

# The Evolution of the Idea of the Jewish Race from Medieval Spain to Nazi Germany

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During the first millennium of Christianity, Jews were perceived to be on the outskirts of society, a downcast people whose only hope for redemption was to recognize Jesus as the son of God. Jews were consistently and violently persecuted for their religious beliefs, and, as a result, many chose to be baptized or were forced to do so. In contrast, the Jews in Medieval Spain experienced less violence as their Muslim rulers promoted religious toleration. However, as the Spanish Reconquista took place, a wave of religious fanaticism swept through the Iberian Peninsula and religious toleration disappeared. As a result, many Spanish Jews converted. The Old Christians felt threatened by all the new converts and believed their conversion to be insincere. This led to the institution of the Spanish Inquisition and the development of Limpieza de Sangre laws. The creation of the first Limpieza de Sangre doctrine in 1449 was a pivotal moment in history as Judaism was no longer defined as a religion, but as a race. From this point on, Jews and New Christians were viewed as one people with a tainted lineage neither could escape from. The Spanish perspective on race spread to the rest of Europe and New Christians were largely ostracized from society, just like their Jewish ancestors. Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism in 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany, was influenced by these ideas and shared his stance in his anti-Jewish works. Luther's ideas and texts, which originated from the Spanish model, were promulgated throughout the centuries and would later reappear in Nazi propaganda and dogma. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Luther was acclaimed by racial thinkers who coined the term anti-Semitism and cemented the pseudoscientific inferiority of the Jewish race. Arthur de Gobineau, Edouard Drumont and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's most influential racial thinkers, were vocal advocates of Aryan superiority and the mortal struggle Aryans faced against the immoral, rootless Jews. Germans were gripped by these pseudoscientific racial theories and their interpretation of race eventually escalated to the logical extreme that as the "superior race," Germans had the moral obligation to eliminate "inferior races". This led to the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws, ghettos, concentration

camps and finally death camps. Throughout this work, I plan to analyze the origins of modern scientific racism, starting from the Reconquista and ending in the mid-20th century with Nazi racist ideology and practice. Many do not realize that there is a connection between these two time periods as the Limpieza de Sangre laws enacted in Spain began the idea that Jews were a separate race and the German National Socialist Party manifested the logical extreme of this idea.

### Jewish Persecution in the Medieval Period

Originally, Jews were only differentiated from other people due to religious differences. In the first millennium of the Christian era, doctrinal ideas developed that held the Jews responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. Exile was their punishment for their past transgressions and refusal to accept Christianity. Jews found themselves as societal and religious outsiders to Christian culture and were subject to violent stereotyping ("Holocaust Encyclopedia").

As a result of this prejudiced stereotyping and alleged responsibility for Jesus' death, countless Jews were murdered during the medieval period due to accusations of poisoning food, wells and streams and being plague spreaders. The 'World Chronicler' of the monastery of Albert in Cologne described the "horrible means by which the Jews wished to extinguish all of Christendom, through their poisons of frogs and spiders mixed into oil and cheese (Cohn 17)." Jews were seen as scapegoats for troubles plaguing Christian society, especially during times of mass fear and confusion ("Holocaust Encyclopedia"). Jews were tortured into confessions that 'proved' their guilt or were simply rounded up in city squares or synagogues. Albert Lindemann wrote in his book, *Esau's Tears*, "During the times of the most notorious attacks on Jews, such as the crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the episodes of Black Death in the fourteenth century, and the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the attackers were generally the lawless and desperate elements of the population,

over whom the church –or any other authorities—had little control (37).” Christians believed that Jews were not plotting the deaths of only a few Christians, but rather the complete destruction of the Christian people. The Black Death, that occurred during the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, exacerbated tensions as Jews were blamed for the pandemic. Petrarch wrote that the Jews “were accused of having made a special journey to India in order to bring back the plague and spread it among the Christians (Hay 143).” Christian masses believed that the Jews were using their ‘demoniacal power’ and connections with authorities to achieve world domination.

As a result, deadly pogroms threatened Europe’s Jews. Notably, there were mass executions of Jews in Hainault and Brabant (modern day France and Belgium). Anti-Jewish riots were usually initiated by peasants and artisans. The deadliest, however, involved the elites. The ‘enlightened’ Emperor Charles IV of Bohemia, before a pogrom, would grant immunity to the burghers, bishops and knights to murder Jews and would cancel debts local elites owed to Jews (Cohn 15). Attacking the Jews had economic rationale as aggressors were able to cancel their debts and steal Jewish property. Henry of Hervodia, a German chronicler in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, narrated the horrific suffering of the Jews, “cruelly slain ... women with their small children cruelly and inhumanly fed to the flames (Cohn 16).” To escape the senseless violence, many Jews were forcibly or voluntarily baptized. Nonetheless, those who were forcibly baptized would often return to Judaism at the pogrom’s culmination.

### Jews and Spain

While the Jews in Medieval Spain did not entirely avoid the violence their brethren faced, they did enjoy more religious toleration due to Muslim leadership. Under Muslim rule, Jewish communities flourished; Jews played a major role in international trade and provided financial, technical and administrative services. As the Christians embarked on the Reconquista, in which they fought to regain

control of Spain, the Jews continued to provide their services. However, as the Reconquista progressed, religious Christians initiated an aggressive Christianization movement and ended religious toleration. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish communities became increasingly isolated from their Christian counterparts.

Under Christian rule, Spanish Jews had to deal with stifling anti-Semitic laws that prevented social and economic growth. Pope Innocent III had ruled in 1215 that Jews had to wear a yellow badge and distinguishable clothing which was enforced as the Reconquista progressed. Jews were not allowed to own land, had to live in certain neighborhoods and were banned from joining Christian guilds. When applied, these laws ensured that everyone was aware of the religious and societal differences that separated Jews from Christian society. Daniel Schwartz posits that the overwhelming amount of social and economic prohibitions was meant to reduce Jews to destitution and misery, which would ultimately bring them to Christianity (126).

