ANTISEMITISM, SECULARISM, AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN

THE EUROPEAN UNION

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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Submitted to the LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research office at
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the designation as an

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Approved by
Faculty Research Advisor: Dr. Alexander Pacek

May 2021

Major: Political Science

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This project did not require approval from the Texas A&M University Research Compliance & Biosafety office.

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ABSTRACT

Antisemitism, Secularism, and the Catholic Church in The European Union

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The evidence of a rising antisemitic quandary in the European Union has grown to a pinnacle point too severe to disregard. In the wake of decreasing amounts of religiosity, antisemitic hate attacks are increasing. While European populations are overwhelmingly advocating for secularism, the Catholic Church continues to maintain a tight fist in matters such as cultural outlook and political influence. It is notable that the Catholic Church continues to exercise great influence in the governmental structures and political arenas throughout Europe; in amalgamating the deeply entrenched impact of the Catholic Church on political attitudes with the upsurge of secularization sentiments in the European Union, it stands to reason that a culture of antisemitism could result from this contradiction. This study aims to combine the aforementioned factors of Catholic influence and secularism to develop a well-rounded and holistic observance of the antisemitic phenomenon in the European Union.

The methodology required of this is extensive research through historical, religious, and political lenses, considering only the European countries that present themselves to have this issue. Analysis is divided into examinations of historical and current expressions of antisemitism

in the context of secularism and the Catholic Church. We expect to find a strong correlation between antisemitism and countries that, while secular in political categorization, are historically influenced by the catholic church. In contrast, we expect to find that countries with no set catholic affiliations and or secularism, tend to not experience as many antisemitic incidences.

We conclude that traditionally Catholic and Christians nation states hold antisemitism as a historical leftover, whether it be consciously in terms of public policy or subconsciously. These can manifest higher when there is a veil of "secularization", and depending on the severity and type of secularization, can result in higher incidents of antisemitism.

DEDICATION

To our friends, families, instructors, and the Jewish community of Texas A&M who supported me throughout the research process.

"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must become the center of the universe."

Elie Wiesel, of blessed memory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contributors

We would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Pacek, and our program advisor Dr. Perry, for their encouraging guidance and unwavering support throughout the undertaking of this thesis program. Gratitude is also due to our colleagues and the department faculty and staff for making our time at Texas A&M University an outstanding experience.

No other outside sources or contributions were utilized for the composition of this thesis.

Makenzie Glavin contributed greatly to this the success of this thesis. Ms. Glavin completed roughly fifty percent of the content of this work and aided in composing the structure of the overall thesis, as well as assisted in extensive research to support and reinforce the topic of the thesis. All other work conducted for the thesis was completed by the student independently.

Funding Sources

No funding was received for this undergraduate research venture.

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency found 89% of Jews feel that antisemitism has risen in their home countries, many scholars have taken data to try and reveal the cause of this sudden upsurge (European Union Fundamental Rights Agency 2018). This uptick in antisemitic attitudes is ushered in by a powerful, pervasive movement advocating for secularistic ideals. Considering citizenry's decreasing volumes of religiosity, "Rising shares of adults in Western Europe describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated, and about half or more in several countries say they are neither religious nor spiritual" (Sahgal 2020). However, this doesn't necessarily infer that individuals do not subscribe to religions in a cultural aspect. Cultural perspective is steered by religious affiliation. Even in "secular" countries, it's discernible that the Catholic Church still deals a hand in politics and social perceptions. From this facet of the plight of antisemitism, nations with high Catholic influence like Spain, Italy, and Poland, hold high rejection of Jewish people. A 2008 study conducted by Pew Research indicated that 46% of Spanish citizens rated Jews unfavorably, along with 36% of Poles (Pew Research 2008). The upsurge of secularization in the European Union, paralleled by recent antisemitic attacks, lends itself to reasonable correlation. Therefore, we think it pertinent to observe the rising antisemitic phenomenon in association with the Catholic Church and secularism.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

While research on antisemitism has long been conducted globally, the rising levels in Europe are causing researchers to reconsider the causes of this phenomenon. Research regarding antisemitism, secularism, and the Catholic Church combined are few and far in between. Therefore, the theories and themes presented in the chiefly relevant articles overlap three-fold, in respect to our own research concepts.

1.1   Antisemitism in the European Union

The first being the occurrence of antisemitism in the European Union and the respective areas encompassing. Generally, the concept of modern antisemitism in the European Union is circumambient of the "alarmist" and "denial" parties (Bunzl 2005). The alarmists, as described by Bunzl, are characterized by their trepidation in respect to new antisemitism and its demonstrations, and the deniers as their counterparts, far left critics that somewhat doubt the salience of new antisemitism. Conclusions drawn from Bunzl reflect that while Europe has an antisemitism problem once again, they also do not have antisemitism coded into their "social DNA". He rejects the notion that antisemitism in Europe is a constant and calls for the "recognition of the radical historical transformations in the status and function of European anti-Semitism as well as the right wing's project". The point of departure for this theory of antisemitism in the European Union brings along another element of political science, that of polarizing viewpoints. Robert Fine, in a contribution to the debate, argues that even the discourse regarding the current state of antisemitism has become increasingly polarized, one group considering that Jews have "safely integrated at most levels of European life", and another completely rejecting this notion (Fine 2009). The methods provided are either statistics

of antisemitic incidents, as outlined later, or focal observations of current debates with additional comments (Fine 2009). Results come in all dispositions, including the most accepted, which is that antisemitism has not "run its historical course", but has simply changed form to fit a modern political discourse (Fine 2009). Indeed, multiple sources have concluded that antisemitism in its own definition has not changed drastically, but the performance of it has. To be sure and with complete observation, antisemitism is not only on the rise as presented by data, but it has taken many different forms in the modern age leaving space for new research to be done.

