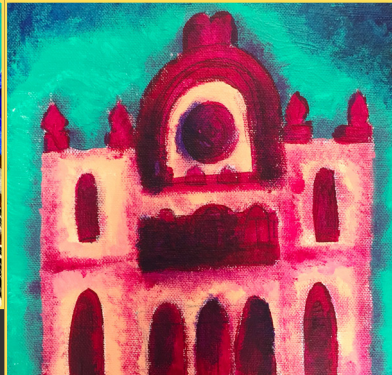




Odessa Synagogue, Ukraine  
Becky Masar



Peed Synagogue, Hungary  
Channa Gelbtuch



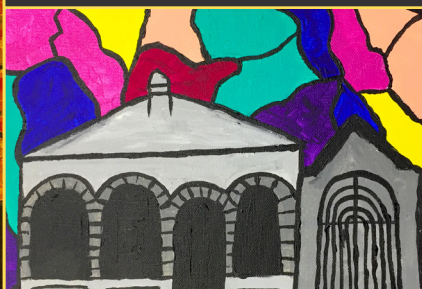
The New Synagogue, Berlin  
Rivka Sabel

# Anti-Semitism

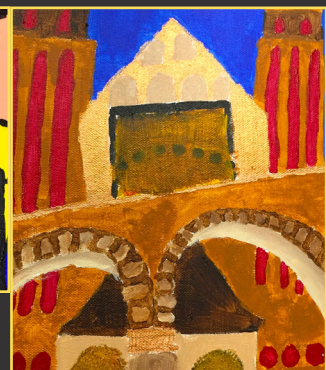
## THROUGH THE AGES



Hurvah Synagogue, Jerusalem  
Chana Shutyak



Odessa Synagogue, Ukraine  
Goldi Goldberger



Orthodox Synagogue, Germany  
Lele Book



Shul Windows  
Shoshana Schwalb



Miltenberg Synagogue, Germany  
Yehudis Haas



Orthodox Synagogue, Germany  
Chayie Safrin

Manhattan High School for Girls  
Spring 2019



# Anti-Semitism Through the Ages

Selected Student Historical Interpretations  
and Primary Sources from  
Manhattan High School Research Papers

Spring 2019



# Message from the Principal

*“If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world’s list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”*

- “Concerning the Jews”

Mark Twain, 1894

Over a century has passed and Mark Twain’s question concerning the Jews still persists. The journal you hold reflects this year’s schoolwide project, an expression of our desire to make sure that our students are aware and informed of the prevalence of anti-Semitism and that they recognize the similarities between historical events of anti-Semitism and contemporary events unfolding around us.

Our objective is two-fold: Ignorance is not a protectant. We want our girls to see anti-Semitism for what it is and to engage and advance more thoughtfully. Silence is not a panacea. We want our girls to see that leadership and advocacy are essential, and to cultivate the knowledge and skills with which to traverse this challenging landscape.

The papers we selected to publish reflect clear knowledge of historical content as well as attentive control of written skill. The original artwork on the cover reflects our schools tribute to 70th commemoration of Kristallnacht. I salute our history teachers, Mrs. Badrian, Mrs. Szenberg, Ms. Licht and Mrs. Rosensweig for sharing their scholarship with our students. Thank you to Mrs. Jackie Rosensweig for leading this project and our department with distinct dignity.

May The One Above continue to protect us and our precious children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Estee Friedman Stefansky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mrs. Estee Friedman-Stefansky

*Principal, General Studies*

# Foreword

*“Anti-Semitism is best understood as a virus. It has no logic. Jews were hated because they were rich, and because they were poor; because they were capitalists and because they were communists; because they held tenaciously to an ancient faith and because they were rootless cosmopolitans, believing nothing. Hate needs no logic. It is a sickness of the soul.”*

– Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Hatred against Jews has existed, in multifarious forms and manifestations, in all of history where Jews are present. It has taken root among the far left in irrational hatred of Israel, and in the far right and in populist, nationalist fringes that exclude Jews as outsiders. It has been justified by fundamentalist religions, Christian and Muslim, as well as by atheist science of racial Darwinism.

And it has appeared increasingly in the world today—from British Parliament to Paris, from the United Nations to U.S. Congressmembers, from Pittsburgh to the New York Times international edition. While we still, Baruch Hashem, live in times with opportunities, freedoms and acceptance at or near historic highs, the specter of anti-Semitism never does recede from view.

We hope you gain insight from our students’ original history research papers, written in their history or politics classes with Mrs. Badrian, Mrs. Rosensweig, and Mrs. Szenberg, exploring historical topics of anti-Semitism. The selection here represents some of the finest of the students’ work across the four grades. In these papers, students have learned to research using history books from the library, analyzing historical interpretations and primary sources, and contextualizing today’s events through comparing and contrasting to conditions past. They have seen the common threads woven in anti-Semitism through the ages, and have identified how history relates to both the blessings and the challenges of contemporary times

Wishing a geulah b’karov,

Mrs. Jackie Rosensweig  
*History Department Chair*





# Manhattan High School Award

*First Place History Award*

**Rivka Notkin**



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# Kielce: The Post Holocaust Pogrom, 1946

*Bruria Schwartz | Grade 9*

In 1946, the world was still reeling from the violence of the Holocaust. Millions of innocent civilians had been killed, thousands displaced, and the United States developed technology capable of destroying entire cities. The Kielce pogrom occurred after World War II, just as the world was beginning to return to regular order. Therefore, when the Poles committed this atrocity against the Jews, everyone was shocked. Yet, if you look at the context of this event you will realize that it was really just a representation of the cultural, social, and political times in Poland in postwar Europe. The violence in Kielce was sparked by the Poles' animosity toward the Jews that survived the Holocaust. Due to the economic gains the Poles had achieved during the war from the Jews' confiscated possessions, the Poles were reluctant to allow the Jews back into Polish society. When the Nazis rounded up Jews to take them to concentration camps, the Poles took over the Jews' land and businesses and were determined to forbid the Jews from occupying their former homes and businesses.

During the Nazi occupation of Poland, many Jews were displaced from their homes due to being sent to a concentration camp, or if they were lucky, by fleeing Nazi controlled areas. During their absence, the Poles occupied their homes, looted their businesses, and plundered their belongings (Gross). After the war approximately 200 Jews returned to their hometown of Kielce. However, these Jews were faced with innumerable hardships upon their return. If Jews had entrusted property with their Polish neighbors, they often had to go through the court system just to get their property back. There were court cases over who owned beds, chairs, spoons and all sorts of mundane items. The courts weren't any better, as the judges often expressed deep anti-Semitic sentiments (Gross). Because most of the town's Jews were killed, the Poles, who had possessions belonging to Jews who had survived, lamented their "bad luck" that they were unable to keep all of the Jews' belongings. Therefore, many Poles were looking for an excuse to strike against the Jews.

The Poles involved decided to resort to blood-libel like tactics to ensure that they could keep the Jews' possessions. A young Polish boy, Henryk Blaszczyk, was reported missing by his father. After he returned home, his father, Walenty Blaszczyk, stated that he was kidnapped by an unknown man, either a Jew or a Gypsy. A short while later, Henryk and his father were out on a walk when Henryk pointed to the house where a large number of Jews lived and said that they were the ones who kidnapped him, claiming they

trapped him in the basement. The Civic Militia then forcibly broke into the house, only to find that there were no children being held captive there. The inhabitants of the house had permits for weapons for self-defense, but were ordered to turn them over to the militia. It is unknown who initiated the fight, but shots were fired. The Civic Militia opened fire, killing and wounding some of the people in the building. In response, the Jews opened fire, killing two or three Poles, including a Civic Militia officer. Following the murders, the Jews were driven out of the building and attacked with stones and clubs by civilians and soldiers. Around 20 Jews were beaten to death with iron rods and clubs. Neither the military, security heads, nor the local civic leaders did anything to stifle the violence. The Kielce Pogrom was the deadliest post-WWII pogrom in Poland, occurring on July 4, 1946. Forty-two people were killed in all, with another 40 injured.

After the pogrom, the number of Jews living in Poland shrank dramatically. Approximately 20,000 Jews left in the month of July alone. Despite there being other episodes of post-war violence in Poland, the Kielce pogrom was the straw that broke the camel's back. After Kielce, Jews realized they were not safe in Poland. The police, who were expected to maintain the peace, turned their backs to the Jews, even attacking the Jews themselves. Their non-Jewish neighbors also turned into violent individuals who brutalized many.

However, there are many other theories about what sparked the violence. *In Fear: Anti-Semitism In Poland After Auschwitz*, author Jan T. Gross argues that the pogrom occurred out of the Poles' deep regret for what they had done. He states that when the Jews, scarred from Auschwitz, returned to Kielce, they forced the Poles to reckon with the damage they had caused. The Poles did not want to have to confront that reality, and having Jews living in their towns would mean they would need to confront it daily. Therefore, they decided to just cause all the Jews to flee Poland so they wouldn't have to face the damage they have caused.

Economic incentives were the primary motive for this act of anti-Semitism. Today, while anti-Semitic arguments aren't the same as those used in 1946, they still stem from a common cause: economic motivations. Still today, economics often comes into play in anti-Semitic stereotypes and anti-Semitism, such as people saying that the Jews control the banks or media. For example, during the 2018 midterm elections, house minority leader Kevin McCarthy tweeted that "We cannot allow Soros, Steyer and Bloomberg to

BUY this election!,” the tweet was widely seen as anti-Semitic, since Soros, Steyer, and Bloomberg are all of Jewish descent, and McCarthy’s mention that the Jews will control an election is simply anti-Semitic. Additionally, Representative Ilhan Omar tweeted that American politicians’ support for Israel is “all about the Benjamins.” This tweet also connects support for Jews and a Jewish state to economics and money, and idea which is profoundly anti-Semitic. Therefore, the primary motivation for the Kielce pogrom and a motivator for today’s anti-Semitism stems from a common root of economic motivations.

