts with a special interest."<sup>57</sup> Among such tracts is Isaac Cardoso's *Philosophia libera*, one of the first works of general philosophy published by a professing Jew specifically for a generally European audience.<sup>58</sup> And there is also Cardoso's *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, a treatise published in 1679 in Amsterdam, a haven for Marranos.<sup>59</sup> Having been raised as a Spanish Catholic and living as a devout Italian Jew, Cardoso describes in this controversialist work the Spanish claims that the Jews are cruel and inhuman, and he counters those claims with an argument that the Spanish merely project onto others the faults they fear in themselves. In this context he describes how the Spanish kill both men and animals for pleasure at their Fiesta Agonal (or bullfight); how they regard the dead with exhilaration and joy; and how they sacrifice men to their gods, throwing them to the so-called wild beasts.<sup>60</sup> In the same work, Cardoso emphasizes the need for political toleration toward Jews not only because Jews are a loyal, industrious, and

hence politically useful people—which was the usual argument for toleration—but also because Jews constitute “a Republic apart.”<sup>61</sup>

Leo Strauss, in a work researched in the Weimar Republic, writes in reference to the Marrano philosopher Uriel da Costa—a Catholic who, after relinquishing Christianity and converting to Judaism, relinquished Judaism and took up a general critique of all religion—that “the situation of the Marranos favored doubt of Christianity quite as much as doubt of Judaism.”<sup>62</sup> (One might think here of the anti-*converso* pamphlet of 1488 that spoke of the monstrous animal “which carried Mohammed on his back from Jerusalem to Mecca and which, like the *conversos*, belonged to no known species.”)<sup>63</sup> Certainly, the unique philosophical stance of the Marranos, which was skeptical and liberal, helped to mark and make for a new sort of toleration. It is a stance whose proponents include the Marrano skeptic philosopher Francisco Sánchez in his *Quod Scitur Nihil* [That nothing can be known; 1581] and Sebastien Châteillon in his *De haereticis* [1554], where he criticizes Calvin for helping the Inquisition to persecute the Spanish anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus and eventually to burn him at the stake. “We know in part,” writes Châteillon, “that Socrates was right, that we know only that we do not know. We may be heretics quite as much as our opponents.”<sup>64</sup> It is a stance that includes Montaigne’s free-thinking essays, written by the son of a Marrano at a time of brutal religious conflict in France, where Catholics persecuted Protestants as if they were members of another race or even species.<sup>65</sup> And it includes Pierre Bayle’s skeptical and tolerant writings, as well as Spinoza’s treatment of freedom of thought and speech in his anonymously published *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670), which, with its celebration of the domestic liberty of Amsterdam, has been called the first philosophy of democratic liberalism.<sup>66</sup>

Amsterdam was a haven for political radicals and religious outcasts from Europe, including such proponents of toleration as Henri Basnage de Beauval, Pierre Bayle, and John Locke.<sup>67</sup> No political refugee living in Holland in the seventeenth century needed reminding that Christianity in practice did not live up to its claims of universal love. Spinoza, haunted by the same memories of Spanish cruelty as many Hollanders, was no exception. “I have often wondered,” he writes, “that persons who make a boast of professing the Christian religion, namely, love . . . and charity to all men, should quarrel with such rancorous animosity, and display daily towards one another such bitter hatred, that this, rather than the virtues they claim, is the readiest criterion of their faith.”<sup>68</sup> Much of Spinoza’s political thinking starts from analyzing the link between the preaching of universal love based on universal kinship and the practice of persecution. Sometimes Spinoza flatters the majority of his readers by appearing to agree with them that Matthew’s famous claim about the Jews—that they believe in the doctrine “Love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy”<sup>69</sup>—is correct. But indirectly, he points out both that the Jews were bidden to love their fellow-citizens as themselves and that there is an inevitable conflict between the requirements of universal love and those of politics: “Though the Jews were bidden to love their fellow-citizens as themselves (Lev.