1.2   Secularization in the European Union

The second is the systematic increase of secularism in the European Union. Whilst the overarching consensus among citizens is a decline in "church belonging", and belief in any sort of Christianity, the government representing may not entirely be secular. Cohen and Laborde outline that the European Union is a modest secular state. This entails that while the state is technically secular, it still consists of heavy religious ties that influence the lives of its constituents, even granting "monopolistic privileges" or special advantages to one or another branch of Christianity in some cases (Cohen and Laborde 2015). Carlo Ivernizzi-Accetti continues the notion of "'monopolistic privileges" within his claims that the European Union conducts its relations in more of a manner lining up with that of a Christian Democracy than a secular body; alleging that institutional structures further promote a move away from all religion. This notion is realized through the method of examining four aspects of the European Union institutional structure; the intentional allowance of a plurality of church-state relationships and their expressions, the recognition of religion as a source of ''inspiration'' for public law, the endorsement of a ''positive'' interpretation of the principle of religious freedom, which imposes

an obligation upon European institutions to actively promote religious traditions, and finally, the fact that the European treaties and jurisprudence also implicitly grant a privileged status to Christianity as a constitutive element. This specific kind of civic ''ethos'' is assumed to give unity and coherence to the European project as a whole, while other religious traditions are taken to be either exterior, and even inimical to it (Invernizzi-Accetti 2017). These facets designate an advantageous political standing to Christianity, in viewing Christianity as the basis of civil "ethos" necessary for foundational European law, while religious groups are regarded as lesser appendages, or even threats to legal cohesivity. That being so, in conjunction with the decline rates of religiosity in Europe, secularism proves to be a force that is both abstract and unconditional in nature.

1.3   The Catholic Church's Relationship with the European Union

The last, respectfully, is the historic influence of the Catholic Church in the corresponding locale, and how it manifests in modern affairs with the states. There are varying levels of explicit links to theology in the European Union, most of them within bioethics (Kratochvíl and Doležal 2014). Although there are few direct links to Catholicism, the church is still perceived unambiguously positive. This is exemplified informally by the monopolistic privileges given to branches of Christianity as detailed by Cohen and Laborde. Kratochvíl and Doležal argue that religious connections between the catholic church and the professionals within the European Union are veiled with "secular language". The political role of the Church is never acknowledged, but its values are presented intact to legislative bodies with secular verbiage in a way that coats the Catholic Church as ubiquitous and nonnegotiable, such as referring to Catholic values as general principles to which political discourse stands. There has also been substantial evidence that points to the increase in formal influence and or otherwise

general connectivity of the Catholic Church and the governments of the European Union (Kratochvíl, Doležal 2013). Analysis of church and government documents alike have proved to be very informational in the studies presented, proving a theory of religious paradox within the European Union. As explained by Kratochvíl and Doležal, as the secularization of Europe continues, the Catholic Church is becoming more important in politics since it represents "a visible and still relatively large minority". This intersection between secularism and the Catholic Church provides a foundation for our research. The trends shown in recent studies show similar results, explaining that while secularism is championed, the Catholic Church still has the ascendancy in a lot of political structures. The most frequented methods of research are analyses of substantial EU documents, wherein words like "catholic", "church", "religion", etc, are named. Outcomes gather that there's a large overlap between the Catholic Church's rhetoric and the value promoted by the European Union, which is consistent with other sources who examine this topic.

As established by Kratochvíl and Doležal, Catholic populations in the European Union hold fundamental pro-European tenets, but in a separate source the same authors also state that both the Catholic Church and the European Union are critical of the dwindling rights of minorities. Bearing in mind the reputation of antisemitism in the Catholic Church, a question to raise would be whether or not the Catholic Church is a part of influencing any of those policies and or judgements. If Europe is secular in the highest sense, one would think that the Church would have no participation, but as described in this introduction, the ideals of secularism and the implementation are not always consistent. While secularization in Europe is still institutionally apparent, even if coated under the pretense of a "modest secular state" (Cohen and Laborde), it still allots incredibly high entitlements to the Church (Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti). The

point of divergence for many sources is within the severity and or substance that the Church has on politics. Wherein Cohen and Laborde might argue that the Catholic Church has a "modest" or trivial influence, Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti may disagree, insinuating that the European Union's secularism is a facade for a simple Christian democracy. Overarchingly, this disagreement is an aperture to where antisemitism can slip in unrecognized and hence provides the need for research on this.

Articles, such as the aforementioned, are prominent articles in this field, but they exemplify a hole in their respective research. These articles hold the assumption that secularism, Catholicism, and antisemitism can exist independently in these countries, without prominent effects on the others. Our assumptions contend these ideas, and rather state that these ideologies compound to develop antisemitism outright. Many sources focus heavily on the overall indications of antisemitism, secularism, and or the catholic church in the European Union. By contrast, many additional sources focus heavily on regional demonstrations of the same. Indeed, even when exploring the concepts in generality, sources tend to spotlight specific countries and sectors, such as France. The problems with this type of research is that it unassumingly ignores the historical and implicit relationships that member states of the European Union have together. As one simple example, the Holocaust spanned almost the entire statehood of the European Union in its definition today. Researching locally and automictically can inadvertently convey that antisemitism in Poland is unaffected by the actions and history of Germany and France, which is missing a considerable opportunity for historical and modern analysis. Even within this argument, it is noticeable that many of the sources are strictly modern in their viewsets, respectfully. Many of them view the Holocaust as the point of convergence for antisemitism in Europe, and do not consider any previous manifestations of antisemitism, never mind combined

with secularism and or the Catholic Church. It is evident that historical contexts should be elaborated on to a greater extent then joined with overarching geopolitical contexts to create a cohesive outline of their causes.