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# The Allahdad- Forced Conversions to Islam in Mashad Persia, 1839

*Rivka Hakimi | Grade 9*

The Allahdad was an event of significance to the Jewish life in Mashhad, Iran. As a result of this event, which displayed Muslim intolerance towards Jews, Jewish community life in Mashhad was short (200 years), and Jewish Mashadis migrated worldwide (Green). This episode is an example of classic Muslim anti-Semitism because the Muslims forced Jews to convert or be killed. In addition, this event happened quickly, not gradually over time, which is another example of classic Muslim anti-Semitism. The Allahdad also showed others living during this era the intolerance of Muslims towards Jews.

In March 1839, an event that would have an effect on the Jewish Mashadis forever began with a rumor. According to the 1845 travel logs of Joseph Wolff, a doctor had advised a Jewish woman to kill a dog for its blood in order to heal her sore hand. This act had been done in the Muslim holy month of Muharram. In response, the Muslim community rose and accused this Jewish woman of insulting the Muslims during their holy month (Allahdad). Conflicting rumors ignited anti-Semitic feelings the Muslims had had since the Jews began populating the city of Mashad in 1746 (Green). It finally gave them an excuse to harm Jews.

After accusing the woman of mocking the Muslims, an angry crowd got permission from the political leader to attack Jewish homes and destroy Jewish shuls and *sefarim*. On a single day in March 1839, 36 Jewish lives were taken. The Muslims did not stop there. They then demanded that the rest of the Jews in Mashad convert to Islam (Green). If the Jews refused, they were put to death.

The Jews decided to accept this demand and publically acted like Muslims. Secretly, however, in their homes they practiced Judaism. For example, they gave Muslim names to their children and dressed in traditional Muslim garb. They fed non-kosher meat to their animals, had shuls in their basements and rewrote *sefarim* in order to teach their children Torah. Mashadi Jews practiced Judaism this way until 1925 when they were granted some rights, but this freedom only lasted until 1945 when there was more tension between the Muslims and Jews and anti-Semitic riots broke out against Jews (Green). Most of the Jews of Mashad moved to Tehran, which is another main city in Iran, or migrated out of the country to places like New York or Israel, where most Mashadi Jews live today.

This event was an example of classic Islamic anti-Semitism because the Jews were forced to choose between conversion or death. This type of anti-

Semitism is classic among Muslim nations. While portions of the Quran teach believers to convert non-believers, other portions of the Quran call the non-believers enemies and deservers of death (Miles). So, because of the teachings in the Islamic Quran, this was a popular way that they did not accept any ideologies of those around them, especially to Jews.

Another feature of classic Muslim anti-Semitism is how quickly an incident can spark violence. In most countries, anti-Semitic feelings simmer gradually over time. For example, before the Holocaust, there were signs that showed European anti-Semitism growing. This gave Jews some opportunities to leave before the war started. In contrast, when anti-Semitism has occurred within a Muslim-ruled country, acute feelings and actions against the Jews can develop suddenly. One day, Jews are living freely in society and a few weeks or months later, something happens and turns into an anti-Semitic event or tragedy. The best example is the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Under the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi Jews had freedom of religion. Life was very good for Jews under the Shah's rule. But in a matter of a few short months, everything changed. Jews couldn't attend Jewish schools anymore. They were afraid to practice Judaism in public. They were not allowed to obtain passports to leave the country. Life had turned upside down for the Jews of Iran practically overnight. These features are all clearly present in the events of the Allahdad forced conversion of Mashad's Jews.

The Allahdad showed others living in this era how intolerant Muslims could be. It opened the eyes of other Jews living in Muslim areas to the possibility of Muslim persecution as this was not the only anti-Semitic event. In 1840 in Damascus, Syria thirteen noble Jews were accused of killing a Christian monk for religious purposes. Similarly, during the Allahdad, Mashadi Jews were blamed for mocking Muslims on their holy day. Both episodes show how quick anti-Semitism began, and that how even the smallest accusation can have impactful consequences. These events were a warning sign to Jews to be very careful and to prepare for such events. Calm times can easily turn to the most difficult of times.

Today, Muslim anti-Semitism is different from that of the nineteenth century. The State of Israel has changed the dynamics of anti-Semitism. Today, Muslims claim they are not anti-Semitic but anti-Israel. However, Anti Zionism is simply just another form of anti-Semitism. The country of Israel is defined by its religion, being the "Jew of nations" (Marquardt). Therefore,



anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. Although its garb has changed over time, anti-Semitism still remains a sad and ever present part of Jewish history.

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# Viktor Orban & Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Hungary

*Elana Spearman | Grade 9*

Anti-Semitism is re-emerging all around the globe. While people in America and other countries claim to denounce anti-Semitism, in actuality their policies and lack of action speak otherwise. One country experiencing this phenomenon in particular is Hungary. First, the Hungarian parliament passed laws against George Soros. These led to billboards portraying Soros as an illegal migrant. Soon after, Viktor Orban, the Prime Minister of Hungary, allowed the *Figyelo* magazine to be published with a derogatory picture of a Jew on the cover. Hungary's laws, reactions, and hypocrisy portray their anti-Semitic feelings for Jews.

It is clear to see the anti-Semitism of recent Hungarian legislation. In 2017, the Hungarian parliament passed laws against a liberal financier and Holocaust survivor, George Soros. He funded many civil rights groups whom Viktor Orban accused of disrespecting Hungary. These laws make it a crime to disrespect Hungary's rules and the punishment is imprisonment. The government soon paid for large public billboards that portrayed Soros with these words: "Let's not let Soros have the last laugh: 99 percent reject illegal migration" (Leifer). Many people graffitied the words "dirty Jew" on these billboards. Andras Heisler, president of Mazsihisz, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, sent a letter to Orban asking him to stop the anti-Soros campaign and to remove the billboards. Orban refused to take them down, claiming that it was his duty to protect Hungary from immigrants. He strengthened anti-Soros attacks during the led up to the spring election.

In November 2018, a business magazine in Hungary named *Figyelo* published an anti-Semitic picture on their weekly cover. On the cover was Andras Heisler, the head of Mazsihisz, the country's largest Jewish group, surrounded by money. *Figyelo* accused Heisler and Mazsihisz of "accounting irregularities" that were connected to a state-funded synagogue's renovation project in Budapest. Mazsihisz contested these accusations. Hungary's largest Jewish group explained how the *Figyelo* cover "revives centuries old stereotypes against our community." It portrayed Jews as money-hungry people. This was similar to what the Nazis and other anti-Semitic groups have done and are doing. Another thing to take into account is the fact that *Figyelo* is linked to Viktor Orban. Orban has refused to criticize or comment about the anti-Semitic magazine cover. The *Figyelo* cover attacked a respected figure of Hungary's Jewish community (Forman). Whether it was because of Orban's billboards or out of true hate, the Jewish people are still fearful.

Many people had different reactions to the billboards and magazine. Laszlo Miklosi, the president of the Association of Hungarian History Teachers, felt that “The government’s goal is to create a version of history preferable to Orban” (Kingsley). Professor Andras Patyi, the head of a new university that trains public officials, said that “The government is using its democratic legitimacy not only to reform the state but to reform the society. This is common in democratic societies” (Kingsley). Some people felt that the *Figyelo* magazine’s cover of Andras Heisler was stereotyping and insensitive. WJC President Ronald Lauder wrote a letter to Orban informing him that [The cover] is one of the oldest and vilest caricatures of the Jewish people and it places not just the magazine, but all of Hungary in a very bad light. The timing of this is especially critical because people in the United States, and elsewhere, are paying greater attention to the upsurge in anti-Semitism throughout Europe and, especially, in Hungary....While I understand and respect the boundaries of a free press, I believe your strong, public condemnation of this very clear attack on all Jewish people, would not just distance you, personally, from this most disgusting hatred, worthy of the Nazi era, but it would also place your government and all of Hungary in a better light (Toi).

Therefore, some people found these events to be anti-Semitic while others felt it was acceptable.

What was very surprising about these two occurrences was its historical context. Orban has continuously condemned anti-Semitism and told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu many times that he has “zero tolerance” for anti-Semitism. In 2010, Orban had his government make it illegal to deny the Nazi genocide. His administration has relished that they donate to Jewish communities in Hungary, and protect them from anti-Semitism. Zoltan Kovacs, a spokesman for Orban, defends Orban’s government’s migration policies calling Hungary “one of the safest places for European Jews.” This statement does not reflect Orban’s actions of dog whistling anti-Semitism with the billboard and the magazine. In one of Orban’s campaign speeches, he praised Miklos Horthy, Hungary’s anti-Semitic interwar leader, who associated with Hitler as an “exceptional statesman” (Leifer). Another point is that Orban’s government awarded Zsolt Bayer, an anti-Semitic journalist who is one of the founders of Orban’s Fidesz party. Bayer had criticized “Brooklyn Jews,” saying they caused a 2008 financial crisis (Leifer). Although

Viktor Orban and Hungary, as a nation, claims not to be anti-Semitic, their actions challenge their statements.

On February 9, 2019 a Neo Nazi march took place in Budapest. There was an estimate of about 2,800 extremists that carried swastikas and “other fascist symbols.” Jews in Hungary claim that the government and police have failed to stop this march and allowed it to take place. Avigdor Liberman, former Defense Minister of Israel, attacked the Hungarian police agreeing that they failed to stop the marches (Sharon). This is a more recent example of anti-Semitism in Hungary which proves that the government is hypocritical. They speak of friendship with the Jews and claim to oppose anti-Semitism yet turn a blind eye to Hungarian anti-Semitism.

