

WHY DID THE NAZIS PERSECUTE THE JEWES?



HITLER'S IDEOLOGY

- Hitler was anti-Semitic.
- Anti-Semitism is the term used to describe prejudice against Jews simply because they are Jewish.



HITLER'S IDEOLOGY

- Hitler expressed his racist ideology very clearly in *Mein Kampf*.
- Here he explained that he believed that the German race was being weakened by the Jews.
- He believed that Germany had been **stabbed in the back** in 1918 by Jewish politicians who had signed the Treaty of Versailles.



ORIGINS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

- Hitler and the Nazi Party were not the first to persecute Jews.
- Prejudice against the Jews had been common in Europe for hundreds of years before the Nazis rose to power.
- Why?
- Around 2,000 years ago, Jesus, according to the Gospels, was executed for treason.
- Christian teaching blamed the Jews; this formed the historical basis for hatred towards the Jews.

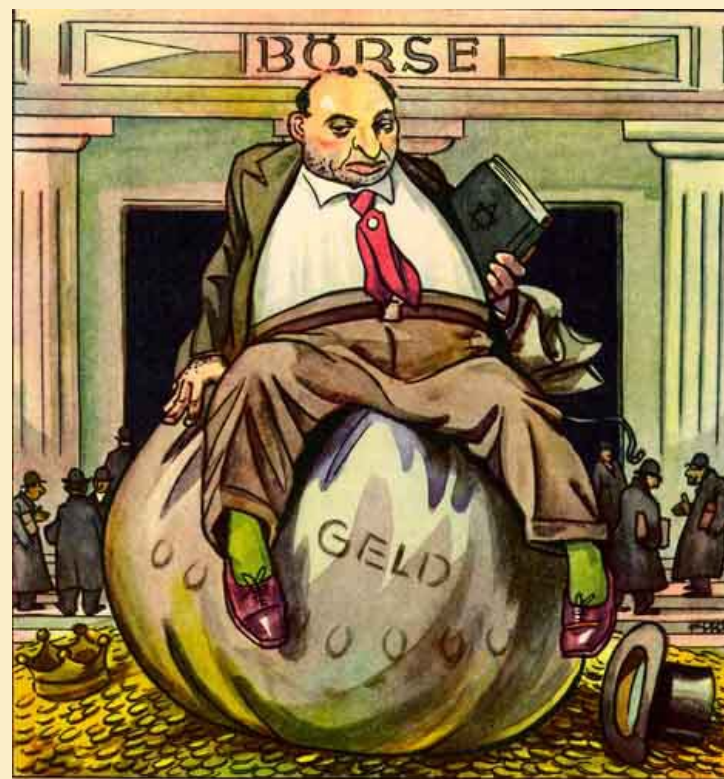
ANTI-SEMITISM

- From this time on Jews were forced to leave Palestine to find new homes in other lands.
- Wherever Jews settled they tended to hold on to their own religion and customs.
- This made them stand out in Christian Europe.



ANTI-SEMITISM IN GERMANY

- Anti-Semitism was growing in Germany before 1914.
- However, after 1918 this prejudice took on new forms.
- Jews in Germany were often viewed as being successful in business.
- Jews were sometimes associated with 'big businessmen' like bankers who were seen as having made good profits while other Germans were dying in the trenches.



„Der Gott des Juden ist das Geld. Und um Geld zu verdienen, begeht er die größten Verbrechen. Er ruht nicht eher, bis er auf einem großen Geldsack sitzen kann, bis er zum König des Geldes geworden ist.“

ANTI-SEMITISM

- German Jews were also blamed for stabbing Germany in the back in 1918.
- It was believed by some that left-wing parties, like the SPD, were controlled by Jews.
- It was argued that it was these parties that had destroyed Germany by making peace and setting up the Weimar Republic.



ANTI-SEMITISM

- Why did anti-Semitism grow after 1918?
- Germany suffered greatly after the end of the First World War.
- People wanted an explanation for what had gone wrong.
- Blaming the Jews for Germany's problems was an attractive option because it was a way to save German pride.
- Jews became the **scapegoats** for the problems experienced by Germany post war.