Within our seven case studies we have found that there are general links between broad secularism, large catholic influences and the apparent increase of antisemitic attacks. In sooth, the countries that are experiencing quandaries in antisemitism are also predominantly Catholic in nature (Pew Research 2018 and Pew Research 2011). We do not see these are mutually exclusive, rather they are directly related. The rising nature of secularism, although it may be argued to be superficial or cursory in nature, politically contributes to the situation in a modern way. It is salient to account for the underlying relationships between the Catholic Church, secularism, and antisemitism. As it happens that the catholic church was the political machine for much of history, it's evident that secularism and the Catholic Church would have intrinsic connections and conflicts. Moreover, with the Catholic Church's dim past of antisemitism, it proves reasonable to consider that the Catholic Church and antisemitism to be bonded (Michael 2008). These links provide the basis for our argument and begs the question of how does new-age secularism combined with an older catholic influence result in antisemitic incidents in the European Union?

The methodology required of this is extensive research through historical, religious, and political lenses, considering only the countries that present themselves to have this issue. The data taken to consider which countries have the highest levels of antisemitism was conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, in which the participating countries self-reported antisemitic incidents in their respective countries. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is the EU's decentralized and independent body that collects and analyzes

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law and data to identify trends and provide evidence-based advice on human rights. We chose this source to establish our case studies because it is the most comprehensive and unbiased report of antisemitism in the area. It also details some of the types, whether it was official or unofficial, and sometimes the perpetrators of antisemitism in areas. Antisemitism, overarchingly as depicted in the EU research, is defined largely by two categories: violent and non-violent. Violent antisemitic crimes, as self-reported by the respective governments, can consist of physical violence, murder, verbal aggression, and vandalism. Other nonviolent crime, while still pertinent, can embody letters, articles, media, internet violence, genocide denial, and others. Since the country statistics are self-reported by the governments, respectively, we've cross examined these statistics with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The results are consistent with each other and are arbitrarily listed as France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Poland, and Italy. These countries have the highest rates of official and unofficial documented antisemitic attacks, as self-reported by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. This outturn is consistent with the preconceived notions and overall sentiments of antisemitism in the European Union. It is within these seven member states that we intend to historically, lawfully, and conceptually analyze in order to produce sound explanations for the rise in antisemitism in the area.

2.   HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Antisemitism in the greater European area, now considered the European Union, can be unearthed till nearly the first century common era, and has left bountiful evidence of Jewish martyrdom and settler communities in the space. Antisemitism, overarchingly as depicted below, is defined largely by the act of physical and political violence against Jewish peoples. This includes but is not restricted by murder, physical violence, desecration of Jewish historical sites, and expulsion from lands. While antisemitism can trace back to the creation of civilization, secularism was fairly recently introduced in comparison. For the purposes of this research, we consider state secularization to be a valid point of data collection, but do not consider state secularization to be the same as cultural secularization. For example, The United States is conceptually a secular state, but culturally it's considered majorly Christian.

Secularism, in its modern concept, was coined by George Holyoake and used to describe a life free from religious social order (Holyoake 2011). The paramount influence to growing secular significance in social and political movements has been the dramatic increase of nonreligious people. For example, France has been historically secular since the French revolution and recorded over 17 million unaffiliated citizens in 2012 (Pew Research 2019). The emergence of economic groups, developments of cities, and growth in the industrial enterprise aided in subverting religious affiliations and advancing secular dogma, whether nationalist, liberal, or socialist. Karl Marx, who was known for his atheist rhetoric, viewed religion as needless in a communist state and caused antireligious sentiment to become commonplace among his supporters. The highest consensus amongst Europeans is either lenient Christian affiliation, including non-practicing, or atheism outright. This is about 15% in Western Europe

and, respectfully, smaller in Central and Eastern Europe (Pew Research 2020). Since the 21st century this has been steadily increasing in Western Europe and constant in Eastern and Central Europe. Secular philosophy manifests itself in different laws and procedures, and each state may find it's own way of implementation. Secularism may be categorized into two indefinite types that are the "hard" and "soft" secularism (Kosmin 2006, 1-12). Soft secularism, described similar to the United States or India, embodies tolerance and separation of church and state, whereas hard secularism denotes an inherent illegitimacy to religious propositions. As an example, and for the purposes of this research, one may think of France as an example of hard secularism and Belgium as soft secularism.

The data taken to consider which countries have the highest levels of antisemitism was conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, in which the participating countries self-reported antisemitic incidents in their respective countries as described previously. The following is a list of the top seven countries with the highest antisemitic rates, paired with a brief overview of their respective histories of antisemitism and secularism following that. The very brief historical reiteration is intended to act as foundational information for the analysis following it, and to offer a view of the information to which the concluding analysis bases on.

2.1 Antisemitism

2.1.1 *France*

2.1.1.1 Early History

France has one of the most influential and important Jewish communities. The community is historically known for its history of mass oppression and violence. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia, Jews appeared in France even before 163 BCE, but the most widespread persecution of Jews was directed under Robert II, who ruled France from 972 to

1031 (Jacobs 1906). Robert II directed widespread violence, including mob violence or burning

at the stake, against Jews that refused to be baptized. After the destruction of the Church of the

Holy Sepulcher in 1009, Jews were immediately rumored to be behind the action, and as such

that same year, Jews were forced to convert or be exiled by Alduin, the Bishop of Limoges (Roth

1994). The French Jews were also some of the first to be significantly impacted by the First

Crusade, leading to a manifold of libels and executions in cities across France. When Philip

Augustus took the throne in 1181, a decree for the immediate expulsion of Jewry from France

was enacted and was not repealed until 1198 against his own wishes but on the heed of his

advisors (Jordan 1989). In 1240, one of the most famous antisemitic acts occurred in Paris

within the court of King Louis IX. Nicholas Donin pressed 35 charges of blasphemy against the

Talmud, claiming it to be anti-Christian in sentiment (Rosenthal 1956). Jewish continued to

provide a large economic pillar to France by keeping within moneylending.

