

To what extent did
anti-semitism link to
german nationalism,
between the years
of...

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Introduction

The purpose of this research essay is to determine the extent to which anti-Semitism was linked and a part of German nationalism between the years of 1848 to 1945. The reason why I've chosen to explore this topic, is because I've found a keen interest in world history, and especially in German history, and so seek to learn more about it, more specifically: anti-Semitism and German nationalism.

This essay will explore and analyze seven different events in order to determine the extent to which anti-Semitism linked to German nationalism between this prolonged period of time.

The seven events that I will be analyzing and linking back to my research question go as follows: The introduction of anti-Semitism (The modern father of anti-Semitism) and 'The league of anti-Semite': basically the exploration of who first introduced the term 'anti-Semitism'. As well as an introduction of the league of anti-Semite and how they contributed to the establishment of the concept and ideology behind the term anti-semitism.

Secondly, the arrival of Jews in Germany and the reaction of the German people. Then, I will be introducing 'Henry Buxbaum' and the role I believe he played in allowing me to determine the extent as to which anti-Semitism linked to German nationalism. Thirdly, I will introduce 'The Weimar republic (1919-22) and its contribution to German nationalism. Afterwards, I will analyze 'Adolf Hitler's early dictatorship and how it affected German nationalism, and the evident link it had to anti-Semitism. Then, I will be

speaking about 'The Nazi party', as well as their contribution in influencing the German people and introducing anti-Semitism as a more appealing ideology. And finally, I will be introducing 'The holocaust'. This will be my investigation. In my conclusion, I will evaluate all seven of these events so that I may finally determine and ascertain the extent to which these events link to German nationalism in the period of time that I will be discerning. Both primary and secondary sources were used to conduct the research that will be presented in this essay and therefore any external sources present will be quoted and cited inside my text, as well as in my 'Works cited'.

Investigation

Anti-Semitism is the entrenched hatred for Jews or hostile behavior towards a Jew. This may take the form of religious teachings or even physically harming a Jew. The actual word anti-Semitism was first used and incorporated in 1879, when a German Journalist, Wilhelm Marr, who spoke about his hatred for Jews and for various other liberal and international political trends in his article. But, his specific hatred of Jews is what led him to use the term anti-Semitism, and as he himself put it, "as a way of describing anti-Jewish attitudes" (Hilberg). Born in Germany in 1819, Wilhelm Mar was known as the modern father of anti-Semitism. When he did join politics, his reasoning behind it was that he "favored the emancipation of oppressed groups" including the Jews. But when faced with failure, the failure of the 1848-1849 German revolution, meant to democratize Germany, he's real intentions were revealed when he channeled all his hatred towards an oppressed group he had once supported, the Jews. He proceeded to write

an essay, titled “ Der Weg zum Siege des Germanenthums uber das Judenthum” which means “ The way to victory of Germanicism over Judaism” (Suleyman). His view on anti-Semitism was mostly focused on the racial concept of Jews rather than the religious one. What really makes him stand up to his title of ‘ the modern father of anti-Semitism’ was when his own organization, called ‘ The League of anti-Semite’ introduced the word “ anti-Semite” into the political lexicon, and by doing this, he established the first political movement that was entirely based on anti-Jewish beliefs. Hence, the birth of Anti-Semitism. Nationalism is “ an ideology based on the premise that the individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests” (Kohn). In what ways would this relate to German nationalism? The league of anti-Semite turned into a tyranny that practiced strong hatred towards the already heavily oppressed group, the Jews. Their ideologies were similar to one of a nationalist, they too let their devotion to the German people overweigh the Jews’ interest. Mar was worried that soon there would be no public office that the Jews wouldn’t have infiltrated, even the highest ones, and called for “ resistance against this foreign power” (Marr) referring, in this sense, of course to the non-Jewish Germans, or the pure Germans. The idea that Jews were not purely German was earlier adapted by anti-Semites, and a crucial reason as to why anti-Semitism originated in the first place.

Arrival of the Jews

In the early and high middle ages (15th century), when the Jews initially arrived in Germany, the land was already occupied. Peasants were already

working on the farms and there was practically little to no need for any extra workers. So stripped from the opportunity of being landowners or workers, the Jews had no other choice but to become merchants and storekeepers.