During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, many Spanish Jews were forcibly converted due to Christian pressures. In 1391, a wave of massacres struck different Jewish communities around Spain, which marked the beginning of the end of the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry. Christians were incited by Ferrand Martinez, Archdeacon of Eciija, who used political anti-Judaism in his speeches and would encourage the persecution of Jews. After the Massacres of 1391, one of the largest medieval attacks against the Jews, thousands of frightened and demoralized Jews willingly converted, and in a few cases were forcibly baptized (Roth 20). Many remained Christian after the pogrom culminated because they were able to achieve greater wealth, security and status without their original Jewish identification. These converted Jews assimilated into Christian society and could now work in city governments, own land and be part of the Church. Malcolm Hay writes that Jews converted to save their lives and their property, however, they did not realize that they would soon be condemning themselves “to live in the shadow of the Holy Inquisition” (Hay 158). Conversos began to have great influence within Spain’s

economic, religious, cultural and urban life. One of the most notable examples of a New Christian contributing to Christian society was Teresa of Ávila. A daughter of a Converso, Teresa was a prominent Carmelite nun, Spanish mystic, author and theologian that thrived during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. New Christians participated in the Spanish religious awakening and in the Spanish Illuminism Movement in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. John Longhurst wrote that “one of the noteworthy things about the Illuminist movement is that many of those involved in it were conversos or persons of Jewish ancestry (Friedman 21-23).” While society benefited from Converso influence, in most cases, people were unable to forget their Jewish lineage.

### Developing notions of race in Spain

As time progressed, Spanish society began to view the large number of New Christians with increasing resentment and contempt. The average Spaniard believed that many, if not all, Conversos were secretly practicing the Jewish faith. The fact that Conversos had noble ties, some within the Spanish royal families, added to the intense converso-phobia. This fear of Jews infiltrating royal circles originated several decades earlier as King Ferdinand's maternal great-grandmother was Jewish. People began to fear the growing power of the Conversos and had nostalgia for when Christians were Christians and Jews were Jews, especially since New Christians were not bound to the same distinctive clothing that visually and socially separated Jews from Christians. Spaniards felt as if the Jews were sneaking their way into Christianity and were destroying it from the inside. Public opinion labeled New Christians as "loathsome," "scandalous" and a "perverse people" (Novinsky 156). Alonso de Oropesa, master of the Order of San Jerónimo, cited the Book of Revelation, writing that the Jews and New Christians were members of the “synagogue of Satan,” and “therefore must be avoided with the greatest care” by Old Christians. Furthermore, Old Christians should “converse with them [New Christians] with great caution

as we would do with servants and sons of Satan, to whom they are subject (Roth 23).” Even the Spanish Monarchy believed corruption within the Catholic Church stemmed from Converso interference. Conversos were blamed for causing plagues, poisoning peoples’ water and abducting Christians, the same accusations Christians previously leveled at the Jews. Even before there was a tangible way to describe how Old Christians felt, they were viewing Jews and New Christians as part of the same race. As early as the 1430s, Conversos sent petitions to the papacy complaining of mistreatment, riots and of various attempts to bar them from ecclesiastical and secular offices. The popes strongly disapproved the unwarranted discrimination, however, it did little to change public opinion. Prominent Conversos like Alfonso de Cartagena and other eminent ecclesiastical and secular authorities also tried to defend the Conversos to no avail (Roth 23).

There was also an elaborate 16<sup>th</sup> century anti-Semitic medical practitioner conspiracy theory, which accused Converso doctors of purposefully killing Old Christians for revenge. This conspiracy was founded on two forged letters allegedly between the Jews of Toledo and the Jews of Constantinople in 1492; one community advised the other to use their new, public Christians identities to infiltrate Christian institutions (Soyer 58). This racial discrimination led to an edict passed by the Portuguese Crown which allowed for the immediate removal of a New Christian doctor if an Old Christian doctor became available (Soyer 60). Jewish converts to Christianity were becoming increasingly limited in their social, religious and economic opportunities and isolated from their Christian brethren. Jerome Friedman notes that during this same period there was little to no rioting against Jews who remained infidels and whose different status was clear—riots were directly targeting Conversos (Jewish Conversion 12).

New Christians were viewed as a suspect population because Old Christians did not believe that they had completely forsaken Judaism. There was confusion as to what the status of these converts was: were they full-fledged Christians? This led to the first medieval example of anti-Semitism as Jews, for

the first time, were viewed as a race. The same violence that once characterized Jewish-Christian relations now described the New Christian-Old Christian relationship. The most violent, bloody riots against New Christians took place in 1435 in Majorca, 1449 in Toledo, 1473 in Valladolid and Cordoba and 1474 in Segovia. The rioting became so bloody and terrible in Toledo in 1449 that government troops were called in to suppress the local rioters. Javier Castaño claimed that the prophetic figure, Marcos García de Mazarambroz, disrupted Toledo life in 1449 and began the era of speculation regarding the authenticity and race of New Christians (100). Beginning in 1449 in Toledo, *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) doctrines were rapidly enacted throughout Spain (“Britannica-Limpieza”). For the first time in history a racial distinction arose between Jews and non-Jews as these statutes declared that Jews, regardless of their religious identity, were part of the Jewish race (Roth 23). These blood purity laws proved that despite a New Christian’s grandparents converting to Catholicism, the individual was still biologically a Jew who could corrupt the bloodline of a Christian of pure lineage. It also meant that being a Jew was an inalienable, unalterable fact. These blood purity statutes helped limit New Christian’s interactions with Old Christian society (Soyer 59). Jews were barred from holding public or ecclesiastical office and from university. David Nirenberg argued that “According to this doctrine, Jewish and Muslim blood was inferior to Christian; the possession of any amount of such blood made one liable to heresy and moral corruption; therefore any descendent of Jews and Muslims, no matter how distant, should be barred from church and secular office, from any number of guilds and professions, and especially from marrying Old Christians (75).”

The blood purity statutes concretized the belief that all New Christians were still secretly practicing Jews as it ignored the sincerity of the converts (Roth 23-4). In Majorca, the converted Jewish community was called *Chuetas*, the Spanish word for pork lard, as they had pork lard boiling on their porches. However, because of the social ostracization the community would privately refer to



themselves as “Israelitas” (“Jewish Virtual Library”). New Christians tried to find their place in Christian society, yet they were constantly driven away by Old Christians. The derogatory term Marrano, the Spanish word for pig, was ascribed to Jews who converted to Christianity, but secretly kept the Jewish faith. The term Marrano meant that the individual perpetually existed in an ever changing state that would depend on the circumstances of the evolving social contexts (Muchnik 154). By labeling all New Christians Marranos, it meant that as a collective New Christians were viewed as Jews, despite most being legitimate, practicing Christians, and this status would always remain. In 1462, at the demand of increasingly hostile anti-converso elements, the Castilian monarch Enrique IV petitioned Pope Pius II to establish an Inquisition in Castile against the Conversos. However, the Pope died before he could respond and the request was moot. The Toledo riots restarted in 1467 and culminated with Henry IV forbidding any Converso to hold office in Toledo and Ciudad Real (Friedman 5-8). There were also several cases of Converso militia fighting battles against Old Christian forces. Governing authorities had little control in these matters and would oftentimes aid the Old Christians (Roth 24).