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# The Barcelona Dispute Between the Ramban and Pablo Christiani, 1263

*Zahava Schwartz | Grade 9*

The effects of anti-Semitism can be extremely harmful and deadly. Spain experienced an increase of anti-Semitism in the mid-thirteenth century. Blood libel accusations were increasing and many harsh decrees were enforced against the Jewish people. Crusaders began robbing and killing the Jews and forced conversions to Christianity spread. In the year 1263, the dispute of Barcelona, a significant anti-Semitic event, took place. It was a debate between the Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban), a great Jewish scholar, and Pablo Christiani, a Dominican friar. The goal of the debate was to convince Jews that Christianity was the true religion. According to some commentators, it was part of a plan to convert all Jews in Europe to Christianity (Gerber 101). Although this event was staged in order to settle controversial questions between Christianity and Judaism, it resulted in the mass murder and expulsion of many Jews.

In the summer of 1263, a week before Shavuot, a four-day disputation between Jews and Christians took place in Barcelona, Spain. The idea of a debate between the Ramban and Pablo Christiani was proposed to King James I of Aragon by Christiani. Christiani believed that since he was once a practicing Jew and had Torah knowledge, he would be able to prove the falsehood of Judaism through sources like the Torah and the Talmud. There were three main topics that were debated throughout the Disputation. The first was, whether Mashiach (the Messiah) has already come, the second was whether Mashiach is human or immortal, and the third was whether Judaism or Christianity is the true religion.

According to some commentators, this debate was essential to the conversion of Jews to Christianity (Gerber 101). Although converting all the Jews was the Dominicans' plan, they faced a challenge. If they would convert all the Jews, they would fulfill their goal, but once they converted all the Jews there would be no one to use as a scapegoat anymore. Secondly, Christiani was in a predicament because if he were to lose, he would subject himself to embarrassment, which could evoke doubt among some Christians. The Ramban was worried that if he would lose the debate, then some Jews might follow Christiani and convert to Christianity.

King James I guaranteed the Ramban complete freedom of speech throughout the debate, and the Ramban took full advantage. Since Christiani was a Jew, the Ramban knew that he thought of the Talmud christologically and that he would try to use it as a proof text to support his claims. According

to some sources, Christiani “devoted his life to attacking the Jewish people and rabbinical literature” (Gerber 106). Throughout the debate, Christiani tried making claims and bringing Torah sources to support them, but the Ramban quickly disproved them with logical and clear reasoning.

One of the topics discussed was the Trinity. The Ramban also touched on other topics. He stated that the main conflict between Judaism and Christianity does not rely on the existence of Mashiach. During the debate, he also alluded to the future destruction and fall of Christianity. Additionally, The Ramban touched on Yashu’s negative impact on the world stating, “From the time of Yashu until the present the world has been filled with violence and injustice, and the Christians have shed more blood than all the other peoples.” Lastly, the Ramban pointed out that Yashu’s moral platform was to intervene on behalf of the poor but no one had harmfully manipulated the poor more than the Church.

James I ended the disputation and commented to the Ramban, “Never have I seen anyone who was in the wrong argue as well as you have.” In the end, the winning title was awarded to the Ramban. The following Shabbos, the king attended the Ramban’s synagogue and addressed the congregation during the services. This was an event without medieval precedent. The following day, the Ramban was presented with monetary prize of 300 gold coins for his excellent performance in the debate. The Ramban returned to his home in Gerona to write down his description of the debate and to give a copy to the bishop of the city. Ultimately, the Ramban was charged with the crime of blasphemy, showing contempt for Yashu. For this he was forced into exile (1267) leaving his family behind. He set his sights on Palestine.

After the Ramban’s expulsion, life for the Jews in Spain took a turn for the worse. A decree was soon established that all Jewish books should be set aflame within the next three months. Spanish Jews were then ordered to wear a yellow badge, a mark that distinguished them from Catholics. This law intended to keep the Jews from associating with the Catholics. Other false accusations charged that Jews were allies of Spain’s enemies and the Jews needed Christian and animal blood for religious rituals.

The disputation was a verbal act of anti-Semitism which led to discrimination, mass murder and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Verbal anti-Semitism was not only present during the 13th and 14th centuries but it is still practiced today. Ilhan Omar, a Somali-American politician, recently

expressed numerous comments which are considered highly inflammatory and acts of anti-Semitism. Just as Pablo Christiani was in a position of power and influence as a friar, a member of a religious order, Ilhan Omar is also a person of influence where people are persuaded by and support her anti-Semitic comments. According to an article in *The Washington Post*, Ilhan Omar is “an outspoken critic of Israel” and her “remarks... invoke anti-Semitic stereotypes”(Viebeck, “In Minnesota, Rep. Ilhan Omar’s Comments Cause Pain and Confusion,” *Washington Post*). Omar posted, “Israel has hypnotized the world” with its “evil doings” which claims that Israel pressured other countries to provide for them. Anti-Zionism is the modern form of anti-Semitism which Omar engages in repeatedly. Just like the Ramban defended the Jewish religion from Pablo Christiani, Jonathan Greenblatt, the National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and many others recognized and spoke out against Omar’s comments. It is known that history repeats itself and that even a couple anti-Semitic remarks and a debate discussing religion can be used to fuel something much worse. We need to speak up and defend our religion, morals and beliefs and make it clear to the world that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated.

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# The Edgardo Mortara Kidnapping, 1857

*Sara Sash | Grade 10*

Edgardo Mortara, an Italian Jewish child who was kidnapped by the Catholic Church because his nanny had baptized him, experienced a sad fate that was, sadly, not unique to him in the Italian-Jewish history. However, unlike earlier similar incidents, the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara caused international protest and national changes, leaving historians to wonder why it was such an impactful episode. David I. Kertzer is a social anthropologist who focuses on Italian history. Kertzer believes that the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara played a big role in the unification of Italy and the ending of the Pope's power. However, the Mortara Affair has been ignored by many historians, even though it has been a big part of history, and Kertzer also provides explanations as to why it's been ignored. Kertzer shows how from different points of views the case can have different levels of importance, but essentially, he himself believes that it is a big part of Italian history.

Momolo and Marianna Mortara lived in Bologna with their children. When their son Edgardo was young, he became deadly sick and their Catholic maid secretly had him baptized, believing it would save his life. The boy survived, and later, when Edgardo was six, the church heard about it they sent the police to take the boy to be raised by the Vatican; a Catholic boy could not be raised by a Jewish family. This particular case caused many protests and animosity towards the church during the late 1850s. The area where historians debate seriously is whether the international to-do in the press about Mortara's kidnapping actually had much impact on changing the political events of the time or not.

Kertzer's book *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* focuses on how this case led to the unification of Italy and how it brought an end to the power of the Pope. In 1859 Italy began its physical unification under the Piedmont-Sardinian kingdom, when Austria lost Lombardy and it became part of Sardinia. Count Camillo di Cavour, the prime minister of Sardinia, wanted to unify Italy by adding land to King Victor Emmanuel II, the king of Sardinia. He used the Mortara case to show how having the church control everything was an ancient way of living. Kertzer explains that "the case could be used to undermine support for the Pope's temporal power among the Catholics" (Kertzer 119). The church taking a Jewish six-year-old boy demonstrates how the Pope had too much power, and Cavour took advantage of this and used it to get Napoleon III to be his ally and help fight against the church. Napoleon III, the emperor of France, originally supported the unification of



Italy; however, to maintain his rule in France, in 1849 he stopped his army fighting in Rome so that he would have the support of the Catholics in his land. Later, in 1859, Napoleon sent troops to Sardinia suddenly supporting the unification, because he did not like the way the church ruled.

Kertzer believes that Napoleon's sudden change of heart was due to the kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara. His main evidence for this is his study of press coverage of the affair. The spread of the Mortara affair was very quick, and there were articles being published around the world about the kidnapping. Even people in the United States heard about it; over twenty articles were published by *The New York Times*, and there were thirty-one published in *Baltimore American*, just in December of 1858 alone. Kertzer believes that this greatly affected public opinion by turning people against the church. He says that when the French were in Italy they heard about the six-year-old boy who was taken by the church and from then on, the French had Edgardo in their hearts as they fought to unify Italy and abolish the Pope's power.

When Sardinia allied with France they fought against Austria in the Austrian-Franco war of 1859, which ended with the defeat of the Austrian military and Sardinia acquiring Lombardy. This, according to most historians was the beginning of the unification of Italy and an end to the Pope's power. Using Kertzer's logic, who believes that the reason the French joined the Sardinians was because of Edgardo's kidnapping, the unification of Italy was caused by Edgardo's kidnapping.

However, even though Kertzer believes the Mortara case is important in history, there are many groups of historians who do not believe it holds that much significance and ignore it altogether. Surprisingly, the Italians do not learn about this kidnapping; there are two groups of Italian historians and Kertzer explains why each one does not care about it. The church historians understand that the Mortara case does hold some importance, "but their concern is primarily with the negative impact the case had on the church" (301). They don't really focus on it too much because it shows the Pope abusing his power and "draws attention to the fact that the church's transition from fundamentalism to modernity took place only in the present century" (301). The other group, called the *Risorgimento*, is comprised of historians whose studies focus on the time period of the Unification of Italy. These historians ignore the case, and although their motive is unknown,

Kertzer suspects that it is because they believe the case only affected Jews and therefore, there is no need for others to know and learn the details of the case (301). Historians of the Unification have tended to prefer to focus on stories about Italian nationalism, seeing the Italian nationality as an ethnic group that excludes the Jews by definition.

Many Italian Jews also do not learn much about this case, which Kertzer attributes to their embarrassment over the affair. When Edgardo was taken to the church he changed: he abandoned Judaism and said that he'd rather stay with the church than go back home. This was a case in which the child showed everyone how he believed Catholicism was the 'true religion'. For Jews this was something they were ashamed about and decided not to focus on the case because of how uncomfortable it was for them. Currently, however, the Mortara case is viewed as an important part of modern Jewish history, even though it does not present Judaism in a position of strength.

I don't think any of the approaches is fully correct in this context. Kertzer's beliefs are very far-fetched because there are many factors that are the cause of events in history. It's impossible to say that if Edgardo Mortara hadn't been kidnapped that Italy wouldn't have been unified, and there is no way to know every one of Napoleon III's motives to help with the unification. Furthermore, the historians that acknowledge the affair but don't learn about it, or ignore it all together, aren't right either. Every part of history is important, some might be more significant than others, but in my opinion, all events in history should be studied.

The kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara happened in a time where often, Jewish children were mistreated by Christian neighbors, and in the 1800s this was a very common form of anti-Semitism. Although we may think we face a lot of anti-Semitism in the twenty-first century, it's important to note that if it wasn't for the Second Vatican, Jews would probably be treated much worse. The reason Jews were particularly treated harshly by Christians was because of their belief that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus, and therefore, the Christians were religiously allowed to, and supposed to hurt the Jews. The Second Vatican which began on January 25, 1959 was a council held by Pope John XXIII, in which he made reforms to the Christian religion. One of the things he changed was that Christians would not blame Jews for the death of Jesus. Before this reform, Christians had a strong animosity

towards Jews, however many Christians soon learned to accept Jews and not purposely try to hurt them, like they did in the 1800s.

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# The Dreyfus Affair, 1894

Rivka Notkin | Grade 10

The importance the Dreyfus affair to Jewish history lies not just in it being an early example of modern anti-Semitism but, because it became a lasting *cause célèbre*, a headlining scandal across the continent. The Dreyfus affair, from 1894 to 1896, forced recognition that selfless Jewish contributions to society would exacerbate, not alleviate, Europe's underlying anti-Semitism. James Carroll, a former Catholic priest, authored a book on the history of anti-Semitism called *Constantine's Sword*. Christopher E. Forth, the Dean's Professor of Humanities and professor of history at the University of Kansas, wrote *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*. These historians explored the causes, effects and everything in between for the Dreyfus Affair. Modern anti-Semitism emphasizes hatred of Jews as race, not as a religion, while classical anti-Semitism is hatred towards the Jewish religion. Although James Carroll thinks that the Affair was composed of classical anti-Semitism, and negative religious ideologies, Christopher Forth thinks that the anti-Semitism was modern and drew on racial stereotypes, and propaganda from this time displays modern anti-Semitism and racial stereotypes. Many primary sources seem to support Forth's interpretation.

The Dreyfus affair began in 1894 and ended in 1906. Alfred Dreyfus, a French army captain, was convicted of treason for allegedly leaking military secrets to the Germans after a crumpled paper was found in a wastebasket in the German embassy. At first, the public was in support of the conviction of Dreyfus, who was Jewish. Dreyfus was sentenced to life in prison on Devil's Island. In 1896 the real culprit, a man named Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy was brought to court, although he was quickly acquitted, and Dreyfus was further accused on false charges. Only after French novelist Emile Zola published an editorial called "J'accuse...!" in 1898 did people started seeing the anti-Semitism in this case (Carroll 454). France was divided into two groups, the Dreyfusards, who supported Dreyfus, and the anti-Dreyfusards. This caused a tremendous political scandal which led to Dreyfus' case being reopened. He was again found guilty, although he was pardoned a few days later. In 1906, Dreyfus returned to his position in the French military and remained loyal to his country during World War I. France has not yet apologized for their anti-Semitism during that time, nor have they apologized about what they did to Dreyfus.

The Affair was anti-Semitic because Dreyfus was only accused because he was Jewish and because it initiated major outbursts of anti-Semitic feeling

throughout France from those who supported charges against Dreyfus. There was no evidence that he was the one who was committing treason, but he was accused because he was the only Jew on the list of possible suspects. The reason that was posed for him being guilty was because he was a Jew and no other provable reason. This led to a rise of anti-Semitism in France, and inflamed the hatred towards the Jewish bourgeoisie and led to violence, leading to the bigger question: was this anti-Semitism modern or classical, and which religious stereotypes and religious ideologies of Jews did it draw upon?

In his book, *Constantine's Sword*, James Carroll argues that Dreyfus affair was based on the classical anti-Semitism that religious Christians hated the Jews with, and although the anti-Semitism that the majority of France felt was modern on the surface, its sources were classical and therefore the Affair was a case of classical anti-Semitism. He says “such knee-jerk anti-Semitism was more than an expression of the racial hatred of Jews” (462), bringing an example of “the people who were devout, such as priests, outwardly condemn[ing] Jews because they killed Christ” (456). They argued that their anti-Semitism was justified because Jews were traitors and killers of Christian children. They also said they were anti-Jews because the Jew is “a financier” (457), in line with classical stereotypes of Jewish over-involvement with money. A Vatican newspaper called *L'Osservatore Romano* at the time likewise accused Jews of having “the largest share of all wealth, movable, and immovable” (457). Carroll thinks that the devout Christians had felt classical anti-Semitism throughout this seemingly-modern conflict.

Carroll continues to show more anti-Semitism during the Dreyfus Affair by going on to explain the opinions and motivations of the larger majority of France. He says “that there was nothing tacit about the anti-Semitism of two attack-dog newspapers that led the charge against Dreyfus and the Jews.” He brings the example of a Catholic populist named Edouard Drumont, who wrote a book where he condemned Jews, where he accused Jews of being “money-grubbing, greedy, scheming, subtle, [...] by instinct a merchant” (458). Carroll believes that although on the surface it may seem like the anti-Semitism was modern, it ultimately drew back on the idea that the Jews should be condemned because of their religion and because they have wronged the Christians. Therefore Carroll believes that although there were some modern notes, the anti-Semitism at this time was meaningfully

shaped by classical anti-Semitism.

In his book, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*, Christopher E. Forth argues that both modern anti-Semitism and racial stereotyping were involved. He says “the Dreyfus Affair constituted the first serious eruption of modern anti-Semitism, a form of persecution that differed from more traditional forms of Jew-hating.” In his opinion, the Affair was one of the first times Jews were hated for their race instead of their religion. Forth continues to explain which anti-Semitic ideas were brought up: “This modern anti-Semitism was also coextensive with the traditional assumption that Jewish men, whether due to age-old customs or congenital factors, were bookish, sedentary beings, whose weakness, cowardice, and effeminacy rendered them unfit for military service” (Forth 19). Forth sees these ideas as embodying both anti-Semitism and racism. In his opinion, the “inter-articulation of gender and race” served as guises for those who were racists to be racist and anti-Semites to be anti-Semitic without having to outwardly say pinpoint their opinions. People made comments that were on the surface racist, such as saying that Jews had weak bodies and were cowards, when their true intentions were to be anti-Semitic. Forth brings an example of this by explaining that “In addition to citing his Jewishness, the press provided ample information about the family background of Dreyfus” (17). The press almost ‘justified’ their anti-Semitism by adding reasons to target Jews based on their lineage or nationality. Therefore, Forth believes that the anti-Semitism at this time was both modern and racial, and that it drew on older stereotypes as well.

Forth and Carroll’s opinions conflict, possibly because they wrote their books from different viewpoints and with different motivations. Carroll wrote his book from the viewpoint of a former Catholic priest, and the main topic he addresses is classic-type anti-Semitism. Because of this, his opinions draw on Catholic ties to anti-Semitism. This is why he addressed the classical anti-Semitism of the Christians, because he is a Christian. On the other hand, Forth titled his book *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*. This is because the object of the book was to describe the way his masculinity was compromised by racist comments that he was weak and cowardly. This might be why he writes that the anti-Semitism was modern and there were racial stereotypes, because, in his opinion these comments were the way that his machismo was compromised.

Propaganda from newspapers such as *La Libre Parole* portray Dreyfus with modern anti-Semitic images, such as having a big nose, holding money bags, and embracing a globe. *La Libre Parole* was a French anti-Semitic political newspaper founded in 1892 by the journalist Édouard Drumont. In his book, *Children of the Revolution*, Robert Gildea writes “[Édouard Drumont] transformed anti-Semitism [...] into an all embracing condemnation of Jews for the evils of the modern world” (Gildea 353-354). Drumont’s newspaper remolded anti-Semitic ideologies across France by publicizing his opinions on Jews in finance and politics. The propaganda on the cover of an 1893 edition, titled *Die Ganze Welt als Vaterland der Juden* (The Whole World as the Fatherland of the Jews), portrays Dreyfus as a monster, hugging the world, with money under his hands and coins spilling out of his pockets. This imagery is modern anti-Semitism because it draws on secular ideologies about Jews, targeting their race instead of religion. Dreyfus with money under his hands and surrounding him portrays the stereotype that Jews are greedy and “money-grabbing.” The propaganda shows Dreyfus wrapping his arms around the world, representing the idea that Jews are trying to achieve global dominance and total economic control. Other examples of propaganda from this newspaper show similar images, such as Dreyfus with a ‘Jewish-nose’ and holding money bags. This shows the nation at this time hated Dreyfus because he was racially a Jew, not particularly because he may have practiced Judaism. Therefore, according to primary sources, anti-Semitism at his time was modern.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism is alive and well in France today. People are still being attacked for assimilating with the word ‘Jew.’ Since 1900, millions of North African Muslims (and Jews) have moved to France, heightening anti-Semitic conflicts. On February 11<sup>th</sup> of this year, the word “Juden” – German for Jew—was sprayed in yellow paint on the window of a bagel shop. This shows that the French still hate Jew on the account of them being a Jew, just like what happened to Dreyfus. In America, Ilhan Omar, a representative in Congress tweeted “it’s all about the benjamins baby.” This shows that Jews are still being stereotyped as money-grabbers and stingy, like they were during the Dreyfus affair. Although these conflicts are terrible, and anti-Semitic ideologies remain rampant, there has not yet been such an earth shattering, life changing moment in France for Jews as the Dreyfus Affair, which spread anti-Semitism across the world.

The Dreyfus affair had an indirect positive outcome. The attacks on Judaism motivated Theodor Herzl to create modern Zionism, and help institute a Jewish state. The Dreyfus affair united millions of Jews, and its ramifications, both positive and negative are endless.

