

German civilization: jewish assimilation in germany

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Jewish assimilation in German Heinrich Heine was born of Jewish parents in the 19th century in German. He was a of law in a German university who strongly identified himself with the Jews. Because he wanted to advance in his career, he converted to Christianity by accepting baptism but latter realized that conversion never solved any of his problems. Christians shunned him for his Jewish background and for accepting to be converted. Heine's work showed that he devoted to Jewish culture. For instance, Jewish allusions and characters characterized his poetry. Heine published his Hebrew melodies and many poems on Jewish themes. It is believed he described himself when he stated in his poem that, " take a secret and malicious pleasure in remodeling in whatever ways they see fit what the people's memory has preserved." Jews were treated as second-class people after the Germans. There are a lot of privileges that the Germans enjoyed unlike the Jews; they were also hated by the Germans. For instance, his friend Borne experienced a lot of hatred from his enemies because of his origin as a Jew, and strong believe and connection with Judaism. Heinrich secretly accepted baptism a month before his final examination of his degree in law. Publicly, Heine rebuked his actions by accepting baptism arguing that he had just bought for himself a direct ticket to European culture. He described his actions as a direct transformation from a religious act and culture into a secular European culture. Heine had a strong positive attitude towards the Jewish culture, even after converting, he still identified himself as a Jew, and on the other hand, he despised Christianity as purely European secularism. Six months after his baptism, he wrote a letter to his friend Mosses Mosser claiming that due to his conversion, the Jews and Christians now hated him. Due to this, he regretted being baptized. Heine's attitude

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towards baptism shows that he was not satisfied by the choices he made and the results that he received after conversion. Heine claimed that since his conversion, he has experienced misfortunes. Heine was annoyed with his friend Eduard Gans who converted several months after he converted. He responded to this news with a violent poem titled "to an apostle" this poem showed how he was emotional to this act. Ordinary families who converted to Christianity were able to marry, get children, lived in communities though they never engaged in public debates. The ordinary people never talked in public but they only whispered their grievances among themselves. It took the protest by journalists and the poets who made public what other people were experiencing in private. Moreover, His choices were typical of a Jew in German during that time because the Jewish mothers knew that their children would grow up and convert into Christianity. Bismarck had insisted that Germany was a Christian nation; this forced the Jews to convert to Christianity. The mass conversion of the Jews into Christianity was not what they wanted just like Heine's conversion. However, theologians were distrustful with the mass conversion and regarded it as inherent evil of Jewish character. He then proposed a six-year probation period for applicants. Unlike Heine who found neither relief nor honor in conversion, some converts turned against their fellow Jews. They allied with others and sowed seeds of discord that contributed to Jewish suffering. Fredrich Julius was one of the Jews who are not celebrated by the Jewish people; he will be remembered for betrayal. Fredrich converted to Lutheranism in 1819; he embraced Christianity but also allied with the mythical entity, German folk and denounced the Jewish culture. He even went a head to claim that the Jews were morally inferior to Germans. He was able to succeed Gans as <https://assignbuster.com/german-civilization-jewish-assimilation-in-germany/>

professor of law in 1840 in the University of Gans. In 1847, Friedrich expounded his ideas in a book, which strongly argued against the possibility of emancipation of the Jews in a Christian State. In spite of this, he never advocated for physical violence. His comments against the Jews alleviated his position in the university. Consequently, the Jewish conversion was slowed down by the growing secularization that affected all religious boundaries and the growing concern by theologians like Friedrich Schleiermacher about the mass conversion, which led to “judaization” of the church. Finally, in his poem “the Lorelei” reflected his hope for a new national identity in Germany that would include the integration of traditional German and Jewish culture. He encouraged the Jews to stick with their own Jewish culture and take pride in it. Work Cited Gay, Peter. *My German*. Question: *Growing up in Nazi Berlin*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1999. Print.