2.1.1.2 Middle Ages

The 1300s saw an influx in expulsion from French lands, and in 1305, Phillip IV

imprisoned or expelled French Jewry, seizing all their possessions (Brown 1991). The Black

Plague, similarly, to other countries affected, encouraged tremendous amounts of violence

towards Jewish communities, whom the populous accused of poisoning the water. These mass

movements saw thousands of Jews burned at the stake or murdered plainly in the streets (Cohn

2007). After the French Revolution, French Jewry saw a rise in tolerance and privilege, but this

was ultimately short lived as the 1800s saw a rise in antisemitic behavior. Edouard Drumont's La

France Juive became a popular publication, where Drumont cited Jews as the reason for the

collapse of the Union Generale, a leading Catholic Bank that had fallen prior, during a time of

political dissatisfaction (Byrnes 1948). Perhaps the most egregious episode of antisemitism in

Europe, nevertheless in France, at the time occurred at the tail end of 19th century France. The Dreyfus Affair overall surrounded probing questions of French Jewry's loyalty to the state. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a rich Jew, was tried and convicted of selling French military secrets to Germany. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, without substantial evidence in the theory that he was contributing to a larger secret Jewish agenda. This not only is a scathing depiction of how Jewish myth controlled European and French law, but it also inspired Theodor Herzl to write his "Der Judenstaat" (The State of the Jews), essentially finding foundations for modern-day Zionism (Behr 2018).

2.1.1.3 Interwar Period and the Holocaust

France faced an overriding increase in Jewish immigration during the interwar period after the pogroms in Poland, Ukraine, and Germany occupied areas. This led to much pressure on immigration and led to stricter guidelines. In May 1940, Germany invaded France and Paris fell subsequently in June. When France was divided into unoccupied and occupied territories, a Vichy government was installed in occupied territories and collaborated heavily with the German regime (Curtis 1997). In October 1940, the Vichy passed the Jewish Statute, "Statut des Juifs", that defined the Jews not just by religion but also by race, excluding them from public life and barring them from certain occupations (Curtis 1997). A program was then constructed to "aryanize" Jews in France, sequestering most property and interning Jewry in domestic camps (Curtis 1997). Throughout the Summer, after striking an agreement with the Vichy government, France began mass deporting Jews, including whole families. In March 1942, the first deportation saw 1,112 Jews sent to Auschwitz, and following in May 1942, Jews were ordered to wear identification. It suspected that over "three-quarters of a million workers" were sent to

"Germany as conscript labor" (Curtis 1997). It estimated that 13% of French Jews, and 41% of foreign Jews were sent to their deaths from occupied France (Curtis 1997).

2.1.2   The Netherlands

2.1.2.1 Early History

Very little is known about early Jewish settlers of the Netherlands. Although broken in consistency, sources place the first Jewish communities here to be around the time of the Roman conquests (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). In the fifth century, there were a handful of Jews living in predominant Roman cities (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). Ultimately, since there is scarce source material from this time, the prevalence of antisemitism is largely unknown. The First Crusade was the first time Jews were slaughtered on a mass level in the Netherlands, but overall, it did not hit Northern or Southern Netherlands and thus the general Jewish population was unaffected in the Netherlands (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007).

2.1.2.2 Middle Ages

The beginning of the thirteenth century saw more Jewish immigrants into Northern and Southern Netherlands, in parallel with the Black Plague, which lends itself historically to much medieval antisemitism. Jews had been suspected of poisoning the water wells, similarly to other European countries scapegoating in panic, with the blood of Christian children, one of the first blood libels in the Netherlands (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). The majority German-Jewish cities on the border were the first to be persecuted for this in 1349 (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). Jewish and non-Jewish sources alike detail the horrific and brutal murders that occured in panic of the Black Plague. In 1444, Jews were expelled and barred from Utrecht, where defiance could result in imprisonment (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). The expelled Jews settled in nearby villages, such as Maarssen, which became epicenters for Jewish

life in the Netherlands during this time. It is important to account that there was notable immigration of Sephardi Jews from Spain and Portugal following the Portuguese Edicts of 1496 and 1497 and the Spanish Alhambra Decree of 1492 (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). These Jews became an important economic tool for the Netherlands, and therefore, Jews saw little oppression in comparison to other European countries.

2.1.2.3 Interwar Period and the Holocaust

During the interwar period, the Netherlands estimated 140,001 Jews to be dwelling there, with around 117,999 to be Dutch citizens (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). The Netherlands also gathered that more than 100,000 Jews were murdered throughout the war, the greatest victim count outside of Germany (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). In May 1940, German troops overran the Netherlands and fully occupied it, Dutch Jews did not know the full dangers of Nazim at the time, and hence many could or would not escape. The first anti-Jewish laws included things such as ban on ritual sacrifice, but shortly increased to identification measures instilled by the Rijksinspectie op de Bevolkingsregisters (State Population Registers Inspectorate) (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007). From 1941 onwards, German and Dutch Nazis comprehensively removed Jewish citizens and refugees, revoked their last protections of Dutch citizenship, fully restricted movement to or from the Netherlands, segregated public spaces, and in July of 1942 systematic deportations to concentration camps began (A. Pomerans. and E. Pomerans 2007).

2.1.3   Sweden

2.1.3.1 Early History

Jews, with little doubt, formed small and secretive communities in Sweden predating the 17th century, but little to nothing is known about them. There is scant evidence supporting any of their beliefs, practices, or whereabouts of communities.