### The Rise of the Inquisition

The marriage of King Ferdinand II to Queen Isabella of Spain in 1469 united the majority of Spain and transformed the Iberian Peninsula into a Catholic stronghold. Within the next few decades, all of Spain was ruled by a Christian monarch. During this time there was a strong obsession with purity; the word became increasingly used in chronicles, biographies, and literary works. This religion obsession and blood purity laws led to the belief that it was necessary to *purify* true Christians from their interactions with heresy and New Christians (Roth 24). To this end, in 1478, clergyman Tomas de Torquemada convinced Ferdinand and Isabella to create the Tribunal of Castile, known as the Inquisition, to investigate heresy claims against Conversos. Despite both Ferdinand and Isabella having

benefited from converso support during their struggle to consolidate power, they were also aware that many of their Christian subjects, whose support was necessary in the upcoming crusade for Granada, were demanding a harsher line against Conversos (Roth 24). A famous anti-Judaic pamphlet written in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, *Libro del Alborayque*, stigmatized New Christians as a monstrous hybrid creature that was between Christian and Jew (“Conversion and Apocalypse”). This pamphlet showcases that Christian society had to grapple with New Christians’ position in society and concluded that New Christians were still Jews (Muchnik 153-154). Ferdinand was also interested in instituting an Inquisition because it would vastly increase his wealth and strengthen his authority over nobility. Nobility would be less likely to disobey him because most noble families had tainted New Christian lineage (Atlabé 729). The effort to investigate Conversos was originally focused on fostering a stronger Catholic education. Nonetheless, by 1480, the Inquisition was introduced. The Pope made it clear that the Inquisition would be supervised by bishops and only two or three Inquisitors, masters of canon law, would be appointed. Despite these provisions, Torquemada, who had enormous influence over Isabella, created a strong, centralized bureaucracy that was not episcopally controlled. Secret accusations were solicited and people were thrown in prison without any factual evidence and tortured until they confessed to their supposed crimes and implicated others. Yet, the pretense of episcopal control was maintained through sermons and the supposed opportunity that heretics could recant (Roth 25).

There were many New Christians who hoped that the Inquisition would vindicate their Catholic observance. The early Inquisition instructions, issued in 1484, stated “All those who will be found guilty in any cases of heresy or apostasy, and during this period [Term of Grace] will approach the court with sorrow and without any compulsion to confess their errors, and will avow the truth, not only concerning oneself, but others . . . ; let all of them be treated charitably (Castaño 93).” New Christians believed that the Inquisitors’ intentions were pure and that through their investigations it would be discovered that

New Christians were good Christians. The "Green Book", the *Libro Verde de Aragon*, published in 1507, listed all the high-ranking officials of Jewish ancestry. The author of the Green Book was a New Christian who was trying to prove that ex-Jews honorably served the crown. However, this attempt backfired as Old Christians determined court circles to be suspect as it was impossible to discern who was a Jew or a Christian based on belief.

Norman Roth has an important analysis of the Inquisition's role as he argues it functioned under a guise of purifying Christian society which enabled them to eliminate New Christians and seize wealth. He claims that the validity of the charge brought against a New Christian was not important—it only mattered that a claim was brought. Most Inquisition records note that New Christians were convicted as Marranos because of ethnic Spanish Jewish practices rather than one's actual belief in Judaism. Christians were primarily defined by belief and Jews were primarily defined by practice, therefore it was easier to identify an individual's Jewish behaviors rather than figure out their theological beliefs. Conversos were accused of keeping Jewish customs due to not lighting a fire on the Jewish Sabbath even if the weather was extremely warm and a fire would be unbearable, or failing to recite the Trinitarian formula before reading Psalms. Other common charges included abstaining from pork, using olive oil instead of lard, calling their children Old Testament names, praying while standing and changing the sheets on Friday (Friedman 15). These charges can be found in Inquisition records as proof of the accused person's supposed "crypto-Judaism". Beatriz González, who confessed three times in 1486, admitted to entering a Jew's house in Seville as well as sukkah booths (*cabañuelas*). Her sister, Teresa, confessed to entering a synagogue in La Puebla "once an evening and maybe many other times" and would ask the blacksmith's wife to discreetly buy kosher meat for her (Castaño 103). While the above are simply cultural differences, these unassuming differences were very stark to Old Christians who felt threatened by the New Christians. As a result, Roth argues that "The entire purpose of the

Inquisition was to arrest, to intimidate by imprisonment or torture, and to kill as many conversos as possible, but this goal was secondary to what many regard as its chief motive, the seizure of property". Inquisitors instituted blanket seizures whereby all the property of Conversos was taken on the general supposition of heresy even before they were accused in trial. Furthermore, New Christians would also be required to finance their own trials—the same crooked trials that were handing them the death sentence (Roth 24-27). The social and cultural factors that separated Old Christians and New Christians led to a biological definition of Conversos— New Christians were still Jews who were stained by the original sin. The Inquisition was then a method used to remove Conversos and their influence from 'pure' Christian society (Castaño 90).

Christian religious authorities used the idea that New Christians were insincere converts to strengthen their own positions. Christian authorities would allege that new spiritualist ideas had Jewish origins to stifle reform. As early as 1484, Grand Inquisitor Torquemada attempted to establish pure blood laws as a national standard—at this point *Limpieza De Sangre* were only established in certain regions. He declared that "the children and grandchildren of the condemned may not hold public office or be promoted to holy orders." In 1488, before the blood purity laws were implemented on a national level, an *auto-de-fe* was held in Toledo and 40 living Conversos and 100 exhumed Converso corpses were burnt at the stake. On May 25, 1490, the bones of over 400 Conversos were exhumed and burnt (Friedman 8-12).