19:17–18), they were nevertheless bound, if a man offended against the law, to point him out to the judge (Lev. 5:1, and Deut. 13:8–9).<sup>70</sup> Even as Spinoza pretends for heuristic purposes to agree with Matthew's assessment of Jewish hate and Christian love, he demonstrates that the link between the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and that of Mount Sinai is one of polar opposition. He shows the connection between those teachings. For according to Spinoza, the difference between the commands "Hate thine enemy [the foreigner]," which Matthew attributes to the Jews, and "Love thine enemy," which Matthew attributes to the Christians, is due exclusively to the changed political circumstance of the Jewish people in the Diaspora. Moses could think of the establishment of a good polity, whereas Jesus—like Jeremiah and Isaiah—addressed a people that had lost its political independence.<sup>71</sup> Spinoza shows that, since "religion has always been made to conform to the public welfare,"<sup>72</sup> Christianity and Judaism are political refractions of the same doctrine.

A word about Spinoza's "indirection" in argument is in order. Some historians have said that Spinoza wrote in convoluted fashion in order to hide an atheism that would have troubled his readers and hence interfered with his purpose. (In 1671 Spinoza wrote a moving letter about this matter to the Portuguese-born Isaac Orobio de Castro, categorically denying the charge that he "with covert and disguised arguments [taught] atheism.")<sup>73</sup> Be that as it may, Spinoza wrote in such a way as not to offend his readers unnecessarily. He did not want to jeopardize his larger political purpose, which was the support of free philosophical inquiry.<sup>74</sup> Spinoza's "esotericism" was pedagogic and political: he sought, according to the principle of "economy," to speak to different men at their own planes of understanding.<sup>75</sup> Spinoza remarks that Saint Paul was "to the Greeks a Greek and to the Jews a Jew"; Spinoza himself was something of an ideological Machiavelli.<sup>76</sup>

Amsterdam, with its famous domestic tolerance, provides Spinoza with his purpose. The phrase "an Amsterdam of religions" meant something like "a universal [domestic] toleration."<sup>77</sup> And Spinoza praises Amsterdam as a place within which "men of every nation and religion live together in the greatest harmony"—more as in a Canadian mosaic, perhaps, than in an American melting pot. In Amsterdam, says Spinoza, a man's "religion and sect [before the judges] is considered of no importance."<sup>78</sup>

Now, seeing that we have the rare happiness of living in a republic, where everyone's judgment is free and unshackled, where each may worship God as his conscience dictates, and where freedom is esteemed before all things dear and precious, I have believed that I should be undertaking no ungrateful or unprofitable task, in demonstrating that not only can such freedom be granted without prejudice to the public peace, but also, that without such freedom, piety cannot flourish nor the public peace be secure. Such is the chief conclusion I seek to establish in this treatise.<sup>79</sup>

Spinoza wanted religious tolerance for all men. And surely he would have applauded the efforts of his former teacher, the French-born, Lisbon-raised Amsterdam Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, to convince Oliver Cromwell to allow the

return of the Jews to England. (In England, the question of the readmission of the Jews was mooted under the growing desire for religious liberty; such works appeared in the English language as Manasseh's *Vindiciae judaeorum* in 1656 and Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise* in 1689.)<sup>80</sup> However, the sort of religious tolerance that many of his well-meaning liberal contemporaries desired was not all that Spinoza had in mind. Such tolerance had existed already in the world—as in the old Spanish Islamic *convivencia*. (In 1930 Germany, Franz Rosenzweig wrote, in *The Star of Redemption*, that “in a certain sense, Islam demanded and practiced ‘tolerance’ long before the concept was discovered by Christian Europe. And on the other hand love of neighbor could lead to consequences such as religious wars and trials of heretics—not aberrations but legitimate developments which will simply not fit into any superficial conception of this love.”)<sup>81</sup> This limited tolerance by Islamic Spanish *convivencia*, which earlier I idealized for heuristic purposes, and which the tolerant Lessing idealized, during the Enlightenment, in such works as *Nathan the Wise*, was admirable.<sup>82</sup> But what Spinoza sought was not an ideal if limited freedom of religion based on theological principles, but rather a separation of philosophy from theology. This break would mark an end to the terrors of religious inquisition and guarantee a safe place in the world for freedom of philosophical inquiry.<sup>83</sup>