2.1.3.2 Middle Ages

The first indicator of Jews' presence in Sweden were that of 1685 royal ordinances placed against them calling for their removal. These mandates justified the removal of Jews from Sweden by painting Jews as "revilers of Christ and his communion", making the expulsion of Jews necessary to preserving the purity of the Lutheran faith (European Jewish Congress 2019, 1). The first record of Jews legally residing in Sweden appeared in the seventeenth century, through baptism records of the Stockholm Cathedral, as being baptized into the Lutheran Church was a requirement for allowance to settle in Sweden (Valentin 1924). Jews were later allowed to settle in Sweden without being required to convert to Lutheranism in 1782, but Jews were not recognized as Swedish subjects until 1838 (European Jewish Congress 2019, 1). Lutheran Protestantism, now referred to as the Church of Sweden, was the state religion starting from the middle ages. Sweden has since separated from the church in 2000, 58% of Swedes are members of the Church of Sweden (Sutherland 2020, 1).

2.1.3.3 Interwar Period and The Holocaust

In between 1850 and 1920, Russian and Polish immigration to Sweden caused the Jewish population to heavily increase, with the Jewish population reaching nearly 6,500 in 1920. This massive influx led to stricter regulation measures on immigration. Public opinion also influenced the restrictions placed on immigration, as Sweden was facing a scarcity of employees (Jewish

Heritage Europe 2018, 1). With the Holocaust on the horizon, a multitude of Swedish Nazi

parties emerged in the 1930s, in part to the upper crust of Swedish society being pro-German,

and therefore pro-Nazi (European Jewish Congress 2019, 1). The most prominent of these parties

were the Svenska nationalsocialistiska partiet, the Swedish National Socialist Party; the height of

the Nazi stronghold in Sweden was in 1934, when Nazi parties were successful in over 100

electoral ventures (Lööw 2004, 244). In regard to the ensuing World War, Sweden made its best

efforts to remain neutral, and this stance created a prime environment for Jewish refuge.

Following the Nazi occupation of Norway in 1942, Sweden authorized the immigration of 900

Norwegian Jews. In October 1943, the country gave asylum to more than 8,000 Danish Jews

(Jewish Heritage Europe 2018, 1).

2.1.4   Germany

2.1.4.1 Early History

Documentation is well supportive of an early Jewish population in Germany, leading

back to 321 C.E. (Elon 2002) in Cologne. Christianity was new and the Holy Roman Empire

held the continent in power. The Catholic Church that had dominated this society had listed

Jewish people as rejected, who should be segregated from Christians. The fifth century saw the

Church present the Theodosian Code, that headed its constituents to destroy the local Jews

economically and politically (Gay 1992). The First Crusades ushered in an era of persecution,

similar to themes of other surrounding countries. Entire communities were wiped out, and the

end of the Crusades saw fairly few communities spared from its barbarity (Elon 2002). In Mainz,

for example, eleven-hundred Jews were forced to kill themselves and their families in order to

evade Baptism (Gay 1992). After the first Crusade, Jews were rejected from public life and

retracted into ghettos and developed strong and distinct Jewish-German cultures (Gay 1992).

2.1.4.2 Middle Ages

Beginning in the 12th century and continuing well into the 13th, the Catholic Church's Inquisition was instituted to combat "heresy" which often encompassed Jews among other non-Christian folk (Elon 2002). Extending the same period was the Black Plague, which incited a new wave of antisemitism in Europe consisting of blood libel and Juddenschlacht, or "Jew's slaughter". Beginning with the Reformation, the settling status of Jews in Germany became uncertain. Jews were under the influence of German city's charters, that could expel Jews within a day's time. This made the Jews somewhat nomadic, travelling to and from many European cities over the decade, or in time wholly immigrating to Eastern Europe (Gay 1992).

2.1.4.3 Interwar Period and the Holocaust

The interwar period and Nazi Germany are the most defining periods of modern Jewish history, and the accompanying Holocaust being among the most devastating events of recent thought. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were adopted, followed by Kristallnacht and the implementation of Ghettos. The Ghetto Jewry were shortly and swiftly emptied either into further pogroms, where many were shot in mass graves, or into Nazi concentration camps, and thus the Final Solution was enacted. In May 1943, Germany was in time declared free from Jews, or Judenrein. All in all, most need not be reminded of the horrific events that led up to the extermination of approximately six million people.

2.1.5   Belgium

2.1.5.1 Early History

The first archeological findings proving of Jewish settlement in the area goes back to the thirteenth century in Tienen, of where a Jewish tombstone engraved with the name Rebecca bat Moshe was found. This stone is now housed in the Collection of the Royal Museum of Art and History in Belgium (Glatt 1940) Anti-Jewish ideas and movements were also notable during this century, including Duke Henry III's order to expel all Jewish settlers from the Brabant province (Ben-Rafel 2016), the thoughts of theologian Thomas Aquinas (Dorin 1970), and the 1309 crusades, where forced conversions are massacres of Jewish people were commonplace. The early Jewish community in Belgium dwindled down to a few hundred after the Black Death Persecutions in 1348-1350, wherein Jews were accused of poisoning the wells, leading to the Black Death. What was left of the community after 1350 perished at the stake during the 1370 Brussels Massacre (Kotek and Kotek 2005, page 27) that banished, executed, or otherwise killed about twenty Jews that were in connection with an alleged host desecration at the Brussels synagogue. Jewish people in the early history and medieval Belgium history held unimportant roles, such as petty moneylenders. They were regarded highly as outsiders or immigrants, restricted from holding any office or influence in economic or political spheres.