In 1492, there were 250,000 to 600,000 Conversos and 200,000 to 500,000 Jews living in Spain (Friedman 7-8). The high number of willing and unwilling conversions, New Christians' spiritual contributions to Christianity and confusion about a New Christian's status enflamed religious fanaticism in Spain. On March 31, 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella, with the urging of Torquemada, issued the Alhambra Decree, Edict of Expulsion. The edict required the Jews in Spain to convert to Catholicism if

they desired to remain. If one refused to convert, he or she had to leave the country by July or face execution (Atlabé 728-729). In the Inquisition's eyes, removing Spanish Jews would prevent New Christians from maintaining Jewish rituals. The Alhambra Decree was more concentrated on rooting out Catholic converts who secretly practiced Judaism. However, Spanish Inquisition officials viewed Jews as a race; therefore, they considered all Jewish converts to be secretly practicing Judaism. As New Christian terminology evolved, New Christians were collectively referred to as "men of the lineage," "these people," "this lineal descent," "this generation" [ *generación* ], "this race" or "Men of the Nation [ *homens da nação* ]" (Hebrew or Portuguese). Muchnik notes that these terms reveal the ethnic distinction made between New and Old Christians (Muchnik 155). Despite their Catholic observance, New Christians were still viewed as Jews. Another important characteristic of these terms is that, in the eyes of Christian society, all New Christians were collectively guilty by nature rather than individually guilty on the basis of their actions. Old Christians linked blood purity and virtue and because of a New Christian's Jewish heritage they were biologically and permanently impure.

### Jewish View on New Christians

On the other hand, the Jewish view on Conversos shifted over time. At first, rabbinic authorities considered New Christians to be *anusim*, which were Jews who were forcibly converted to a different religion. However, when the majority of New Christians did not convert back to Judaism or leave Christian Spain after the Alhambra Decree was issued this view changed and New Christians were no longer considered part of the Jewish people (Roth 22-26). Religious authorities encouraged religious conformity within their own communities through distancing from New Christians (Friedman 8-12). Rabbinic authorities believed that Conversos had "gone out of the peoplehood of Israel and become another people (Roth 22)." Conversos published many of the most damning and damaging anti-Jewish

polemics which encouraged violence against the Jews. Therefore, it is no surprise that Norman Roth could not find any Jewish source that showed particular horror or criticism towards the Inquisition. Furthermore, before the Jews were expelled from Spain, substantial numbers of Jews testified, many offering false testimony, against New Christians in Inquisition trials (Roth 26).

### New Christians Outside of Spain

The estrangement and separation from New Christians eventually occurred in other European countries as well. The terms and concepts reached across political/religious boundaries and had a major impact on European trade and religious institutions. In August of 1528, in Italy, Baldassare Castiglione wrote to Alfonso de Valdés and criticized him and his Jewish heritage. When Alfonso responded very insulted, Castiglione replied, “I am surprised that you presume that I should value your honor—which you lost before you were born”. This reaffirms that people outside of the Iberian Peninsula viewed a New Christian as a Jew despite undergoing conversion—Spain’s idea of the Jewish race spread far beyond Spain’s borders. As time progressed, European societies began to denounce New Christian participation and influence in Christianity. New Christian and humanist Juan Luis Vives, who wrote many anti-Jewish polemics, once wrote to Erasmus that because of his own heritage, “we have such difficult times that we can neither speak nor be silent without peril.” This further emphasizes that a New Christian was not recognized as anything other than a Jew—their religious affiliation meant nothing as long as their lineage was tainted by Jewish ancestry (Friedman 22).

By the 17th century, European society viewed Jewishness as a biological consideration. In 1623, one Portuguese scholar declared that "a little Jewish blood is enough to destroy the world!" Fray Prudencio de Sandoval, Charles V's biographer, eloquently explained in 1604,

Who can deny that in the descendants of the Jews there persists and endures the evil inclination of their ancient ingratitude and lack of understanding, just as in Negros [there persists] the inseparability of their blackness. For if the latter should unite themselves a

thousand times with white women, the children are born with the dark color of the father. Similarly, it is not enough for the Jew to be three parts aristocrat or Old Christian for one family-line [i.e., one Jewish ancestor] alone defiles and corrupts him... [Therefore] it is not necessary to be of a Jewish father and mother . . . half is enough and even if not that much, a quarter is sufficient or even an eighth.

Sandoval declared that a New Christian could not separate from his biological background of a Jew any more than a black person could prevent his children from having a similar skin color. A Jew would forever and always be a Jew regardless of the religion he subscribed to. These views hardened despite the fact that there were important theological issues with the Spanish biological determination as both Jesus and Paul were Jews by birth. Also, claiming that blood could not be cleansed of its Jewishness after conversion could indicate a weakness in god. Weak refutations were offered that Paul was biologically different than other Jews who rejected Jesus and Christianity. Friedman posits that had Limpieza de Sangre not existed the converted Jews would have seamlessly fit into Christian society. Therefore, he questions whether the pure blood laws were established because the Christians feared the Jews did not convert or if they truly did.

Therefore, to the Christian world, Judaism was no longer a description of one's religious deeds and more of a theory on race and heredity. Juan Marcez explained in 1612 that 'bad blood' remains as is and, therefore, no New Christian could be admitted to an office of public trust. In regards to New Christian judges whose families had been Christian for five generations, Marcez declared that, "One cannot expect strict justice from one who does not adhere to the true faith, but also because the Hebrew Republic . . . was on various occasions known to possess corrupt judges (Friedman 17-18)." Despite the fact that these individuals had little to no affiliation with the Jewish religion, they were still accused of being Jews and having Jewish characteristics. Even in 1623, Vicente da Costa Mattos wrote that the Inquisition had discovered that New Christians have been found to Judaize up to 21 generations after the first ancestor converted. He also wrote that Old Christian children should stay away from New Christian children in order to prevent "the biological infection of Jewishness" from endangering them (Friedman

17). This explanation, which came centuries after Jewish conversion to Catholicism, proved that Christian society determined a person was a Jew because of his ancestry, not religion. This was a charge an individual could never rid himself of. To further cement this biological separation, in 1628 Juan Escobar Del Corro, a Grand Inquisitor in Murcia and in Cordoba, wrote that, "by converso we commonly understand any person descended from Jews...be it in the most distant degree.... Similarly, a New Christian is thus designated not because he has recently been converted to the Christian faith but rather because he is a descendent of those who first adopted the correct religion." The Inquisition in Toledo "devoted four times more space in its records to the percentage of Jewish blood one had than to actual court procedures involving charges of Judaization (Friedman 18)." One's ancestry was more important than their current worship—people were condemned simply for the crime of being born to a Jewish family. Limpieza de Sangre maintained the idea that Jewish blood could never be purified through baptism—it would forever and always be impure, tainted Jewish blood. That is why a New Christian who reproduced with an Old Christian would contaminate the bloodline of subsequent generations.

