Anti-Semitism in the 20th century

Justin Butler

October 15th, 2020

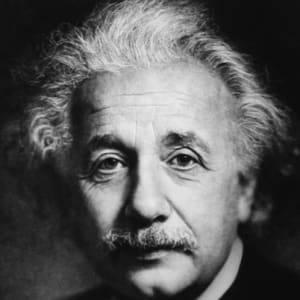
**Introduction**

*Anti-Semitism* is defined as the discrimination of Jews as a racial or religious group. This term is new, but the concept goes as far back as biblical times. Jews were depicted as History.com Editors (2019) states “Hostility against Jews may date back nearly as far as Jewish history.” After the crucifixion of Jesus, anti-Semitism rose throughout much of Europe. These hostilities continued throughout the middle ages and into modern times.

The 20th century had one of history’s worst cases of mass discrimination. This discrimination eventually turned into the systematic extermination of the Jew. This crime against humanity was called The Final Solution which was committed by Third Reich. The Nazi’s created extermination camps where they murdered millions of people that the state deemed not Aryan descent. The main target demographic was people of Jewish descent.

This extermination was not immediate, it was after years of increasing discriminatory laws that first barred Jews from Government positions, revoked citizenship, Designated ghettos, and finally the deportation to extermination camps. Many Jewish peoples saw the writing on the wall and were quick to escape Germany before it was too late. One of those to escape is arguably the most famous mathematicians of the 20th century, Albert Einstein.

**Albert Einstein**



Albert Einstein was born on March 14, 1879 in Ulm, Württemberg, Germany. Growing up, Einstein’s family was Secular Jewish. According to Biography.com Editors (2020) “His father, Hermann Einstein, was a salesman and engineer who, with his brother, founded Elektrotechnische Fabrik J. Einstein & Cie, a Munich-based company that mass-produced electrical equipment.” Einstein had speech challenges growing up but had deep inquisitiveness and learned to play the violin, which “which would stay with him into his later years.” Biography.com Editors (2020).

Biography.com Editors (2020). Albert Einstein

During Einstein’s teens, he published a paper titled “*The Investigation of the State of Aether in Magnetic Fields.*” Biography.com Editors (2020). Einstein’s father moved to Italy after his company lost a contract. This left Einstein needing to stay with his relative at a boarding house. With fear of military service, Einstein joined his family in Italy. After some time, Einstein gained admission to the *Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.* He was required to complete his pre-university education. He completed the education at Aarau, Switzerland.

Once Einstein completed graduating from University, he found himself in hard times trying to find academic work. During this time, he found work at a Swiss patent office in 1902. This time is when Einstein published his work thus founding relativity. In 1905 “Einstein had four papers published in the *Annalen der Physik*, one of the best-known physics journals of the era.” Biography.com Editors (2020). A common myth one may have head at some point was that Einstein had gained all his mathematical knowledge during his time at this patent office, but as we have read, that is simply not true. From a young age Einstein had a knack for mathematics.

During the development of his General Theory, Einstein had always stated that the universe was a fixed static entity but was directly contradicted in his later years. The *Theory of General Relativity* is what Einstein is the most known for. His theory allowed more accurate predictions of planetary orbits than Newtons theory. It also gave a more expansive explanation of gravity. The most famous equation was . This equation states that energy is equal to mass times light squared. Biography.com Editors (2020) state it the best “This equation suggested that tiny particles of matter could be converted into huge amounts of energy, a discovery that heralded atomic power.”

In 1923, Einstein returned to Germany, at this time anti-Semitic policies would slowly start to be added. Einstein’s work was labeled “Jewish physics” by the Nazi party. In 1933 after Hitler rose to power, Einstein renounced his German citizenship. Following this “Einstein himself was targeted to be killed.” Biography.com Editors (2020).

IGH (n.d.). Einstein's workplace on the Speichergasse

(*Ahnenerbe Emblem*, n.d.)

Initially this institute was researching ancient texts, engravings, and folklore. In February 1938 Himmler transferred the SS Excavations Department into Ahnenerbe. This seems like a propaganda stunt to show that joining the SS would allow one to become a researcher in Germanic History. Eighteen excavations were sponsored and conducted during the Ahnenerbe lifetime. The results of these expeditions and research was used by Himmler to justify the Holocaust.

During world war 2, the Ahnenerbe was responsible for the theft of many historical object, paintings, and other priceless items from museums that were thought to be of German origin. One such occurrence is from museums in Warsaw after the invasion of Poland.