2.1.5.2 Middle Ages

Jews fled to Belgium in the early 16th century during the Spanish and Portuguese Expulsion of the 1940s. Sephardic Jews, new to Northern Europe, converted to Catholicism for safety and social rights, but many kept a secret practice of Judaism, even attending secret synagogue services in Antwerp. These "New Christian" Sephardic Jews were considered to be Marranos, an old Spanish term meaning "swine," and as they congregated in Antwerp, they

brought the diamond and precious-stone industry to Belgium (Glatt 1940). They initially played as key tradesmen in the late 16th century, opening international trade with Europe. Charles V ordered the expulsion of these "New Christians", on many occasions, but was ultimately denied by the surrounding citizens. Under Austrian, or Habsburg, rule in 1713 Jews regained some civil liberties and freedoms, but ultimately continued to pay special taxes and refrain from intermarriage, which limited the number of Jews (McCagg 1992) They continued this expansive freedom under the French (1794-1814) and Dutch (1814-1830), and when Belgium became independent in 1831, Judaism was an officially recognized religion. The Jewish population continued to grow with the aforementioned freedoms, especially with the influx of Eastern European Jews fleeing persecution. The foremost communities at this time were Antwerp, Mons, and Brussels.

2.1.5.3 Interwar Period and the Holocaust

Preliminary to World War II, about 40,000 Jews in Belgium were German refugees. (Glatt 1940) As Germany seized Belgium on May 10, 1940, Anti-Jewish measures began shortly thereafter. Autumn of 1940 saw the Nazi prohibition on certain professions, such as in public service, and from 1941-1942, the situation progressed so far as setting a curfew and requiring Jewish badge identification (Garliński 2001). Many Belgium Jews fled to Poland, the United States, and Cuba, but ultimately approximately 28,000 Jews perished in Belgium during the Holocaust (The JUST Act Report: Belgium 2020)

2.1.6 Poland

2.1.6.1 Early History

The early history of Jewish settlement in Poland was starkly different than other European powers at the time. Due to Bolesław III, and the Magdeburg rights (Weinryb 1982),

Jewish immigrants and citizens flourished with distinct rights and privileges. There was a continuation of prosperity within the Polish Jewry until approximately the 11th century, when Poland was gradually distorted by the Roman Catholic and German influences (Weinryb 1982). With the exception of Jewish persecution during the 13th century crusades, Poland largely served as a refuge for European Jewry.

2.1.6.2 Middle Ages

Poland was considered the center of the Jewish world for most of the middle ages. Just as the Spanish diaspora and expulsion occurred, Poland offered up its borders. It wasn't until the Early Jagiellonian Era that the first blood libel and pogroms had been established. The first blood libel accusation occurred in 1367 (Weinryb 1982), which ultimately contributed to antisemitic riots in Krakow in 1407. Poland during the Black Death followed the same antisemitic scapegoats as did other European countries at the time (Weinryb 1982). Franciscan friar, John of Capistrano, inspired anti-Jewish riots in Wroclaw and other Silesian cities that concluded in total banishment from Lower Silesia in 1454. The end of the Middle Ages saw waves of Pogroms (Marcus 1983), influenced by Russia and the assassination of Alexander II, the Emperor of Russia, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Finland.

2.1.6.3 Interwar period and the Holocaust

The population of Polish Jews at the onset of World War II was the largest of Europe, constituting at least three quarters (Marcus 1983) of total European Jewry. After Poland became a sovereign state in 1918, the Jewry of Poland no longer felt such safety, being massacred in Pogroms for being associated with Trotsky and the Bolshevik revolution (Smolar 1987). The legal rights and nationality as described in the Treaty of Versailles weren't honored by Poland, and Jews were strictly barred from working in civil service or certain public service (Weinryb

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1982). Legislation soon began to pass that was targeted towards Jewish commerce and new wave anti-Jewish boycotts. Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 and immediately placed restrictions and Jewish identification markers on the communities there (Marcus 1983). The first ghetto was in Piotrków Trybunalski as early as that October (Dubnow 2014), and by 1942, all Jewish citizens were living in ghettos or in hiding. Poland housed three major concentration camps and six extermination camps, wherein approximately eighty-five percent, or around 3 million, of all Polish Jews perished (Stone 2006).

2.1.7 Italy

2.1.7.1 Early History

The first settlement of Jews in Italy is not documented or well-known, but we do know that documents from Caesar's era of Rome detail exemptions for Jews in Military Service and allowing for religious observance of sending money to the temple in Jerusalem (Simonsohn 2015). During the reign of Constantine and the Edict of Milan (Simonsohn 2015), Jews were striped of many rights and freedoms previously given to them, including prohibition of owning slaves, circumcision, and or intermarriage. Under Gregory I and later in the 11th century under the respective popes of Rome, Jews saw a new flourishment of tolerance. (Katz 1933)

2.1.7.2 Middle Ages

Jews during the middle ages lived a relatively prosperous life, residing in good relations with their Christian and Catholic neighbors for most of it. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 (Cohen 2017), that was convened by Pope Innocent III, made efforts to place Jewish citizens in a position of serfdom and presented that Jews should wear an identification badge, similar to those of the Holocaust. Forceful conversions ran rampant beginning with a formal declaration by Pope Benedict XI (Roth 1936), bringing a steady decline to Jewry in Italy. Charles II initiated a

southern crusade that lasted to approximately 1294 (Starr 1946), wherein entire communities

perished, and survivors were forced to flee. It is also salient to note that the Age of the Ghetto, or

from around 1600 to 1800, saw compulsory segregation under Paul IV (Mann 1989), the

nationwide Ghetto institution, and a public burning of the Talmud in 1553.

2.1.7.3 Interwar period and the Holocaust

The Jewry in Italy saw a multifaceted accession to fascism in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Benito Mussolini's rise to power in 1922 showed early stages of intolerance towards minority

groups in Italy. The Zionist movement in Europe and the Middle East strained relations with the

Jewry of Italy, Britain, and the Italian Government. The strengthening of links with Nazi

Germany in 1936 gave Italian Fascism a new aspect; antisemitic discourse. Many articles and

books stressed the othering of Jews, including the "alien" character of Jews which was inherently

different from the "pure" Italian, Aryan stock (Felice 2015). At the onset of September 1938 two

laws against Jews were enacted, preventing them from teaching in education sectors, and

deporting the Jewish citizens that immigrated after 1919 (Felice 2015). In the early months of

WWII concentration camps were swiftly set up in Italy, and then were implemented in the

horrors of the "Final Solution", as Germany occupied the Italian Socialist Republic (Benz 2009).