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# General Grant's Order No. 11, 1862

*Chedva Levine | Grade 11*

General Order No. 11, given in 1862 during the Civil War and dismissing Jews from Ulysses S. Grant's military district in the South, marked the first time Jews were discriminated on directly in US policy, and led to a unique dynamic between Grant and the Jews which would have a lasting impact. Historians debate the causes and significance of Grant's actions in this case. Jonathan Sarna is an expert in American Jewish history and has published over ten books on the subject. Ron Chernow is a noted biographer who has also authored works about Alexander Hamilton and John D. Rockefeller, both of which are award-winning books. Sarna believes that the causes for the event are uncertain, most likely relating to Grant's father, but the consequences are of lasting significance. However, while Chernow identifies the cause as a familial crisis, with no anti-Semitic intentions, he concludes by viewing the event as historically insignificant. Therefore, they both identify a common cause, but view the repercussions differently.

The Civil War was a traumatic experience, and all normal practices were in upheaval during the period. Some enterprising Jews took advantage of the chaos to participate in illegal trading between the North and South to the disdain of many others, which precipitated the General Order (Sarna, 5, 44). However, despite well-known Jewish involvement in smuggling, they were obviously not the only ones. Grant sent a command that read: "examine all baggage of all spectators coming south, only then specifying that: "Jews should receive special attention" (44). In fact, a week before the infamous order, Grant denied an attempt which proposed expelling Jews from Holly Springs, Mississippi, the battle front, or else they would be "sent to duty in the trenches" (45). By a week later, his General Order No. 11 called to expel all Jews from his military district. These specks of historical context make way for further questions. Why, then, did Grant expel the Jews? Furthermore, it can be asked: how did this affect the Jews' political stature?

Jonathan Sarna offers three explanations for what Grant's motivations may have been in expelling the Jews. One, is he was simply following higher orders. This was the claim of an informant writing for the Cincinnati Commercial, as well as the view of Isaac Mayer Wise, a leading Jewish figure. Sarna observes many technical issues found with this option. In particular, Edward Rosewater, a telegraph officer in the White House and Jewish journalist, argued definitively that there were only three men who might have been able to order Grant, and none of them did. Additionally, even the

telegram blamed for causing the order never mentioned the idea of exiling all Jews, as Grant's order did. The second interpretation was that Grant was supporting soldiers who viewed Jews as monopolizing on cotton trade. This was the view of Cincinnati newspapers, and Sarna dismisses this view as well, claiming Grant had no personal motivation to act on these premises (44-45). The final, most well founded reason was a personal one. Grant's own father partnered up with a group of Jews who were participants in the illegal trade. Grant resented the Jews, who he viewed as negative influences, and thus transferred this into vengeance against all Jews, even those who did not participate in this crime (45-48).

It would seem automatic then, that Sarna's interpretation regarding the importance of this event would be based on the backlash it caused. Interestingly, it is not so. After the horrified reaction, first from Jewish community members and then from Abraham Lincoln, Grant gave a solicitous apology. He remarkably went above and beyond in his efforts to prove his support for and commitment to the Jewish citizens of what would become his country. In the election of 1868, Jews were for the first time at the forefront of the campaign agenda. Aside from a media frenzy and discussions among elite Jews, Grant himself received hundreds of letters from Jews concerned about his order, a considerable amount when the entire Jewish community in America numbered to about 150,000 (63). Once he was president, Grant imbued a determined element in his attempt to improve his relationship with the Jews. He became one of the most Jew-supporting presidents of all time. He appointed over 50 Jews to public office, attended the founding of a synagogue and after his presidency, embarked on an unprecedented visit to Israel (83, 121, 127). This Order No. 11, originally reeking of anti-Semitism, which many feared might turn America into a Europe-like force of anti-Semitism, ultimately left a positive impact on Jews in America. He set a precedent of Jews being taken seriously in politics, giving them many positions in political office, and he also offered Jews an ear in the chorus of voices with demands in the electoral cycle.

Ron Chernow transmits Grant's life in a story-like, biographical form. He omits the analytical aspect which Sarna offers, sharing just one interpretation of the event. Chernow offers extensive context of the lead-up to the consequential declaration, explaining the frustration Grant felt towards northern traders whose financial support could be used for weapons

against their own army. In early December 1862, Grant had found a target for his frustrations: the Jews, and not just the traders, all Jews. By December 17, he decided to expel all Jews from the district, leading to some Jews having to pack up and leave (Chernow, 232-233). The concept of expulsions was a painful one to the Jews, but Grant's intentions were unlikely to have been like the expulsions Jews had suffered throughout the centuries. According to the implications from Chernow, despite the Jews' justifiable infuriation, it's hard to defend the claim that the anti-Semitism Grant elicited was in any form connected to the traditional anti-Semitic beliefs (236).

This is due to Grant's later actions. Chernow views the impact of Order No. 11 to be minimal in the long term but a "self-inflicted wound" to Grant (234). He discusses the many attempts Grant made to reconcile with the Jewish community (642-44, 836, 837, 855). They were overwhelmingly successful, and he became widely accepted within the Jewish community (620). Even Isaac Mayer Wise, a Reform rabbi and noted Democrat, began to support Grant, in spite of his being a Republican (643). Chernow steps short of marking the event as significant to Jewish history. Of course, the book discusses Grant and his life, not the Jews, but Chernow makes no claim that the event was of any significance to the Jewish community. He does, however, characterize it as a horrible decision that Grant spent the rest of his life trying to correct. In short, it was life-changing for Grant, and impactful for the Jews of his time, but of no real long-term significance.

Sarna views the consequences of General Order No. 11 to be dramatically more long-lasting than Chernow. The differences between their opinions likely stem both from the context of their books and of the lens through which they viewed history. Sarna's book focuses on the relationship Grant had with the Jews, so the event was meticulously researched and most of the book was dedicated to the causes of and the aftermath of Order No. 11. Meanwhile, Chernow's book is a biography of Grant, and consequently, does not spend as much time discussing the order. The authors' own backgrounds could also be contributing factors in the differences between their perspectives. Sarna is Jewish, and he's written about a dozen books about Jews in America. Chernow is not Jewish, and does not hold any particular interest in Jewish history. Therefore, it is possible Chernow may consider the event to be important, and merely omitted mention because he found the topic inconsequential as a whole.

In the New York Times “Letters to the Editor” column a decade before Grant’s infamous decision, an interesting discussion took place. There is a letter titled “Letter from a Catholic” which replies indignantly to what the letter writer views as words that ‘beg to endorse.’ The author of the letter, William D. Telfer, reflects on the state of religious tolerance. Telfer delves into the issue of stigmatizing an entire community as the Catholics and Protestants habitually did. Telfer argues passionately that “any person who derides the ideas of another... is not a little deserving of punishment, and is an enemy to social welfare” (NY Times, 6). Telfer is an example of someone who believed that although everyone is entitled to believe in what they do, no one should discriminate based on differences of opinions. This supports Sarna’s view on the intentions of Grant. If he was following the context of the time, it’s unlikely that Grant would so publicly single out the Jews for exile. It’s far more likely that this event is not a microcosm of his general viewpoint, and rather just a declaration regarding a specific event which challenged his military agenda.

This event bears no relationship to anti-Semitism today. The anti-Semitic crimes which are perpetrated now are primarily occur due to anti-Israel ideology or neo-Nazism. This can be proven by the fact that there was a significant uptick in anti-Semitism after wars in Israel and many anti-Semitic incidents involve swastikas (Simko-Bednarski). This symbol was used by the Nazis for anti-Jewish intentions, and never even existed during Grant’s lifetime. Today, Jews depend on the government for defense in cases of anti-Semitism, and the choices Grant made which were considered so radical—appointing Jews to office, visiting synagogues, exploring Israel—are expected of all presidents. Overwhelmingly, conditions for Jews have improved. This is even despite the frequency of minor anti-Semitic incidents, because Jews have the constant support of the government, and that is what ultimately matters most.

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# Jewish Quotas in American Universities, 1920-1940

*Abuva Mermelstein | Grade 11*

The idea of quotas being made specifically for Jews in Ivy League colleges such as Yale, Columbia, Dartmouth, and Harvard, among others, from the early 1920s to the mid-1940s, is important to history. They determined that a well-deserving student can be unqualified simply because of his religion, which is unjust and goes against the rights of an individual. During the early twentieth century, many colleges made Jewish quotas in order to see diversity in their universities rather than have a homogenous takeover by one group. However, some colleges possibly made these quotas as an act of anti-Semitism. The question of whether or not Jewish quotas were started for racist reasons are discussed by American historian Hasia R. Diner, along with history professor Joshua B. Freeman, and Dr. Gerard N. Burrow, who was dean and professor at Yale University School of Medicine. According to Diner, the quotas were to prevent a non-diverse group of students and they didn't want their universities to be over-popularized with one population—in this case, Jewish people. In contrast, Freeman argues that colleges would have accepted other minorities, but made these quotas to target Jews specifically. Burrow ties the two opinions together as he notes that it is unclear if the people in charge of quotas were anti-Semitic or truly believed in a need for diversity and if one does consider the quotas to be discriminatory, they very likely were due to unique preferences.

Until about the 1960s, the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) dominated American society and culture and also largely controlled the economy and politics. A large part of WASP culture in the early twentieth century was a meritocracy which governed the idea that environment and society should be composed of people who worked hard and made it to the elite. This followed the Protestant notion about work. However, the idea of meritocracy would enable Jews to rapidly dominate in the universities. This meritocratic model that would be monopolized by Jews very possibly could have been a reason that the colleges in that time period made Jewish quotas. The main historical question with regard to this issue at that time was whether or not these Jewish quotas were based upon anti-Semitism or simply to see diversity.