As non-Germans, their activities were restricted. In a way that they were prohibited to own any property. They were obliged to rent homes in specific areas, which was later known as ghettos. The ghettos had unsatisfactory housing, poor sanitary facilities and were most of the time surrounded by high walls. These walls and buildings tended to be both narrow and high, and prevented sunlight from entering.

Overcrowded housing resulted in high disease rates in the ghettos. The Jews could not move about surrounding areas freely and had to return to these ghettos before dark. There were other laws, many petty, which applied only to them.

Among their arrival, the Jews were shut out, and excluded from the rest of the German people. This act of segregation could be considered as nationalism, because they're interest was always placed below non-Jew Germans, which was the majority of the German population at this time. Their regards were ignored, and they were oppressed and led into restricted areas, despite not having much of a choice. They were treated poorly and their needs were not satisfied. In addition to this Jews were specifically targeted. This was a clear act of anti-Semitism.

Jews were different from ordinary Germans. They had different customs, traditions, associated with their religion. And because they were herded together in ghettos, these differences were magnified.

These differences were what made them stand out and what distinguished them from non-Jew Germans. From pure Germans, and what made it simpler for the German regime to target them and enforce these petty laws on them. Hence, proving my thesis correct. By what means? They were targeted simply because they were Jews, which as earlier mentioned was a clear act of anti-Semitism, that when closely analyzed, did correlate with the German regime and nationalism to a large degree, during this span of time.

Henry Buxbaum

In 1918, Henry Buxbaum who was one of the estimated 100, 000 Jews who served in the German army during World War one had returned home to Germany after the war to find that anti-Semitism had expanded throughout the nation.

He commented: " You could taste anti-Semitism everywhere; the air of Germany was permeated by it. All the unavailable consequences of military defeat, revolution, a ruinous inflation, the Versailles, the loss of the territories in the east and west, the unsettling social changes following in their wake - each and every thing was blamed on the Jews and/or the communists, who for the convinced Jew-hater were interchangeable".

At this time, Jews only made up 500, 000 of the total German population of about 61 million. They were the minority. By 1922, Ludendorff focused

mainly on the Jews and claimed they were “ the enemy”. He wrote “ The supreme government of the Jewish people was working hand in hand with France and England. Perhaps it was leading them both” and as proof he cited the ‘ Protocols of the Elders of Zion’. But besides those rumors, most Germans in 1919 knew that the reason Germany had lost the war was because the United States gave France and Britain an advantage when it declared war on Germany in 1917. How and why does this link to German nationalism? Even after Jews served in the German army because of the great propaganda influence the Germans were exposed to, Jews were still treated as outsiders and blamed for things that they had no involvement in. Anti-Semitism was on the rise and The Jews were persistently being oppressed. Germany at this time was overruled by Wilhelm II, who was the German Kiser and the king of Prussia, as well as one of the most influential public leaders in World War one.

German nationalism at this time was still a rather new concept that had not so long ago surfaced during the unification of Germany in earlier years (1871). And so, at this specific point and time, there wasn’t much of a link between the two. However, this doesn’t come to neglect the very prominent acts of anti-Semitism towards Jews during this time.

The Weimar republic

In a single week on November 1918, Germany experienced vast changes. On November 9th, Wilhelm II gave up his position as Kaiser and fled to the Netherlands and within only hours, The Weimar republic replaced the

monarchy. The new government faced significant problems and the possibility of a revolution, similar to what happened in Russia.

On November 11th, two days after Germany was established as a republic, the First World War ended with a cease fire and only then did Germany realize that they had lost the war. And as if things couldn't get worse, they practically went bankrupt once the terms that were inflicted on them by The Treaty of Versailles were established. This angered the nation, and so the German people began insisting "that someone had stabbed the nation in the back". And General Erich Ludendorff, a war hero, began telling lawmakers that Germany had been betrayed and not by the men who had led the nation into war but "by Social democrats, the Catholic Centre Party, the socialists and of course the Jews". In the end, Germany's new constitution guaranteed equal rights to all citizens, including Jews. Some Jews decided to take advantage of this. This caused outraged extreme nationalists to begin to call 'The Weimar Republic' the "Jew Republic". Yet out of the two hundred and fifty Germans who served as ministers between 1919 and 1933, only four were actually Jews. For many nationalists even one Jew was too many.

The Weimar Republic was Germany's regime from 1919 to 1933, the time period after the First World War, right until Adolf Hitler took over and Nazi Germany was established. It was formed by a national assembly in Weimar after Wilhelm II was abdicated. This republic was mocked and criticized by the German people and the 'Stabbed in the back' theory came about after the Republic agreed to sign the Treaty of Versailles which accepted that they were responsible for the war.

