

THE ASSIMILATED GERMAN JEW

BEFORE READING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW, MAKE CERTAIN THAT YOU CAN DEFINE THE TERM ASSIMILATION. ANY DICTIONARY WILL GIVE YOU A DEFINITION. MORE IMPORTANT, CAN YOU APPLY THE TERM TO AMERICAN SOCIETY?

- The Jews living in Germany at the time of Hitler's control of the country were less than 1 % of total population (about 500,000)
- It is important to note that by 1933 about 20% of the Jews were not originally from Germany but came from eastern countries such as Poland, and Russia; they came to Germany because they could find much better jobs; these "so-called" eastern Jews were very different from German Jews: they were more religious, had often lived in ghettos where they mingled primarily with other Jews in private and business life; to some extent they were looked down upon by the assimilated German Jew (See below under discussion of assimilation), since they were generally less educated and their religious convictions required that males wear skull caps, long caftans, and earlocks and woman wore wigs or headscarves.) Their preferred language was Yiddish

Why does this surprise you? (read on for some answers when we discuss the type of professions and jobs which Jews held)

- German Jews lived for the most part in larger cities in Germany. Berlin, for example, had almost 1/3 of the Jews of Germany living in Berlin. German Jews were more mobile than other Germans, moving rather often from one large city to another. This mobility led to the image of the German Jew as being rootless, according to Nazi propaganda. This is especially poignant when compared to many Germans who were farmers and lived on their farms and their farm regions for centuries. They (the Aryan German) had ROOTS)

Why do you think many German Jews gravitated to large cities?

NOTE: Hitler referred to the city of Berlin as the "tomb of Germanism" Do you know what he meant by this?

- What jobs and professions did German Jews practice in Germany.

by 1925 there were 8 times more Jewish Executives in commercial enterprises than non-Jews (than Germans or Aryans as the Nazis

referred to them)

Jews were very active in retail and wholesale trade such as owners of department stores and a variety of “mom and pop” grocery and bakery shops; they dominated the textile clothing industry. By 1932 25% of all employment in sales and retailing were in the hands of Jews.

Remember: the general labor force of Jews in Germany was .74%

German Jews were active in private banking: in Berlin, for example, there were 150 private Jewish banks compared to 11 private non-Jewish banks

In 1928 in Berlin, 80% of the leading members of the stock exchange were Jewish

Jews were well represented in the Civil Service sector: as early as 1904 27% of all lawyers in Prussia, in government service, were Jewish, 30 % held high posts as judges

Jews were respected professors in universities throughout the country: by 1910, 12% of the professors were Jewish (do not forget that this is very high considering that the Jews represented less than 1% of total population

Jews strove for higher education: in 1906, 25 % of the law and medical students were Jewish.

NOTE: These students would be the doctors and lawyers who would be forbidden to practice in Nazi Germany. (in some cities, Jewish doctors were in the majority)

Between 1905-1931, 10 of 32 Germans who received Nobel Prizes were Jewish.

Jews were visibly part of German society as artists, actors and directors in theatre and film, and in journalism: For a period of time, 50 % of 234 theater directors in Germany were Jewish

Jews were underrepresented in agriculture: 2% were farmers compared to 29 of Germans. This is significant when we talk about the Nazi concept of Volk.