The rights that New Christians received when they converted were ultimately taken away as a political treatise, brought forth by the Province of Guipuzcoa in 1696, argued that "we cannot deny that blood possesses great force nor that the ascendants of the New Christians have therefore been disqualified from serving as judges" and a town statute declared that no New Christian could be a citizen or even live in that specific province (Friedman 17). New Christians were viewed as scheming, treacherous and lying individuals, the same, supposedly hereditary, moral defects that their Jewish ancestors passed down.

Novel Christian Movements and New Christians



As a result of the racial anti-Jewish sentiment, New Christians across Europe gravitated towards religious institutions that had more shallow historical roots. St. Ignatius, a Spanish priest and theologian who founded the Jesuit order in 1534, strongly disapproved of pure blood laws and racial discrimination against New Christians. As a result, many of the founding members of the Jesuit order had Jewish ancestry. However, as time progressed, his successors instituted the same racial standards and practices that were present in other branches of Christianity (Friedman 23). Only in 1946 did the Jesuit society remove their Aryan clause which for centuries prevented Converso descendants from obtaining membership.

Johannes Reuchlin, a German humanist and a Greek and Hebrew Scholar in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, protected Jewish sources for Christian use and he was condemned by local bishops and the papacy. His book *Augenspiegel* (Eyeglasses), published in 1511, shared his positive opinion about using Jewish works. He was later charged with heresy and his works were confiscated in 1513 by Jacob von Hockstraten, the papal inquisitor and prior of the Dominican monastery in Cologne (Whitford 150). Ironically, the debate between Reuchlin and the Dominicans about studying Jewish religious writings popularized the study of Christian-Hebraica (Abulafia 366).

Friedman posits that the New Christian problem helped the progression of the German Reformation. New Christians in Germany joined the Protestant Reformation which Martin Luther, a German monk and theologian, began in 1517. They were attracted to Protestantism as, unlike other movements, it was open to changes and utilized the Hebrew language and Jewish exegetical sources. One Protestant aim was to understand the original context of the earliest Christians. At first, New Christians taught many Protestants how to read Hebrew and even published Hebrew old testament texts for Christian use. After some time, conservative Catholic authorities condemned this 'Judaic' interest. Martin Luther was also denounced for his interest in Hebraic studies, however, at first, he ignored these charges. Luther even

brought Matthew Adrian, Werner Einhorn of Bacharach and several other new Christians to be Hebrew teachers in Wittenburg. Yet, this openness to New Christians was only true for the first years of the Reformation. Once Protestants had proficient Hebrew language skills, there was less of a need for New Christians and their cultural and religious inclusion slowly deteriorated. Protestants began to identify New Christians as Jews and condemned their religious contributions as Judaizing. One could argue that this was a self-preservation tactic as during this period Roman Catholics were accusing Protestant Hebraists of judaizing. Hebraists defended themselves and protected their good Christian status by lashing out against Jews and New Christians.

### Luther and the Jews

In his 1523 treatise, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, Luther wrote favorably of the Jews and believed they were redeemable. Luther anticipated that Jewish literature could lead to important philosophical and grammatical insights into the Old Testament without giving credence to Jewish exegesis. He also believed that this way of thinking would lead to more Jews converting to Christianity. In his famous treatise, Luther wrote “Instead of this we are trying only to drive them by force, slandering them . . . So long as we treat them like dogs, how can we expect to work any good among them? . . . If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by Christian love. We must receive them cordially (Whitford 153).” From this excerpt, many argue that Luther had fond feelings towards the Jews, however, a closer reading demonstrates that Luther did not believe the Jews were worthy members of society in their own right, but rather was attracted to them because of their potential to convert to his version of Christianity. In May 1523, Luther wrote to New Christian Bernard, “They [popes, priests, monks and universities] find fault with the Jews because they only pretend to be converted, but they do not find fault with themselves because they only pretend to

convert them (Whitford 154)...” Luther, like the people in his time, believed that New Christians were still Jews even though their baptism was sincere. To further prove this point, Luther consistently referred to Mathew Adrian as a Jew despite the fact that Adrian was a New Christian who was helping Luther with the Protestant Reformation (Friedman 25). He also once quipped, "the Spaniards are all Marranos (Friedman 29).” While it is revolutionary that Luther blamed the clergy for New Christians’ ‘insincere’ conversions, it does not negate the fact that he viewed New Christians as Jews rather than sincere Christians.

Luther’s perspective began to change after he heard about Protestants judaizing in Eastern Europe and he was again accused of judaizing (Abulafia 367). Was it possible that Luther thought he could safeguard his own position and his Church by turning on the Jews? Luther’s 1538 treatise, *Against the Sabbatarians*, which was supposed to be a refutation against Sabbatarian Christianity was actually a polemic against the Jewish religion. Luther devoted considerable time to the theme of Jesus as the messiah, however, Jews, not Sabbatarian Christians, would need to be convinced of this. Luther denounced the “Jewish” Cabbalistic numerology through showcasing Reuchlin’s work despite the fact that Reuchlin was trying to prove Jesus’ divinity through numerology. Luther, like Castiglione and countless others, considered the “Jews” - New Christians- to be dangerous to Christian society and thought their deceptive ways would turn Christians away from Christianity. He firmly believed, as evidenced by his works, that Jews concocted the New Christian exegetical views to fool true Christians. The Jews were seemingly condemned for successfully assimilating into Christian society and the fear was that they did so too well.