According to Hasia R. Diner, although there were individual anti-Semites during this period, the Jewish quotas were mainly to prevent colleges from being almost entirely Jewish (Diner 208-210). She notes how many colleges were worried that colleges would become too Jewish if they accepted the

amount of students that would be eligible if based upon academic merit (209). WASP culture wanted to see a society of elites, but allowing the Jews to dominate is definitely something a Protestant society wouldn't want. Thus, they were necessarily targeting Jews but rather preventing a group from overtaking a college. For instance, she quotes how one specific college admitted to accepting fewer Jews since "their scholastic standing is usually better than that of other students" (210). If they accepted the amount of Jews academically eligible, the college would be mainly Jewish which would challenge their notion of diversity. Furthermore, Diner states how Rutgers College in New Jersey "put a cap on Jewish students" for the main reason of preventing Jews from becoming the dominating religion of the college (209). Diner believes that colleges simply wanted to see diversity rather than a homogenous takeover by one group.

President Hopkins, who was the dean of Dartmouth University, sent the following reply to people who critiqued his seemingly Jewish quotas. His response was, "nothing would so increase intolerance and focus on racial and religious prejudice as to allow any racial group to gain virtual monopoly" (Hopkins 1 in Buchsbaum 80). In this source, even someone who was influential at that time didn't think of the Jewish quotas as discriminatory but rather thought they were required to prevent Jews from taking over colleges due to their educational advancements. This opinion is quite similar to that of Diner as they both conclude that colleges made excuses for why Jews shouldn't be accepted according to if they were deserving, but never admitted to being anti-Semitic.

In contrast, Freeman disagrees and argues that colleges would accept significant amounts of other minorities but would place quotas specifically on Jews. Although these particular events took place in the latter half of the 20th century, Jews were still "being denied equal rights" in both colleges and the work field (Freeman 69). Yet, after many strikes and other harmful acts against racial quotas, many colleges accepted more applicants from African American and Puerto Rican minorities (228-237). However, even with their being more accepting of other racial minorities, they kept their quotas on Jews and still only allowed in a minimal amount of Jews compared to the amount that applied. Therefore, according to Freeman, some colleges must have had Jewish quotas simply for anti-Semitic purposes since the argument of limiting minority groups is invalid due to their accepting other racial

minorities.

So too, according to fellow historians Kingston and Lewis, who conclude that the quotas were placed to specifically affect Jews. They relate how “the popular opinion of the time expressed as early as 1911 the Jews had ruined Columbia and Pennsylvania” (Kingston and Lewis 93). Although they don’t necessarily argue that quotas were placed for anti-Semitism, the notion that Jews were ruining elite schools is suggestive of some sort of bigotry.

Gerard R. Burrow merges the two opinions, specifically analyzing Yale, by claiming that it was unclear if the person in charge of quotas placed one on Jews simply to prevent a non-diverse college or due to his anti-Semitic beliefs. When Winternitz, the dean at Yale University, was questioned on why there was a limited amount of Jews being admitted, he stated that “there was a need for diversity” (Burrow 107). However, he was a man of “violent likes and dislikes” and his claim may simply have been a reason to cover up for his discriminatory quotas that began solely for anti-Semitic reasons (109). Although the quotas placed on Jews may have been due to an anti-Semitic belief of the time, it also might have reflected the narrower prejudices of a small number of individuals.

While Diner and Freeman take completely conflicting approaches on whether or not the Jewish quotas were anti-Semitic during this time, Burrow talks past both of these opinions as he concludes that the restrictions were placed due to individuals rather than a college’s decision as a whole. Furthermore, In Buchsbaum’s article, she has a consistent interpretation to that of Diner as she cites about another college bringing claims unrelated to anti-Semitism. Historians Kingston and Lewis take an opinion similar to that of Freeman in which they all agree that the quotas were an act of anti-Semitism relating to that period of time. Historians still disagree on whether the quotas on Jews were anti-Semitic or simply to promote a diverse group in colleges.

The topic of Jewish quotas in colleges differs from anti-Semitism today. Back then, acts of anti-Semitism weren’t necessarily true and even if they were proved to be truthful, they were played out behind the scenes. The selection of universities possibly intentionally excluding Jews was committed by those who stood in the background and their actions were not clear cut. In contrast, in today’s world, people are ready to advocate for what they believe in outright in the open. This can be seen in recent acts of anti-Semitism in

America which have been clear on their purpose—to harm Jews. Whether it be Richard Baumhammer’s murder of his Jewish neighbor in 2000 or the burning of Temple Beth-El later that year by Ramsi Uthman, the actions have obviously been decided for Jews and it’s not hard to see the Jewish hate portrayed in these acts. No longer do Jewish quotas exist in colleges of today’s society and Jews have often risen to elite positions. Although American Jews are only a mere 2.5% of the United States’ population, Jews occupy 7.7% of board seats in various corporations. Although there have been open acts of anti-Semitism in our world today, Jews no longer are held back from elite opportunities and have a chance to get a good education and make it to the top based on academic merit regardless of religion.

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# The Lynching of Leo Frank, 1913

*Tamar Spoerri | Grade 11*

In the racist Deep South of the 20th century, blacks were routinely persecuted. Since Jews ran businesses near blacks, they were often grouped with them and experienced similar hatred, such as during the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot. Within a decade of this event, Leo Frank, Jewish man living in Atlanta, was convicted for murder on the testimony of a black man, and later lynched by a mob. Historical interpretations differ on exactly what this event signifies. Both Edward Shapiro and Eugene Levy agree that Jews were persecuted because they were lumped in with blacks. However, while Shapiro views the Frank lynching as an anomaly which does not indicate any significant amount of Southern anti-Semitism, and is instead a symptom of hate for blacks and Russians being extended to Jews, Levy argues that the incident demonstrated that anti-Semitism was already strong force in the South, in some ways even greater than racism.

Leo Frank was a German Jewish middle-class worker who was accused of attacking and murdering a young girl named Mary Phagan at the pencil factory where he worked. Mostly because of the testimony of Jim Conley, a black janitor on the premises, Frank was convicted of murder on August 25, 1913. His sentence was commuted from the death penalty to life imprisonment after a series of appeals. Almost two years later, on August 16, 1915, an angry mob seized Frank and lynched him. Although most historians now agree that it was probably Conley and not Frank who committed the murder, the Frank case is more significant to us culprit but for what it reveals about anti-Semitism in the South before and after the event.

Shapiro makes the case that while the lynching made the subconscious anti-Semitism of the South more obvious to Jews at the time, the event itself was not specifically anti-Semitic. Rather, he asserts that the Frank lynching occurred because of the mob which lynched Leo Frank falsely associated him, and German Jews at large, with other groups who were discriminated against by white Southerners at the time. Firstly, Jews were associated with blacks, who had long been seen as inhuman and deviating from typical moral behavior. As described above, there was already historical precedent that when blacks were attacked, the nearby-dwelling Jews were lumped in. The specific stereotype of immoral behavior, which was generalized to not just characteristic of black men but their Jewish neighbors as well, proves especially dangerous in a case like this one, where Frank was accused of attacking a young girl. Secondly, white Southerners conflated German Jews

with Eastern European Jews. While the German Jewish community was mostly assimilated and middle class, the newer Russian Jewish community was relatively backwards and lower class (Shapiro). Even though these groups of Jews were different, it didn't matter that Leo Frank was from the old wave of immigrants. The dislike that the Southerners harbored for them was not rational, instead fueled by passionately vicious reporting like that of Tom Watson that characterized Frank as a foreigner. Shapiro argues that Frank's lynching was not inherently about anti-Semitism because it wasn't intended as such by its perpetrators. Essentially, it had the same consequences, stirring up latent hate for Jews that was lying dormant in the South for decades. Though this hate was initially created only in the context of anti-black speech and violence, it evolved into vicious anti-Semitism independent of other associations.

Levy, on the other hand, looks at Frank's trial and not his lynching, concluding that the event as a whole was an effect of anti-Semitism. Through examining the press reactions over the course of the trial of Leo Frank, Levy shows how Americans drew on existing stereotypes to support their preferred outcome for Frank's trial. Black newspapers ran headlines like "Jews Raise Millions to Free Frank and Put Blame on Innocent Man," capitalizing on long-held fears of Jewish manipulation to implicate Frank (Levy). This shows that attitudes towards the case emerged from the already-present anti-Semitic ways to express the typical Atlantan hatred of all foreigners. Furthermore, Levy marks the Frank case as remarkable because it distinctly illustrates the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism. For the segregated South of the 1910s, it was bizarre that the word of Conley, a black janitor, was valued over that of Frank, a highly educated, middle class worker. Levy cites several newspapers who reported on these events in shock. He also offers possible explanations for this short-lived phenomenon, but none prove satisfactory. Levy concludes that both blacks and Jews would "offer up the other by emulating the prejudices of the majority" to defend themselves, and the simple men in the mob weren't elite enough to make distinctions about which lower class group was worse (Levy). Since the controversy at the time surrounding Frank's trial used anti-Semitic stereotypes, and Frank's conviction proved that anti-Semitic sentiment could triumph racism, Levy strongly implies that anti-Semitism was already an independent entity.

Because historians analyze events through different lenses, they can

arrive at different conclusions. Shapiro attempts to understand the Frank lynching in the context of perceptions of Jews in Atlanta before and after the event, as shaped the city's social and economic climate. For this reason, his analysis seems naive and limited at times. In contrast, Levy primarily examines newspapers and their reactions to the ongoing trial to gain awareness of how the case fitted into the larger picture of minority groups in America of 1915. Levy's broader approach enables his better-informed conclusion that, though fueled by general prejudices against the lower classes, as Shapiro stated, the Leo Frank lynching was an effect of pure anti-Semitism. Different perspectives on the event arise from looking at different evidence.

Shapiro and Levy do justice to primary sources on the Frank case, but neither significantly study the rhetoric used in the trial itself. As reported in a *New York Times* article at the time, the judge in the frequently referred to Frank's Jewishness. This fact indicates that the conviction was motivated by anti-Semitism. Though this assertion was probably influenced by the agenda of the author, a rabbi, who wants to see a fellow Jew freed, the article verifiably refutes Shapiro's unwillingness to see the Frank trial itself as anti-Semitic.