During this period of time there was a noticeably larger growth in polarization and political anti-Semitism amid political parties and other organizations.

The aspect of Jews gaining more power and opportunities at this period of time were more prominent, Jews began increasingly getting more involved in the social dynamics of Germany, in things such as music (Arnold Schönberg) visual arts (Max Liebermann), and even science (Albert Einstein).

Unfortunately, the German people weren't as acceptant and approving of all these changes. As earlier mentioned, some even went as far as referring of the ' Weimar republic' as the ' Jew republic'.

German nationalism during this period of time was weak. Anti-Semitism was on the rise in the country whilst the government was beginning to allow more Jews into their system, which caused a rather dismissive reaction from the German people. I believe the reason why the Weimar republic was so hated by the German people was because anti-Semitism was still so prominent in the country. The German people were not ready or rather did not desire to let Jews gain more power than they already had. This leads to the belief that anti-Semitism did have a substantial impact on German nationalism during this period.

Adolf Hitler's early dictatorship

Among all the extreme nationalists who perceived Jews as a threat, Adolf Hitler was probably the worst out of them all. Hitler strongly believed that world history was " a struggle to the death between Germans and other

members of the so-called Aryan race and the Jewish race, with the world's future depending on the outcome of that struggle". This perception emerged from the extreme racism of his own time as well as the nationalism that was evoked in Germany in the early 1900s. It was a nationalism that idealized and praised the concept of ' Volk', the word literally meaning ' people' or as it came to mean ' race'. Which was what Hitler believed to be the opposite of what the Jews were. Hitler viewed Jews as " a dangerous force that drove other races to ruin" as well as " a subhuman cause of disease, disintegration and death" (Goldstein). Adolf Hitler, born in April 20th, 1889, only seventy years after Wilhelm Mar was the leader of Nazi Germany from the years 1934 to 1945. And in his time being a leader of an all too powerful party, the Nazis, before he passed on April 30th, 1945, Hitler himself was a practitioner of Anti-Semitism. He and the Nazis were not anti-Semites only because they were racists, like Wilhelm Mar. The real difference between Hitler and Wilhelm Mar was that Hitler saw bad in Jews no matter what they did. Hitler saw them as a menace and he died believing that (Hitler). The period that Adolf Hitler ruled Germany, was probably the period that Jews in Germany felt most oppressed and dehumanized. Anti-Semitism was so incredibly prominent and the despotism in the country was on the rise. Hitler was an extreme believer that the Jews were not a part of the ' Volk' (people), and that they were below them in every way possible. This was his message to the German people, who eventually began to share Hitler's nationalist view on the Jews. The link between anti-Semitism and German nationalism in this context is conspicuous. German nationalism during this time was virtually driven by anti-Semitism, because Germany was being controlled by an

extreme anti-Semite. As the German people supported Hitler, they concurred with his anti-Semitism views as a nation.

The Nazi Party

The Nazi party, was active in Germany from 1920-1945 and propagated Nazi ideologies similar to their leader, Adolf Hitler, both were extreme nationalist and anti-Semites. They promoted German pride and anti-Semitism to the German people as well as the dissatisfaction felt about the Treaty of Versailles and the results of world war one.

The first step in “ saving” Germany from the Jews and others inferior races from the Nazi perspective was by destroying the Weimar Republic, which was the name given to the German government between the end of the imperial period (1918) and the beginning of Nazi Germany (1933). And like other extremists groups, the Nazis hired thugs and organized a private army to kill supporters of the republic. Between 1919 and 1922, 376 political assassinations took place in Germany. German Communists were held responsible for 22 of those murders. The other assassinations were the work of extreme nationalist and most of their victims were Jews because German nationalists believed that all Jews were communists regardless of their actual party affiliations.