Luther’s 1543 treatise titled *On the Jews and Their Lies* made it immediately apparent that Luther no longer believed that Jews would convert to Christianity. He advocated for a “harsh mercy” against the Jews that would bring them to dire destitution with no other social recourse, besides

conversion. He had seven steps through which his “harsh mercy” would be enacted: destroy synagogues and Jewish schools, raze Jewish houses, remove Jewish texts, forbid rabbis from teaching, forbid Jews from using highways, prohibit them from receiving usury, remove their wealth and require Jews to perform forced labor. David Whitford argued, “It is a bit of hyperbole to state that “*On the Jews* provided the blueprint for Kristallnacht, it is however, difficult to read one of the opening lines of his next treatise without thinking of the Holocaust (Whitford 161) ....” Luther’s animosity continued into his next treatise, *Vom Schem Hamphoras*, in which he elaborated on Jewish “lies” he did not cover in *On the Jews and their Lies*.

Over the next few decades, Protestants denounced religious deviations as Jewish. Johannes Forster, a prominent Lutheran Hebraist, admonished Calvinists that their fondness of Old Testament covenantalism was “Jewish” and due to having studied with Jews. Forster hoped to expurgate the study of Hebrew from both contemporary as well as ancient Jewishness. He specifically accused Sebastian Münster, a Calvinist Hebraist and Münster responded by attacking the New Christians who helped him learn Hebrew and publish grammars for Christian use (Ancient Testimony Friedman 212-54). Old Christian Protestant Hebraists also accused each other for being “too Jewish” for studying Hebrew with New Christian teachers. There were some northern Christian Hebraists who were friendly with Jews and New Christians, and yet, the more they used Jewish sources the more they wrote anti-Semitic treatises and denied the legitimate conversion of New Christians (Friedman 26).

### The New Christian Phenomenon

The Marrano/New Christian phenomenon is a decisive new development and cannot be described simply as another manifestation of traditional anti-Judaism. The Jew shifted from an individual hated for their religion to someone who could never assimilate into Christian society because

of the 'biological' differences that separated them from true Christians. New Christians were considered to be active members of the Jewish race, despite being religious Christians. While New Christians made countless linguistic, spiritual and societal contributions to their new religion, it led to increased estrangement from their Christian brethren. Friedman writes, "The more New Christians assimilated into their new surroundings, the more biological distinctions were needed to separate New Christian from Old Christian. The more New Christians might contribute to their new faith, the more necessary it became to expurgate the faith of "Jewish" influence." One could argue that there is a direct correlation between the pure blood laws and the large-scale Jewish conversion as these laws only came about after a significant number of Jews had converted and the laws were only applied to these New Christians. The traditional medieval anti-Jewish attitude was replaced, due to the chain of events initiated by Limpieza de Sangre, with the belief that Jewishness was a biological, physiological and spiritual defect in an individual. This shift laid the foundation for the modern racial hatred of Jews which demanded the elimination of the Jews and their degenerate ideas. Luther's Doctrine helped provide suitable texts that contributed towards Hitler's plan of annihilating the Jews (Hay 167).

Heiko Oberman would disagree with the above assertion. He wrote in *The Roots of Antisemitism* that "one must realize that Luther does not see 'a race' when he looks at the Jews, nor are baptized and unbaptized Jews for Luther the exponents of an ethnic, racial unit. Baptized Jews belong unqualifiedly to the people of God, just as do baptized Germans, the Gentiles. (Oberman 102)." However, Oberman's claim, does not acknowledge the importance of the pure blood laws in paving the road towards racial anti-Semitism as it overlooks many important events such as the eviction of Jews from countless Protestant cities and that Jews were only tolerated in areas that understood the economic and political benefits of religious toleration. Oberman posits that racial anti-Semitism was a creation of the secular 19th century, and yet the pure blood laws suggest otherwise. There are many like Oberman who make a

similar claim. What they fail to acknowledge is that the terminology present in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is also present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century—meaning that the framework for racial anti-Semitism was already established. Both Spanish Old Christians and Luther viewed Jews and New Christians in racial terms. There was no social phenomenon that took place, Christian society just became more forthright in how they viewed the Jews. Therefore, it should have been no surprise that the term modern racial anti-Semitism was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the term is pretty recent, it originates from a centuries old concept.

### Subsequent Development in Early Modern Period

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the racial barriers between Jews and Christians continued to grow. Malcom Hay's survey makes it clear that even Enlightenment and liberal thinkers who advocated for freedom of religion and expression did not believe Jews should be extended the same rights. Voltaire, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century French Enlightenment writer and philosopher, believed Jews were "an ignorant barbarous people who for a long time have combined the most unworthy avarice with the most detestable superstition (Hay 174)." In Lamennais' popular 1834 essay, *Paroles d'un croyant*, he wrote, "For eighteen centuries the Father has not yet pardoned them, and they drag on their life of suffering throughout the world, and in all the world slaves have to stoop in order to see them (Hay 175)." If Lamennais, one of the most liberal-minded ecclesiastics in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, placed the Jews on a lower social standing than slaves it is quite clear what more conservative ecclesiastics thought. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Genevan Enlightenment philosopher and writer, described the Jews in 1894 as "the vilest of people (Hay 174)."

Despite the fact that racial anti-Semitism had been present in Europe for centuries, the coining of the term came about in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pseudoscientific theory was that Jews originated from

Semitic people and were racially and biologically inferior to the white, Christian Aryans (Elukin 13). While there was still religiously inspired hate during this time, animosity against Jews was, more often than not, racially charged. Around 1880, anti-Semitism became popular in Germany as it developed into a politicized term (Judaken 26). Interestingly, Lucien Wolf, an English Jewish journalist and minority rights advocate, wrote the Encyclopedia Britannica 1910–1911 entry on “Anti-Semitism” and argued that anti-Semitism was a “bygone relic that rested upon the phantasm of race.” In his conclusion he cautioned that Zionism helped encourage anti-Semitism as it promoted Jews as a race and Jewish nationalism (Judaken 27). Wolf’s entry gives credence to the idea that anti-Semitism is an ancient racial concept.