The lynching of Leo Frank showed the immense power of anti-Semitic slurs as propagated by the media. Words are more than just words, since they influence real world events. Even today, when society has become more sensitive in their use of language, US elected officials continue to be ignorant of the origins and effects of the ideas they communicate. Recently, Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) tweeted that the billionaire Tom Steyer, which he spelled \$teyer, was influencing a Jewish Congressman to investigate the president. Not only was the allegation baseless, but it appealed to the long-held, anti-Semitic notion that Jews control the world through their monetary power. Though one hopes his statement has nowhere near the impact that the reporting of black newspapers did on the Frank lynching, it's hard to say what the consequences of sentiments like these will be. Words are not just words. They have meaning and effects beyond what one can imagine.

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# The Crown Heights Riot, 1991

*Bayla Weiner | Grade 11*

The Crown Heights Riots of 1991 marked a striking, brutal attack on American Jewry. Jews experienced direct hate and realized that although America offered a safe haven allowing for religious freedom, there were still those who threatened Jewish existence. Historian Edward Shapiro demonstrates that although the facts of what occurred during the riots are undisputed, the cause for it is. Shapiro suggests that the rampages were primarily anti-Semitic while articles reporting on them project different narratives. One approach supports Shapiro's claim that the attacks were predominantly anti-Semitic, while the other depicts the riots as an ethnic clash of two minorities who had previously encountered much racial tension, and thus reflected a tension that ran in two directions more than a direct targeting of Jews.

In 1991, Jews suffered horrific anti-Semitic attacks perpetrated by the African American Crown Heights community. These riots were in response to a car accident in which a Lubavitch man, Yosef Lisef, driving in the Rebbe's motorcade, fatally hit a young black boy, Gavin Cato. The accident was immediately linked with Lisef's religion. The anger and hurt that followed led to the gathering of hundreds of blacks, mostly teenagers, who surrounded the scene and began throwing bottles and attacking the police officers present. In their anger, a group of black teenagers stabbed to death an Australian Jewish student, Yankel Rosenbaum, who had been studying in Crown Heights. Rumors at the time suggested that the anger from the African-American community was rooted in the fact that Jewish driver, Yosef Lisef, was given medical attention at the scene before the black children, Gavin and Angela Cato, were treated. In the days that followed, Hasidim and blacks continued rioting with both sides jeering the police and violently attempting to harm each other (Kifner). These riots raised many questions for historians, Jews, blacks, and the world at large. This historical event raises questions of whether the response of the black community was anti-Semitic or not. Was the hatred reflected in the riot a sudden sentiment or had the tension been building up all along? Finally, was the attack equally carried out by both sides or were Jews being targeted by the black community alone?

These historical questions have spurred different interpretations, one being that of historian Edward Shapiro. Shapiro suggests that the riots of 1991 were primarily anti-Semitic in nature in that Jews were unfairly targeted

solely for the fact that they were Jews. He supports this idea by highlighting the reactions of different individuals around the world. Shapiro indicates that two events preceded the Crown Heights which may have increased the black community's antipathy for Jews. One of them was the release of the first volume of the Nation of Islam's *Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews*. This work expresses the involvement of Jews in the slave trade. Additionally, Leonard Jeffries, professor of Black Studies at the City College of New York, gave a speech depicting the Jews as having controlled the black slave trade and having played a major role in creating derogatory stereotypes against blacks. His speech met much dispute throughout New York, which resulted in him losing his position as chairman of the Black Studies Department (Shapiro). However, according to Shapiro, these two events illustrate that the anti-Semitic attack in Crown Heights was one that some felt the Jews were deserving of.

Additionally, these anti-Semitic events offered clarity regarding the limited tolerance of the time. They illuminated for Jews the full extent of the anti-Semitism of their era. The black community of Crown Heights may have been the ones to perpetrate the terror, but it became apparent that others justified and supported their horrific acts. This response surprised the Jews, for after suffering horrifically in the Holocaust, many Jews viewed America as a safe country in which they could rebuild their lives. However, to their shock and disappointment, some Americans were interested in the further persecution of Jewish Americans.

Supporting Shapiro's claim, *The New York Post* depicted the attacks as an act of complete anti-Semitism. Ari Goldman was a reporter at the time of the riots who claimed to have never once seen a Jew attack a black man, yet the other newspapers were set on the misconception that there had been ethnic tension for decades. It was when Goldman heard offensive phrases including "Heil Hitler" and "Death to the Jews" that he could no longer silently witness this injustice. He called his editor and proclaimed that they had been misunderstanding the event and in truth, it was an anti-Semitic attack on Jews. The author of the article, Seth Lipsky, quotes Shapiro in indicating his agreement that the riots marked "the most serious anti-Semitic incident in American history" (Lipsky, *New York Post*).

In contrast, other reports depicted the riots as having been the result of growing tensions between the black and Hasidic communities in Crown

Heights, prior to 1991. African-American community members who were interviewed at the time, claimed that for decades the Hasidic community was being favored by the police and this led to the emergence of an ethnic clash between the two minorities. Interviewee Dr. Vernal Cave, a black dermatologist living in Crown Heights, claimed that Jews were getting special treatment from the police, as they received extra protection from the NYPD around their synagogues. Additionally, another black local stated that one had to be “blind, deaf and dumb not to know about the problems here with the Hasidim” (Rothman). The views of these two local community members portray the unfortunate reality where tension between the two minorities was rooted in far more than the car accident, but rather that the tension had been present for years. The accident merely provided an outlet for the black community to reveal their pent up anger in a radical, dangerous and impulsive way.

These two approaches address the question of whether the riots were anti-Semitic or a result of ongoing tension between Jews and blacks that had been present for decades. The article supporting Shapiro’s claim that the riots were an attack on Jews, accurately describes the perception of an eyewitness, who observed the anti-Semitism but experienced it minimally, if at all. In contrast, a more popular approach of articles reporting on the time was to depict the riots as having been a result of existing two-directional tensions between the minorities. Through quoting community members living at the time, it is clear that blacks supported the idea that tensions were pre-existing. I think these interpretations differ for different reporters and historians because while there seemed to have been tension present for years, the riots, and more specifically the murder itself, was uncalled for, radical, menacing and misplaced. The alarming, brutal murdering of Yankel Rosenbaum was a clear revelation that for many blacks that, in their minds, Jews were far more than a nuisance; they were deserving of death.

The Crown Heights Riots were more than remarkable; they symbolized one of the most consequential acts of Jewish hatred in recent American history, but unfortunately did not represent an end to it. Anti-Semitism is a global phenomenon with acts carried out both large and small. Just recently, a Jewish cemetery in Alsace, France was vandalized with over 96 tombstones spray-painted featuring a horrifying swastika symbol, indicating yet another anti-Semitic incident. With the rising Muslim immigration to France, Jews

face more danger as they are constantly being targeted by Muslims, the Yellow Vests and French society at large (Nossiter). Unfortunately, this desecration is just one, rather minimal example of the constant anti-Semitism Jews in Europe face on a regular basis. This act contrasts with the Crown Heights riots as it took place in Europe where anti-Semitism has been present for centuries, and unlike the riots, did not mark a significant event, as it is one of many frequent incidents. In America, anti-Semitism is limited and contained, in comparison to the rest of the world, primarily Europe. However, this does not mean it has been eradicated. On October 7, 2018, Robert Bowers entered a conservative Jewish synagogue, Tree of Life, Or L'Simcha Congregation, during the Shabbat morning services where he perpetrated a mass shooting, murdering 11 Jews and leaving 7 injured 4. This event marked the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in America. This massacre compares with the Crown Heights murder because the victims in both cases were killed in cold blood. These faultless Jews were targeted merely based on the fact that they were Jews. They were also different in that the Pittsburgh shooting was not an element of a larger ethnic struggle within a diverse community. Although Jews in Brooklyn do still face regular low-level anti-Semitism on the streets, they do not have to fear from riots like those in 1991.

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# The Anti-Semitism of Charles Lindbergh, 1920-1941

*Anna Gross | Grade 11*

Charles A. Lindbergh was a famous American aviator who became a celebrity after traveling across the Atlantic Ocean in a non-stop solo flight in 1927, when he was only 25 years old. He was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1902 after which his family moved to Minnesota and then to Washington, D.C. where his father was a U.S. Congressman. It was here that he spent most of his childhood. Lindbergh was a dynamic, handsome and charismatic American hero who was influential because of his status and the accomplishments that he made. However, he was someone who harbored anti-Semitic and racist sentiments and was not afraid to share them. It is likely because of his stature as a prominent American that his anti-Semitic opinions were given traction and publicity.

Lindbergh's popularity grew throughout his early adult life. The transatlantic flight was a major accomplishment that had the backing of successful businessmen who were eager for a direct flight from New York to Paris. He earned great praise as well as financial reward, and, upon his return, it is believed that more than 4 million people attended the ticker tape parade to celebrate his success. According to his biographer, this one accomplishment alone had acquired him an almost god-like status. "Universally admired, Charles Lindbergh became the most celebrated living person ever to walk the earth" (Berg 16). Most likely because of his celebrity status, he was targeted for a horrific crime. While he and his wife were home, his two-year-old son was kidnapped out of his bedroom window and ransom notes were sent to the Lindberghs. Even after paying the ransom money, and with the help of police, Lindbergh's baby was found dead some time later. This tragedy is forever something connected to Lindbergh just as his transatlantic flight. However, both of these major incidents created a certain aura around Lindbergh and ensured that, at least for a large time in Lindbergh's life, whenever he spoke, the world listened with rapt curiosity.

Lindbergh lived through both World Wars and had opinions about wars, and other important topics, that he was not afraid to share. He was particularly outspoken during the build-up to World War II, primarily relating to his isolationist views and his racist and anti-Semitic opinions. He believed that the white race was superior and had to maintain their position of power throughout the world in order to defeat foreigners. In fact, Lindbergh wrote an article for the *Reader's Digest* in which he stated that there can only be peace when white people join together to defend their European blood against



foreign people. He supported eugenics, the idea of controlling the human population by breeding people with the desired characteristics, such as pure white skin, in order to maintain the “white race”. He felt comfortable sharing these beliefs in a public forum where they were read and distributed across the country. These racist opinions actually impacted his position regarding the war and Russia because he believed Russia to have some Asian connections and characteristics. Because of this, the Russians were considered by him to be an impure white race and therefore not worthy of defense.