Those who could not seek refuge in the independent Italian occupied zones were arrested by

Germans after 1943 and killed in the Holocaust, either in the local camps or transported to

Auschwitz.

2.2 Secularism

2.2.1 France

France is maybe the most recognizable secular state in the European Union. Its

constitutional Laïcité, which holds a long antiquity, demands separation of Church and State, but

also strikingly does not extrapolate the free exercise of religion. The model that secularism has developed into in France is extreme, to say the least, in that all religious iconography and expression is shunned from public view. Secularism, or Laïcité, gained special backing after the French Revolution, symbolically overthrowing the divine rights of the government. Considered as the legal foundations of Laicite in France, the Third Republic enacted the 1905 French law on Separation of the Churches and State. It nullified the Concordat of 1801 and set the stage for modern Secularism to grow exponentially in France (Guerlac 1908). Secularism has steadily become more fundamentalist, peaking in the infamous 2004 ruling of banning conspicuous religious clothing, including but not limited to yarmulkes and head scarfs.

2.2.2   *The Netherlands*

The Netherlands has risen to be considered one of the most secularized countries in Europe (Knippenberg 1998). This includes both personal secularization and political secularization. The religiosity of Dutch people is comparable to other Scandinavian countries like Norway, where people subscribe to certain spiritual ideas but not church membership (Knippenberg 1998). The Netherlands followed suit of the Belgian and Dutch "Pillarization", as described below, that followed the conflict of Catholics and Calvinists. Traditionally, church affiliated organizations have been active in political and cultural spheres, such as the Christian Democratic Party (CDA) (Bijsterveld 2015). The separation between Church and State was specifically detailed in Article 6, which names neutrality of the state. The history proceedings of the Netherlands somewhat parallel Belgium's secularism processes.

2.2.3   *Sweden*

The Church of Sweden, also known as Lutheranism, was gradually established in Sweden during a period of three centuries (800-1100 CE) and grew to wield influence over nearly all

aspects of Swedish life. The legal decline of the Church came about in the 1809 Constitution of Sweden, which abolished the requirement of religious unity when Sweden began allowing religious freedom to the influx of immigrants. The Church and State were separated on January 1, 2000. As Sweden has grown increasingly less religious, there remains preferential Lutheran treatment in the eyes of the law. For example, the Church of Sweden enjoys advantages in the financial compensation over other religions entities due to the church-antiquarian compensation system set in place when the Church separated from the State. Sweden is now considered one of the least religious nations in the West, as eight out of ten Swedes are either "not religious" or "convinced atheists" (The Local 2015, 1), (Sutherland 2020, 1). This relationship between religion and secularism evokes the "Swedish paradox", in which the majority of the citizenry holds only a weak relationship with the Church but persists in utilizing the Church in chief personal life situations. The principal delineation needed to be made clear between the priority placed on the Church of Sweden and other religious denominations in the nation, is the historical role of the Church continuing to influence Sweden today (Jantera-Jareborg 2009).

2.2.4   Germany

German citizens are free to practice their respective religions, and there exists a separation between church and state. Thirty-six percent of the population, more than one in three, belong to no religion (Deutchland.de 2021, 1). The course of German handling of religiosity is rooted in East and West Germany's physical separation and vastly differing ideological and governmental structures from 1949 to 1990. The German Basic Law lays a foundation for a legal framework that upholds religion, while the German Democratic Republic employed anti-religious politics (Korioth and Augsberg 2016, 320). Many details of the framework is indicative of a time in which the majority of Germans were Christian, and the framework is

therefore tailored to the Christians (Deutchland.de 2021, 1). In highlighting individual forms of

religious belief, there exists the risk that Christian tradition may obtain a privileged stature

(Korioth and Augsberg 2016, 330). To remedy this, Germany has pledged to approach all

religions and perspectives neutrally. It is important to note that "Neutral", does not entail that

Germany is opposed to religions. Germany adopted the concept of "constructive neutrality",

meaning that the state and religions work in partnership in many areas. For example, the state

acts monetarily in hospitals and social institutions that are supported by religious communities,

and Christian holidays are safely afforded to the people by the Constitution (Deutchland.de 2021,

1).

2.2.5 Belgium

Neutrality in religion and faith isn't laid out explicitly in Belgian law. Since 1970, seven

religions have been officially recognized by the state, paralleled by a federation of secular

associations. Secular movements are treated equally to organized religion under Belgium law,

ensuring that a secular lifestyle is equivalent and included in religious tolerance. This is a direct

result of the "pillarization" of Belgium, a movement which grew in the 19th century (Rowntree

1910). The catholic church still wields influence culturally and socially in Belgium, influencing

pushback from several up-and-coming secular organizations during the 19th century and sparking

confrontations with government. The catholic church held ubiquitous influence in Belgium until

the latter twentieth century, and even then, the power exerted still lingered in the lives of

nonbelievers after. Before the twentieth century, in the first decades of 1830, Belgium was

characterized by two political parties, commonly known as liberals and Catholics (Rowntree

1910). The liberal party, characterized by their anticlerical sentiments, promoted civil funerals

and life cycle events, and also the state education system as an alternative to the organized

education of the Catholic Church. The state education system led to subsequent nonviolent "school wars" in 1878 and again in 1950 (Meynen, et al. 2009).