### Race Theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The idea of separation and distinction between races was intensified by the works of Arthur de Gobineau, a French diplomat, writer and ethnologist in the mid-19th century. Shocked by the Revolution of 1848 in France, he viewed French commoners as the ‘barbarous’, poor descendants of the racially inferior Celtic and Mediterranean people. Conversely, Gobineau believed French aristocrats, like himself, had racially superior Germanic heritage. Gobineau firmly believed that the Germans’ birthright was to rule the world while being served by non-Germans. Gobineau divided humanity into three races: the sensual, brutal and cowardly black race, the weak and materialistic yellow race and the intelligent, energetic, beautiful and brave white race (Fortier 342). It was the white race’s destiny to conquer the other two races and establish civilization. His work, *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, which used the works of earlier polygenists and racial thinkers, highlighted many of these notions and was incredibly influential. As Gobineau placed his perspective on Jews within a wider discussion of race, he was still working off of the Medieval Spanish model that believed in the Jews’ biological inferiority.

Edouard Drumont was another influential author in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and known as the father of modern anti-Semitism. While his works are quite similar to Gobineau's, there is no evidence that these two individuals were aware of each other's works, however, they both clearly draw from the same earlier notion of Jewish racial difference (Hellman 445). He believed that France's social and economic distress was the result of International Jewry's manipulations. His 1886 polemic, *La France Juive*, explained how Jews were plotting world domination through destroying Christianity. His book was lauded by the Catholics of France as Drumont called upon the clergy "to denounce the plotting Semites and hand them over to the secular arm (Hay 177)." He believed that once the Jews were driven out by the Aryans, all social troubles would cease and prosperity would follow. Millions of copies of Drumont's books were sold throughout Europe and his newspaper, *La Libre Parole*, was one of France's most influential journals (Anderson 28). At one point, he called New Christians entering France Portuguese Jews. Since he viewed Jews as a race, he thought these individuals were trying to disguise their Jewish heritage by pretending to be Christian. Regardless of whether Drumont was aware of this, his wording was the same wording used in Medieval Spain. Medieval Spain's perception of the Jews far surpassed their own borders and was influencing modern anti-Semitism. These claims are central to proving a link between Medieval Spain and Nazi Germany as the same concepts were Drumont wrote that Jews "have a brain made differently from ours [other Christians]; their evolution is different from ours, and all that goes with them is exceptional and bizarre.... They arrive from one knows not whence, live in mystery, die in a conjecture... (Anderson 33)." Through a 'scientific' and mystical analysis of Jews' characteristics and behaviors, he firmly stated that Jews and Christians are not of the same species, let alone the same race. His writing was very similar to previous rhetoric and helps prove there is no relevant distinction between modern anti-Semitism and traditional anti-Jewish sentiment. Drumont used the language of religion to get his point across, yet it is very clear that he was honing in on racial, not



religious, differences. It is not a coincidence that he called out the Portuguese people entering France; it demonstrates his awareness that thousands of Christians of Jewish lineage living in the Iberian Peninsula

When Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was accused of selling military secrets to Germany in 1894, Drumont's newspaper, *La Libre Parole*, titled the piece "Jewish Traitor Under Arrest". Dreyfus' defense and innocence did not matter because he was a Jew and, therefore, was guilty before the trial began (Hay 194-196). Drumont wrote that "it was not a man who was being degraded for a personal fault, but a whole race whose shame was being exposed (Hay 196)". Drumont, along with the works of Gobineau, cemented the centuries old concept, without the Old Christian/New Christian terminology, that all Jews are traitors and foreign entities living amongst Christians.

Many Germans admired Gobineau and believed his ideas would unify Germany and prove their racial superiority. Gobineau argued that the white race was split into three groups: the Celts, the Slavs and the superior Aryans. This led to the dogma of Aryanism which later became the foundation for Nazi race theories. Just like later Nazi imagery, Gobineau depicted Aryans as blond, blue-eyed, aesthetically perfect giants who were utilitarian, born conquerors and endowed with self-respect, self-esteem and moral perfection. Conversely, Gobineau viewed the Jews as an arid, rootless and uncreative people. The Jews were antagonistic to the solidly-rooted German race. Gobineau's works were translated into German and had a great impact on Richard Wagner and his social circle. A Gobineau Society was founded in Germany in 1894 by Ludwig Schemann, a member of the Richard Wagner circle and board member of the Pan-German League (Fortier 342). Gobineau's ideas were propagated and by 1914 the society had 360 members and 50 affiliated institutions.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain, an Englishman who became a German citizen out of fanatical admiration for the German race and Wagner's son in law, was an important propagandist and theorist of the German race movement. Chamberlain wrote *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* in which he utilized 'anthropological', 'historical' and 'scientific' evidence to prove that race was the fundamental basis for all human and historical phenomena. This logic was then extrapolated to explain that the white race's superior genes led to cultural accomplishments, conquests, dominance and colonialism. Chamberlain even 'proved' that Jesus was not a Jew, but rather a Teuton, by revealing that non-Jewish tribes inhabited the Galilee, Jesus' birthplace. He viewed the German and Jewish races as fundamentally opposed to one another and locked in a mortal struggle. Chamberlain viewed the Jews as the German people's antagonists as Jews lacked all morals and ideals. Unlike Gobineau, Chamberlain saw the modern Germans as true Aryans. Paul Fortier argues, "Chamberlain is especially important because he incorporated an acceptance of modern science and technology into the primitivistic mysticism that had characterized earlier racist thinkers in Germany (Fortier 345)." Chamberlain helped modernize anti-Semitism with the use of pseudoscience. In later years, Chamberlain admired Hitler as the savior of the race (Fortier 341-350). While Gobineau was extremely pessimistic as he envisioned a dying world as the Aryan gene pool was being weakened by racial impurities, Chamberlain brought about optimism because he believed that as soon as the Jewish race was destroyed the world would transform into an idyllic paradise. Both saw the Jews as a foreign race whose ultimate goal was to destroy Christian society.

### Eugenics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

In a 1908 study conducted by Eugen Fischer, a German eugenicist, on the offspring of Dutch colonizers and Khoikhoi, a South African Tribe, Fischer ‘scientifically’ determined the superiority of the Aryan race.

We still do not know a great deal about the mingling of the races [*Rassenmischung*]. But we certainly know this: without exception, every European nation that has accepted the blood of inferior races – and only romantics can deny that Negroes, Hottentots, and many others are inferior – has paid for its acceptance of inferior elements with spiritual and cultural degeneration (Handley-Cousins).