Walter Rathenau, Germany’s Foreign Minister was among those who were targeted by the extremist group. He was a wealthy Jewish businessman, writer and a thinker and without his efforts in reorganizing the German economy to ensure that the military had the resources it needed, Germany

would have probably lost the war sooner. Yet many disliked it and were even outraged when he was appointed foreign minister in 1922. No Jew had ever held such an important position in German Government history. And on the morning of June 24th, 1922, Walter was murdered on his way to work by two veterans who belonged to right-wing groups. After Ratheneau's murder, the violence in Germany intensified as a hyperinflation took hold. During that period, prices rose continuously as the purchasing power of money declines and by 1923, the value of a German mark, the country's unit of currency was dropping almost hourly. It was catastrophic. And although Jews suffered from this inflation along with everyone else, they were increasingly blamed for the crisis. On November 5th, 1923, a mob rushed into a section of Berlin that was home to many Jews from Russia and Poland and ransacked their shops. In that tense atmosphere, Hitler sensed an opportunity and so on the night of November 8th, he and his private army, accompanied by General Ludendorff, a recent ally, decided to fire two shots into the air at a Munich beer hall and announced that a revolution had begun. But within days, the uprising was over and Hitler, his troop and ally were charged with treason. Reporters from across the country covered the trial and presented Hitler as a "War hero committed to saving Germany from the Weimar Republic", which as previously mentioned, was referred to as a Jew Government. Hitler, most of his troop and Ludendorff each received a minimum sentence, and whilst Hitler was in jail, he wrote an auto-bibliography called "Mein Kampf" which means "My struggle" which included his beliefs and plans for the "evil" and "soulless" Jews, as he describes them in his auto bibliography. By the time Hitler and his associates had been released, which was in 1924, the

hyperinflation in Germany had ended and in 1930, the Nazis went from having 12 seats at the parliament to 107, thanks to Hitler, who now led nation's second largest political party in Germany.

The Nazi party was a huge contribution to Hitler's uprising and had a large influence and impact on German nationalism. The main principle of their mass movement was to aggrandize anti-Semitism and to glorify German unity and pride. Therefore, the Nazi party did constitute a link between German nationalism and anti-Semitism, and this link was of foremost importance and a factor that contributed to the genesis of the Holocaust.

They had a prodigious ascendancy on the German nation and managed to make the concept and ideology behind anti-Semitism seemingly appealing to the eyes of the German people. Their support of the concept led the Nazi party and their leader, among other contributing factors such as Hitler acquiring the position of Germany's first Chancellor after the president was deceased, to have jurisdiction over Germany, this essentially meaning the people. Hitler and the Nazi's became the new face to the new and most recent idea behind; German nationalism.

The Holocaust

At the end of World War One, in 1918, Europe was home to over 9.5 million Jews and after the Second World War it nearly doubled to 13.5 million. Some had migrated to other continents but most, nearly 6 million children, women, and men had been brutally murdered by the Nazi government, most specifically by the Nazi party and its notorious leader, Adolf Hitler. These

murders are now collectively known as the holocaust. The holocaust was organized by Adolf Hitler and was what he called the ' Final solution', in which he attempted to purify Germany and ultimately annihilate the Jewish race, in the concentration camps of Poland.

For the first time in history, a government with the support of many of its people had purposefully hunted down and killed Jews for no reason other than the fact that their ancestors were Jews. The intense hatred towards Jews and continuous mistreatment that they endured for centuries, finally came to an end. This horrid event progressed to catastrophic proportions and was intelligible evidence that anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism could lead to such calamitous. Therefore, anti-Semitism in this very sense did assuredly link to German nationalism during this period of time, hence proving my original thesis statement correct.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with reference to the research question, ' To what extent did anti-Semitism link to German Nationalism in Germany, between the years of 1848 to 1945?' It was to a large extent. As evident in the analysis and provided by evidence, anti-Semitism was in fact linked to German nationalism, at least in the period of time that the research covered.

When evaluating the seven events that were mentioned in my investigation, only one proved my thesis wrong. And this was ' Henry Buxbaum'. During this period of time, German nationalism was still a new concept and so was not strongly ensued from anti-Semitism. Therefore meaning that, there was

virtually no link or correlation between anti-Semitism and German nationalism during this time. But, when observing the six other events, presented and analyzed in the essay, they each proved my thesis right, which was that ' Anti-Semitism was linked to German nationalism between the period of 1848 to 1945' each of those events was essentially a build-up to the Final solution, which was ' The Holocaust'.

The Holocaust, as earlier mentioned was the result of extreme anti-Semitism that expanded and grew throughout the German nation. Adolf Hitler's great influence on the German people and the Nazi party was what led the Holocaust to be as successful as it was. Hitler was an extreme nationalist as well as an anti-Semite. And today, the Holocaust is collectively known as one of the largest genocides that's ever taken place in the world.