Perhaps more famously, Lindbergh was believed to be an anti-Semite as well as a Nazi sympathizer. Based on statements that he made, Lindbergh seemed to resent the Jewish influence in radio, government, movies, and other media. He claimed that the Jews were too powerful but this was completely untrue. His support of the idea that Jewish power should be limited since the Jews were a threat, led to the inability of American Jews to support their relatives in Europe. These American Jews were unsuccessful in lobbying the American government to pass laws or increase immigration quotas and many citizens had to sit by as their family members were killed in Europe.

There are many examples of why Lindbergh was considered to be an anti-Semite. Lindbergh spoke very favorably about the Germans, Nazis, and Hitler and had a good relationship with German leaders. He had said that Hitler had, “far more character and vision than I thought existed in the German leader... He is undoubtedly a great man” (Berg). It is believed that Hitler was actually influenced by American policy when he created the Nuremberg Laws. In his famous work “Mein Kampf”, he actually praises America for being the only country that maintained a strong social order based on race. “He had in mind U.S. immigration law, which featured a quota system designed, as Nazi lawyers observed, to preserve the dominance of ‘Nordic’ blood in the United States,” the exact policies that Lindbergh encouraged with his support of eugenics (Whitman). The quota is the same one that led to the denial of visas to the countless Jews who tried to enter the United States in order to escape the gas chambers.

Lindbergh used his political influence that came as a result of his popularity in order to discourage American involvement in the war. He supported isolationism because he didn’t want America to go to war which ended up having disastrous consequences for the Jews. On September 11, 1941, Lindbergh spoke at a rally called “America First” in Des Moines, Iowa

and in his speech, he blamed the American Jews as one of the forces that pushed America into war. It was at this rally where he made his famous anti-Semitic statement: "Their greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government... We cannot allow the natural passions and prejudices of other peoples to lead our country to destruction" (Stellato 117). Not only did he condemn and blame the Jews because of what he viewed as their danger to America, he also called them "other peoples," a clear disregard for their status as regular Americans, just as Hitler had considered the Jews of Germany. This rally led to a major public outcry against Lindbergh and his anti-Semitic views and he never fully recovered from the damage. In an article printed in the New York Times on October 1, 1941, the Attorney General Francis Biddle is quoted as saying that the "most recent expression was 'an open, bitter attack' on the Jews," with the understanding being that Biddle was referring to Lindbergh's rally speech. Newspapers all around the world published condemnations against him. He lost endorsements, his hometown removed his name from their water tower, and children across America removed his photos from their rooms. Many considered him to be un-American as a result of his speech.

In spite of the backlash, Lindbergh never recanted his ideas. He died in 1974 "as a white supremacist and reputed Nazi sympathizer" (*LA Times*). He abused his popularity and spread his racist, anti-Semitic, and often anti-American ideas without regret. In fact, "By December 7, 1941, many Americans considered him nothing short of satanic-not just a defeatist but an anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi traitor" (Berg 34). Surprisingly, or maybe not surprisingly, he never expressed regret for his words and actions even though he suffered throughout the remainder of his life as a consequence. He was essentially stripped of his status as an American hero and never recovered.

In many ways, Charles Lindbergh's anti-Semitism was much like the anti-Semitism spewed by Henry Ford, the famous automaker. In some ways, Henry Ford was also an American hero because he was a successful and innovative business maker who changed the way that production was done. Ford purchased *The Dearborn Independent*, a newspaper, and used it to write and publish anti-Semitic rhetoric that spread quickly throughout the country. He believed, and shared his views, that the Jews were responsible for much of the evil occurring throughout America and the world. Perhaps one of the

most aggressively anti-Semitic things he did was to publicize *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This piece originated in Russia and is a work of fiction that has historically been presented as fact, and appears to be notes about a Jewish conspiracy whereby Jews plan to take control over the world. In this way, and in other such examples, Henry Ford used his popularity and his influence in order to present Americans with anti-Semitic opinions. In the cases of both Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford, influential Americans used their positions of power to influence the American public in an effort to sway people to believe in their anti-Semitic views.

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# The US State Department during WWII, 1941-1945

*Esther Guelfguat | Grade 12*

Anti-Semitism has been a major part of the Jewish people's history. At times, the government has aided the Jews in controlling or influencing the outward hatred of the outside world while at other times they have been unsuccessful and unwilling to help the Jews. Although in America the Constitution was designed to ensure equality and protection for all people, anti-Semitism still persists. The refusal to accept the passengers of SS St. Louis and the lynching of Leo Frank accurately portray the fact that although the government has the ability to help the Jews, at times it does not exert its control on the situation.

During the mid-1900's many countries across the globe, including America, displayed more anti-Semitism as is evident through the SS St. Louis ship. On May 13, 1939, the St. Louis left Hamburg, Germany for Cuba. Most of the passengers were Jews escaping Nazi Germany and intended to stay in Cuba until their visa to enter America arrived. A year before the St. Louis left Europe, the German Jews experienced Kristallnacht, and the German government had enacted several laws that made their life under Nazi rule very difficult. This is what prompted these passengers to flee from Europe. Even before the ship sailed, the captain was aware that the passengers might not be granted permission to enter Cuba because the Cuban president had declared that no more refugees were allowed into the country. After they were denied entry into Cuba, the ship sailed close to Miami and telegraphed President Roosevelt requesting entry into the U.S. He never answered them and the State Department did not make any extra effort to allow them to enter. In fact, a telegram that was sent by the State Department to one passenger says that they had to wait to get their papers that would allow them to enter America (USHMM).

On American soil, many people were advocating for the Jews on the St. Louis. Many Jews asked Roosevelt to let the passengers in several times but to no avail (Lichtenstein). The JDC had meetings with the president of Cuba trying to bribe him but the amount they gave over was not enough. Jewish relief agencies tried to provide public help but were unsuccessful. Robert E. Wagner, a New York Senator, went on the radio after Congress did not accept his bill, hoping to arouse support from the public and feelings for what was happening (Linden).

The context of the time may help to understand what motivated the American president to act like he did. At this time, America had immigration

quotas that were quickly filled. According to protocol, the government couldn't allow the passengers in American when there were thousands back in Europe on waiting lists. Additionally, America was still coming out of the Great Depression so many Americans were wary of allowing more immigrants into the country because they would compete for jobs. Roosevelt was conscious of public opinion because he intended to run for re-election. This is perhaps what motivated him to conform to public opinion and not admit the St. Louis (USHMM).

In the case of the SS St. Louis, the executive and legislative branches had the ability to influence the situation. Roosevelt could have issued an executive order that would have allowed authorities to bypass regular protocols that are involved with immigration. The ship was so close to America that it would be basic good will to allow them into the country. From the standing point of the legislative branch, they could have made more attempts at passing a bill that would enlarge the quota and thereby make the excuse of the State Department not stand. Although their attempts made in Congress to pass this bill, the congressional leaders allowed for them to fail. Thus, the government had the ability to help the passengers of the SS St. Louis but refused to do anything about it (USHMM).

In both the case of the SS St. Louis and Leo Frank's lynching, the government had the ability to intervene but did not. The passengers of the St. Louis contacted the president directly but he chose to not respond. This shows his nonchalant attitude towards helping the Jews. Similarly, in Frank's case there was such a breach in the judicial branch and for a long time no branch of government got involved in trying to make a fair judgment. Later, when Frank was imprisoned and in a hospital, the government did not provide enough supervision in order to prevent any people from attacking him. They knew that the population was adamant about hanging Frank so they should have ensured that it would not happen even after he was in jail. Thus, in both instances the government erred in how they handled the situation.

On the other hand, the government's handling of Frank's case is slightly different than how they dealt with the St. Louis. The governor eventually commuted Frank's sentence reducing it from a death penalty to life imprisonment. This is in contrast to the St. Louis in which the government did not do anything at all to aid the Jewish passengers.

In my opinion, the government made the wrong decision in dealing with

both of these situations. I think that it was wrong of Roosevelt to not admit a ship full of innocent refugees and send them back to the lion's den. Once Frank was accused of murder, the judge should have taken evidence and a jury that was not biased and full of hatred to the Jews. The fact that he enabled and allowed for a case of blatant anti-Semitism to be done is wrong. The government also failed to control the mob that was a direct threat to Frank's life. Had the government taken a step to stabilize the crowd perhaps the story would not have ended in his death. Therefore, I think that the government did not make the right decisions in both of these cases.

After doing this research my view on government and its role in protecting the rights of its citizens has not changed. Although in theory the government is meant to ensure the stability of its citizens, it often does not do so due to external factors. Many times we have seen how many faults the government has which prevent it from protecting the rights of its citizens. There are people in government who are skewed by anti-Semitism and do not treat Jews the same way as other citizens.

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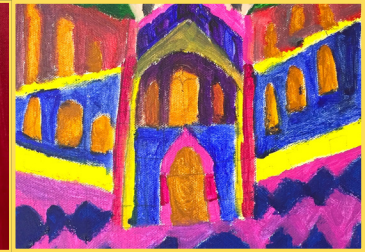




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Rena Seidemann



Brasov Synagogue, Romania  
Rivka Lax



Brasov Synagogue, Romania  
Ayelet Wein



Hari Synagogue, Tzfat  
Shira Safrin



Pasti Utca Synagogue, Hungary  
Leora Lehrfeld



Shul Windows, Morocco  
Mali Wolfson



Haari Synagogue, Tzfat  
Sari Dubin



Pecs Synagogue, Hungary  
Hindi Medalie



My Shul  
Tzophie Ulano



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