Fischer emphatically stated that Europeans procreating with ‘inferior’ races led to a sullied gene pool and cultural degeneration, similar to what Gobineau had stated decades prior. After this study, Fischer became a leading eugenicist as his work monumentally shifted the German eugenics’ focus from one of social to racial anthropology (Weingart 263). Due to the racial element of German eugenics, Germany’s defeat in World War I, and the failure of the Weimar Republic, many Germans turned to nationalism to fathom their new, dire reality. During this period, the German eugenics wing grew tremendously. Numerous centers were founded to study eugenics and by 1923, German universities offered dozens of race hygiene courses (Weiss 221). While eugenics was founded on modern pseudoscience and social Darwinism, it continued to revert back to earlier prejudices shaped in the early modern period.

### Nazi Germany and the Jewish Race

Luther played an influential role in Nazi Germany’s actions against the Jews. This is powerfully illustrated in Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher’s post-World War II trial in Nuremberg in 1946. Streicher defended his anti-Semitic newspaper by arguing “Anti-Semitic publications have existed in Germany for centuries. A book I had [owned] was written by Martin Luther, it was confiscated. . . In the book, *The Jews and Their Lies*, Luther wrote that Jews are a serpent’s brood and one should burn down their synagogues and destroy them.” Streicher himself acknowledged that Luther was as anti-Semitic as

any Nazi and Streicher's newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, was no different than Luther's treatises against the Jews. Luther's goal of razing synagogues and homes was actualized by Hitler four centuries later (Luther and the Jews 166-167). Hay expounds on this by recognizing that the Germans declared Kristallnacht, the first large-scale Nazi pogrom, to be a pious operation in honor of Luther's birthday (Hay 169).

Nazis used their race theory to implement the most extreme form of racial anti-Semitism as they attempted to annihilate European Jewry. They believed that by ridding the world of the Jews society could achieve total greatness. In Franz Neumann's book, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, published in 1942 and later expanded in 1944, he argued that a racial ethno-nationalism was "deeply embedded in the history of German thought" and this lineage could be traced from Luther to Hitler (Judaken 30). Based on Luther's, Durmont's, Gobineau's and Chamberlain's writings, the Third Reich considered the Jews to be a foreign race that was dangerous to the German nation's purity. Alfred Rosenberg's Nazi manifesto *Der Mythos des Jahrhunderts*, expounds on Gobineau's thesis and argued that Germany could be reinvigorated through a restoration of blood as it is the soul of the people (Nale 120). Hitler's *Mein Kampf* incorporated eugenic notions and believed Aryans to be genetically superior and culturally superior to other races. He wrote, "Everything we admire on this earth today – science and art, technology and inventions – is only the creative product of a few peoples and originally perhaps of one race (Hitler 262)."

Race and blood played a very important role in Nazi racial hierarchy and anti-Semitic thinking (Nale 108). The Nazis enacted Eugenic legislation against those considered to be genetically inferior: people with genetic disabilities, Blacks, Gypsies, as well as Jews. The Nazi Party mandated *Deutschblütigkeitserklärung*, Blood Certificates, which were used by *Mischlinges* (those with partial Jewish heritage) to declare them *deutschblütig* (of German blood) and exempt from most of Germany's

racial laws. While the Old and New Christians aspect has gone, the resulting theory remains as these certificates can be traced back to the Spanish *limpieza de sangre* certificates. Nazi Germany imagined a genetically pure society and, therefore, embraced radical strategies to eliminate those who did not fit within this vision. Based on centuries of inflammatory rhetoric, Nazis were more than willing to annihilate Jews and anyone else considered racially or genetically inferior. Just like in Spain, the degree of one's Jewish ancestry was incredibly important in Nazi Germany.

Franklin Sherman, the editor and translator of Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies* in the American Luther's Works, writes,

It would of course be an anachronism to apply the term 'antisemitism' to Luther, since it was only invented in the nineteenth century. But neither can it be maintained that Luther's writings against the Jews are merely a set of cool, calm, collected theological judgments. His writings are full of rage, and indeed hatred, against an identifiable human group, not just against a religious point of view; it's against that group that his action proposals are directed. Luther cannot be distanced completely from modern antisemites. Regarding Luther's treatise *On the Jews and Their Lies*, Karl Jaspers was close to the mark when he exclaimed, 'Da steht das ganze Programm der Nazi Zeit schon' ('There you already have the whole Nazi program') I would qualify this only by saying: the Nazi program down to and including Kristallnacht; but not the decision for genocide. Luther warned, even in his severest recommendations, 'you must not harm their persons' (Sherman 63-64).

While Sherman does acknowledge Luther's anger towards the Jews he falls short in fully acknowledging the racial animosity and seething bitterness Luther had towards the Jews. One could easily argue that Sherman was too conservative with his stance as one could not follow through with Luther's steps without harming a Jew. Furthermore, it is not in Sherman's interest to do so; Sherman himself is a Lutheran Reverend and his publisher is Concordia Publishing House (CPH) which is the publisher of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Their mission very clearly states that they are "dedicated to spreading the Gospel message of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world ("Concordia Publishing House")." Luther's remark about not harming their persons is a sham as all seven of his steps financially, emotionally, spiritually, theologically and physically hurt the Jews. This is in addition to Luther once expressing "We are at fault for not slaying them [Jews]" because "we allow them to live freely in our midst despite their murder, cursing, blaspheming, lying and defaming ("Britannica-Martin

Luther”).” It is not a far cry to say that if Luther advocated for burning synagogues and Jewish forced labor he also would have advocated for concentration and death camps.

It is impossible to give a historical account of race and anti-Semitism without acknowledging blood's central role. Fifteenth-century Spain's actions against the Jews brought forth the creation of racial statuses and ethno-religious cleansing. While the *limpieza de sangre* laws were formulated under supposedly religious terms, the metaphor of the “purity of blood” led to 19<sup>th</sup> century scientific racism (Shohat 15). The pure blood laws were the necessary foundation for the secular, biological conception of Jews. Society viewed New Christians as Jews despite their baptism which led to the formulation of Luther's ideology. Later racial thinkers expanded upon Luther's ideology and added in pseudoscientific research to bolster their claims. Nazi ideology took these theories a step further as it realized Luther's goal of creating a world without Jews. Despite the failure of the Nazi's 'Final Solution', the racial ideas first formulated in Spain persist to this day. For example, even to this day in Spain there is a widely-held belief that General Franco's atrocious behavior during the 1930s was due to him being a Marrano, corrupted by his Jewish blood (Friedman 29).

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