**Soviet Union**

The Soviet Union was founded after the Russian revolution also known as the October Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin. This saw the country change to a socialist country. This country was led by Lenin until his untimely death in 1924.

Joseph Stalin came to power after Lenin’s death due to Stalin being appointed the Secretary. That position allowed him to appoint people to other positions, which allowed him to appoint friends and people that would aid him. This solidified his rise to power.

After world war 2, Stalin’s paranoia had gotten to him as he had his friends, family, and others deemed untrustworthy executed. This had gotten so bad to the point that top scientists and leading experts in fields were either sent to a gulag or executed. In 1953 Stalin suffered a stroke but no one got to him due to fear of bothering him in his office. Furthermore, any doctor that could do anything was either removed prior or too scared to try and help. After his death Nikita Khrushchev came to power. One of the first things he did was condemn Stalin and issued De-Stalinization reforms.

**Akademgorodok**

During the early years, this town enjoyed many freedoms that were not allowed elsewhere in the union. They could study subjects that were considered pseudoscience in Moscow. This changed during the Brezhnev era as these freedoms were removed and focus was subject to economic and military needs.

**Akademgorodok and Ahnenerbe**

Both think tanks were founded and funded by their states. The Ahnenerbe focused specifically on historical research while the Akademgorodok focused on all sorts of fields. They have some similarities such as state influence but also have many differences such as economic security, goals, and social ideologies.

A major difference in Akademgorodok and Ahnenerbe was the economic security of the researchers. Since the Soviet Union is a socialist nation, compensation did not directly translate to one’s standard of living. This completely contrasts the researchers in the Ahnenerbe. In Nazi Germany, the private sector was alive and well and monetary compensation was given to those in the Ahnenerbe which directly influenced one’s standard of living. Residents of Akademgorodok had a special compensation system which would increase the standard of living. For example, residents had access to special food rations not easily obtainable elsewhere. Residents also had access to single family homes which were considered luxury to the average standard of living in the Soviet Union. Russian Doctorate equivalent holders were given special access to a food delivery system which some refused as they found it morally wrong.

The Ahnenerbe was controlled by Himmler and was a branch of the SS. They embarked on numerous expeditions but was dictated by the SS and thus the state. Only if there was a case that the expedition could provide evidence of Germanic history would an expedition be approved. Other factor that affected this institute was the invasion of Poland and subsequent starting of the war saw some expeditions cancelled indefinitely.

The Ahnenerbe seemed to have destroyed much more history than created. Their expeditions provided valuable historical artifacts but the state purposely misinterpreted findings to further their agenda. As well as the theft of countless artifacts from other countries many of which are still lost to this day. This shows that the institute while stating that it is a progressive and reputable institute was just a Nazi organization set on further their own agenda while disregarding any significant historical findings. The Akademgorodok was created and operated in the exact opposite manner in the beginning. Researchers could study what they want, and the state had no interference in the research.

The Akademgorodok was affected and influence heavily by the state in the Brezhnev era. Freedoms they once had such as what research they did, and special compensation was subverted by the state. Once a place free of Moscow’s control was now under the agenda of the state.

A huge effect the state had which affected both Akademgorodok and Ahnenerbe was not the state itself but the lack of the state. Ahnenerbe was dismantled once Nazi Germany fell and Akademgorodok suffered a massive brain drain once the Soviet Union dissolved as many fled to the west. While Akademgorodok still existed post-Soviet era, it existed as a shell of what it once was until private investment was poured into the town. Then in 2005, Putin expressed interest in developing Akademgorodok, thus returning and surpassing its former glory.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can see how both the Ahnenerbe and Akademgorodok were heavily influenced by the state. Both were investing in research but like their political ideologies, they had completely different agendas. Ahnenerbe was fabricating and twisting the truth while Akademgorodok was for genuine research. Both were affected by their states dissolving but Akademgorodok survived as it was a town with people still living there along with infrastructure still standing. We also see how the state can not only influence advancements but also caused massive brain drains in the form of the Holocaust and in the form of Immigration to the west.

**References**

History.com Editors. (2019, December 11). *Anti-Semitism*. HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/topics/holocaust/anti-semitism#section_1>

Biography.com Editors. (2020, September 1). *Albert Einstein*. Biography. <https://www.biography.com/scientist/albert-einstein>

*FAQ - Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property*. (n.d.). IGE. Retrieved December 9, 2020, from <https://www.ige.ch/en/about-us/the-history-of-the-ipi/einstein/faq.html>