2.2.6 Italy

Catholicism intertwined in Italian government and communities very early on. It was established as the official state religion and held significant force over its citizens for millennia. The unification of Italy (1860–70) engendered serious schisms in the relations between the Catholic Church and the new state. The liberal governments, spawned by the unification of Italy, urged a new process of secularization in institutions. They promoted civil marriages (1865), the restriction of Catholic religious education at the state level (1877), and reformations of criminal laws that would protect religious affiliations (1889). All of these provoked the Catholic stratum and aggravated the economic downfall of the Church, especially by way of abolishing entities and confiscating property (A. Ferrari and S. Ferrari 2010). After the revision of the 1929 Lateran Concordat in 1984, secularism became a possibility in Italian government. Those agreements, designating the equality of all religions under law, still ensures that the Catholic Church engages special treatment. Italy officially became a secular state in 1985 (A. Ferrari and S. Ferrari 2010).

2.2.7 Poland

Poland is not a secular country. Poland is still a majority Roman Catholic nation and is still heavily conservative. In the following decades of World War II, Poland was still largely under the influence of the Soviet Union, which in turn suppressed all religious action in the country. Many clergy took on the role of cultural leaders. This paradigm has not changed since the end of communism in Poland, even if the Polish constitution states that it's neutral in

religious matters. The Christian Cross has become not only a religious icon, but a national one tied to the Catholic roots of Poland.

3.   CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the antisemitism of historical antiquity still holds prevalence in the attitudes and perspectives of citizens today. The tensions imposed by the actions of ancestors opposed to Jewish existence remain tangible today. The Catholic Church stood for centuries as the indisputable de facto power in Europe, and its ideologies continue to wield tremendous power over both individuals and European governmental interpretations. This influence on governmental orientation is exemplified by the antisemitic policies discussed in the antisemitism portion of the literature review. The policy landscape shaped by the Catholic doctrine have created societal norms engrained with anti-Jewish sentiment. For example, in Sweden, Jews were not permitted to hold public office until 1951. Until 1951, membership in the Swedish Church was a requirement to obtain political seating (European Jewish Congress 2019, 1). Political systems constructed with bias at the core perpetuate deep wounds that continue to bleed today.

This notion is exemplified by the antisemitism section of our research, in which we explored how the Catholic Church, inadvertently or directly, encouraged violence against Jewish people. Contemporarily, secularism has now seized the role of Catholicism in the sphere of antisemitism. The Catholic Church has displayed historically exclusionary and violent tendencies towards individuals of non-Catholic decree, which holds populations not assimilated to Catholic culture subject to great cruelty. In current times, secularism holds a similar approach of exclusion and high risk of facing violence if one does not subscribe to secularistic values. For instance, the French laïcité ban on religious head coverings caused a spike in antisemitic attacks, as the wearing of a kippah, the cloth skullcap religious Jewish men don, is a physical indication of not subscribing to the secular society mold. Following the violent machete attack of a kippah-

adoring man in France, "the head of Marseille's Jewish community, in urging Jews to stop wearing the kippah, had simply made a pragmatic, logical suggestion. The absence of the kippah from the street would make evident, said Trigano, a reality that already existed: the "erasure of the Jewish community"" (Katz 2018, 11).

The seven case studies analyzed have displayed compelling trends that further emphasize the claim that political regimes with roots in both secularism and Catholicism fuel inflame antisemitic sentiments and attacks. Modern antisemitism, from the frame of the classical antisemitism and beyond the Holocaust, typically spikes from turmoil. Modern antisemitism is exemplified in the Dreyfus Affair, the false accusation of a French Jewish army captain of passing military secrets to German opponents. This infamous event marred Jewish reputation in Europe and beyond and was brought on by France's political strife and coup attempts. Medieval and classical antisemitism was typically driven by blood libel and blasphemy, which was exacerbated by the Catholic Church. Secularism, while a more recent phenomena than antisemitism, also provides a stage for antisemitism, as most secular laws are thinly veiled in Christian-majority countries. In nations such as Italy, the Catholic church unsurprisingly still receives special-treatment, and so the secularism of the state is quite complicated therein. Overall, it seems that nations with robust Catholic ties hold antisemitic "left-overs" from history, which are only intensified by secularism. Countries akin to France and the Netherlands possess two of the highest rates of antisemitic incidents; the states share historical strongholds of Catholicism and, in more recent years, secular pushes from their respective governments. Many individuals who grow up in Catholic majority countries absorb the identities and ideologies from the intrinsic Catholic culture surrounding them, intentionally or unintentionally. These citizens may not be inherently religious, or consume information directly from the Catholic Church, but

this culture still greatly affects and informs their perceptions of Jewry. Secularism holds similar outcomes regarding the societal psyche of assimilating to the collective self, but the desired outcome is achieving an anti-religious state in all respects. Although secularism is anti-religious in all aspects, the Catholic foundations of the now secular nations at hand provide Christian citizens with a substantial advantage over religious minorities such as Jews. Citizens under secular governments believe that they grow less discriminatory when they subscribe to secularism, but as made evident from the research presented, much secularism is born out of intensely anti-religious stances- forced freedom of religion is not freedom at all.

This research intends to connect Catholicism and secularism to antisemitic rises in Europe. We acknowledge that there are many competing factors in antisemitism and history of Europe overall. There are many antisemitic components left out of this discussion, such as Holocaust denial from nations such as Poland, the development of the modern state of Israel, and advancements in international relations. The all-embracing theme attempts to present questions not yet introduced in current discussion, such that Catholicism and secularism, together, provide platforms for rampant antisemitism. Through this discourse, we encourage increased proactive engagement regarding the issue of antisemitism and aspire to facilitate space for the acknowledgment of necessary accountability to be held on the Catholic Church's behalf, as well as dialogue on the harm secularism inflicts upon Jewish individuals.

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