John Locke, who knew both the political and Cartesian writings of Spinoza,<sup>84</sup> himself lived in political exile from 1684 to 1689 in Amsterdam. Already interested since the 1660s in the limits of human understanding and the question of toleration,<sup>85</sup> Locke attended a debate there in the 1680s between the Marrano Orobio and the Remonstrant Protestant theologian Philip van Limborch. One of his first publications was a lengthy review of this debate, appearing anonymously in the Remonstrant Jean Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*. (The debate is the subject of Limborch's *De veritate religionis Christianae amica collatio cum erudito Judaeo*, and it influenced his *Historia Inquisitionis*, a massive critique of the Inquisition.)<sup>86</sup> Locke's review is connected ideologically both to his *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* (1669), which emphasizes the principle of religious toleration, and to his *Letter on Toleration*, addressed to Limborch in 1689. The liberal Locke's various letters and essays on toleration<sup>87</sup> and his critique, in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), of the notion in Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) that “Nations” are merely “distinct Families”<sup>88</sup> are among the earliest systematic nonuniversalist arguments for specifically religious toleration in the Christian West. As we shall see, Locke and his liberal contemporaries introduced a new particularism into the debate concerning toleration.

## TOLERATION

*To belong to this omnipresent shepherd, it is not necessary for the entire flock to graze on one pasture or to enter and leave the master's house through just one door. It would be neither in accord with the shepherd's wishes or conducive to the growth of his flock. Do*

*you wonder why some people deliberately turn these ideas upside down and purposely try to confuse them? They tell you that a union of religions is the shortest way to that brotherly love and tolerance you kind-hearted people so earnestly desire.*

—Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem* (1783)

Anti-Semitism is the Jewish aspect of Christianity—so goes the claim. The accusation that racism and anti-Semitism in Christendom are fundamentally Jewish—an accusation encountered with reference not only to the period of the Spanish Inquisition<sup>89</sup> but also to European history overall<sup>90</sup>—generally boils down to the claim that, since Judaism is supposed to heed consanguinity and tribal affiliation and Christianity is not, racist or anti-Semitic Christians are fundamentally Jewish. This charge has been refuted for myriad historical circumstances, including those of sixteenth-century Spain.<sup>91</sup> That people continue to make the allegation, citing everything from the curse of Ham<sup>92</sup> to the rules concerning monetary interest, is not the fault of those who have refuted it. Yet students of politics and religion have been slow to emphasize that Jewish particularism heeds tribal difference in such a way that it can become precisely the basis for a realistic tolerance.

The particularism of Judaism can encourage tolerant coexistence insofar as its ancient Hebrew Commonwealth had rules recognizing that there are not only Jewish siblings but also other human beings. Those “others” have specific legal and political rights as human beings.<sup>93</sup> Judaism is not essentially a proselytizing religion; it provides a clear standard of goodness independent from being Jewish.<sup>94</sup> Good human beings who are other than Jewish—they run the gamut from “righteous gentiles” to “primitive idolaters”—are protected under the laws of the ancient Hebrew Commonwealth so long as they obey the Noachic covenant. This was recognized by such Quakers as William Penn, author of *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience* (1671) and the *Constitution for the Colony of Pennsylvania* which guarantees “religious freedom,” who wanted to see a Christian Commonwealth with tolerance toward “heretics” as well as non-Christians, and argued that Christendom should emulate the coexistence promulgated by the Hebrew Commonwealth.<sup>95</sup>

If it is not Jewish particularism that leads inevitably to religious discrimination and racial intolerance among Christian universalists, then what does? When we try to see past local issues—like the myths of tribal autochthony that might allow underprivileged social classes to think that they are “unpolluted children of the earth” even if they not pure-blooded Spanish noblemen (*hidalgos*)<sup>96</sup>—a major factor would be the doctrinal absence, essential to the universalist dogma of Christianity, of the Old Testament category of “human beings who are other than siblings.” Christianity, indeed, gains its fundamental New Testament mediation between humankind and God (in the person of the man-God Jesus) only as a trade-off for the Old Testament mediation between sibling human being and nonhuman other. The absence of the category of “nonsibling human being,” expressed by the formulation “all human beings are siblings, none are others,” is of the essence of









