

# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

## AP EUROPEAN HISTORY



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- This was a question on last years exam that proved to be very problematic for students.
- The issue was that the question was asking about anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century, and most students went immediately to the Nazi regime, the most “familiar” form of anti-Semitism, which was in the twentieth century.



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **In the 19th century, more Jews began to enter increasingly into the mainstream of European society, particularly in many of the western nations.**
- **In exchange for greater legal rights and greater acceptance in society Jews in France, Britain, Germany and elsewhere discarded many of their older customs.**



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **Ironically, this "assimilation" helped give rise to a newer form of anti-Jewish prejudice.**
- **As Judaic historian Robert Seltzer has noted, the new prejudice "was a backlash against Jewish success upon entering the mainstream of European society, and in that the acculturated rather than the traditional Jew was the main focus of fear."**



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- German unification was not seamless in the 1870.
- As economic and social difficulties rose as Germany was in the process of inventing who they were, it seemed a natural outgrowth to determine who they were not.
- Let's think of this another way:



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **Klaus Fischer, a German historian of the roots of Nazism, has stressed that the Jews were "an ancient cultured people" who practiced a reverence for learning and philosophical thinking centuries before the existence of the early Greek city-states or the Roman republic.**
- **Positive Message, and there is more..**



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **When Jews entered into Europe in large numbers during the Middle Ages, "they found themselves living among primitive Western people who were repelled by their superior intelligence and their clever business acumen.**



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **The Europeans' responses toward the Jews involved religious differences, cultural differences, the suspicion of one group of people toward 'outsiders,' and not a little envy. It was a volatile mixture that readily could be fanned into violence.**
- **Here is a surprising quote from a person generally regarded as heroic for his stand against hypocrisy and intolerance:**



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- *"Let the magistrates burn their synagogues and let whatever escapes be covered with sand and mud. Let them be forced to work, and if this avails nothing, we will be compelled to expel them like dogs . . ."*
- Martin Luther, "Concerning the Jews and Their Lies", 1543.
- This will be quoted heavily by the Nazi party in the 1930's



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- Historically, it was because the Jews lived “apart” from the rest of European society, and the fact that they would be relegated to Ghettos in most European cities that made them a convenient scapegoat.
- During the Black Death of the 14th century, Jews were massacred because many had believed that they had somehow caused the plague, perhaps by poisoning thousands of wells across the continent.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- What is happening in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that increase Anti-Semitism?
- Growing feelings of nationalism, a militant and active incarnation of the classical “romantic ideal of the state tended to fueled hatred for those who did not fit the national profile, or who could be a danger to the state.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- People being “left behind” the the growth of an increasingly “monetary” economy lash out at those who are perceived to profit most form it.
- A British aristocrat wrote of hatred for the Jews, **“not because we disliked them individually, for some of them were charming and even brilliant, but because they had brains and understood finance”**



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- The concept of racial purity became an unfortunate outgrowth of Social Darwinism.
- Soon, what we perceived legitimate scientists were writing scholarly papers on the purity of the blood, and the importance of the Aryan Race



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- *"There is no true civilization, among the European peoples, where the Aryan branch is not predominant . . . and when the Aryan blood is exhausted stagnation supervenes."*
- Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races*, 1854.
- This became a "Bible" on Race theory



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- **"Aryan" was a linguistic term, denoting one sub-category of the Indo-European family of languages. But Gobineau's decision to use the term to denote a physical characteristic fundamentally altered the use of the word.**
- Hence, we see in the latter half of the nineteenth century the growing myth of a Aryan race as the racial ideal for not just Germany, but for western Europe.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- In France, among some Catholics and anti-republican militarists, the Revolution was viewed as the incarnation of evil, planned by mysterious anti-French and anti-Christian forces.
- The international Alliance Israelite Universelle, organized to protect Jews, had its headquarters in Paris and was attacked as the center of an international French conspiracy.



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- In 1886, Edouard Drumont's anti-Semitic tract, *La France Juive*, went through 114 editions in one year and paved the way for large-scale anti-Semitic propaganda. Drumont, too, contrasted the greedy, mercantile Jew with the heroic and trusting Aryan.
- Remember the Dreyfus affair?



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- A French, Jewish military officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was arrested and charged in 1894 with selling state secrets to Germany. Dreyfus was convicted on the basis of trumped up evidence, and he was deported.
- After his trial, evidence surfaced which proved that Dreyfus was innocent, and his conviction was eventually overturned.



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- However, the Dreyfus case inflamed the hatred for the Jews of many French conservatives and reactionaries. The case divided the country politically, and anti-Jewish violence erupted.
- Ironically, the anti-Semitism unveiled by the Dreyfus case served as the motivation for an Austrian journalist, Theodor Herzl, to organize the Zionist movement. This movement culminated in the establishment of a Jewish national homeland, the State of Israel, in 1948.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- Anti-Semitism in Russia
- The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.
- This was composed with the assistance of the Russian secret police
- This alleged a massive Jewish international conspiracy to seize power all over the globe, to start wars and depressions.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- “The Protocols” Was supposed to have come from a meeting of Jewish Intelligentsia, lead by Theodore Herzl, who was, as we remember the leader of the movement called Zionism.
- Zionism was an ironic, or some might say logical outgrowth of growing anti-Semitism
- It called for the establishment of a separate Jewish state.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- Race Theory.
- Arthur Gobineau, a French diplomat was at the head of those believing that the original white race had been “poisoned’ because of intermarriage with inferior races.
- His major work on Race was published, interestingly, prior to the publication of Darwin’s Origin of the species”



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- Once social scientists and philosophers began to bastardize Darwin's central ideas, Gobineau became a prophet of sorts because of his beliefs.
- Houston Chamberlin, and Englishmen, published the “Foundations Racial Thought” in 1899.
- This massive two volume work hit many of the notes that would be later utilized by the Nazi Regime



## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- Chamberlin believed that mankind could be genetically engineered, bred to be superior.
- This could be accomplished by ensuring that only those of Aryan descent propagate with their kind.
- Hence, over time, the human race could be purged of inferior races.
- Chamberlin also espoused anti-Semitic ideas, blaming Jews for all of the major ills of European civilization



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- He wrote that a man, “of pure origin...is genuine towering over the rest of mankind. He soars heavenward like some strong and stately tree, nourished by thousands of roots-no solitary individual, but the living sum of untold souls striving for the same goal.
- Hitler will use the tree metaphor constantly in his appeals for a stronger and more unified Germany.



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ANTI-SEMITISM

- We see then the factors of:
- Growing, militant and racial nationalism
- The increase in the acceptance of Race Theory a fact
- The alienation of the Jews at the very time they were gaining greater access
- An industrial society that began to display more “acceptable” pursuits of wealth, production, as opposed to simple “money lending”
- The protocols of the Elders of Zion
- The Dreyfus case – Anti-Semitism in action

