**The Witch DBQ**

Time: 15 minutes reading; 45 minutes writing

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying Document Groups A-D. You will have 60 minutes to read and analyze the documents and answer the question. You may make notes and plan your answer on the green insert or on the printed pages of the pink free-response booklet. Write your answer to the question on the lined pages of the free-response booklet.

This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. You may refer to historical facts and developments not mentioned in the documents and assess the reliability of the documents as historical sources where relevant to your answer. In constructing your answer DO NOT simply summarize., paraphrase, or repeat the contents of the documents; instead use the documents in a historical context and draw conclusions from them. Construct a coherent essay that integrates the analysis of documents into a treatment of the topic.

**The Question**

Using the following documents, identify and analyze at least three major reasons for the persecution of individuals as witches in Europe from the !ate fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

[Historical setting: The witch craze lasted from about 1480 to 1700. This was the period of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the consolidation of national governments. Witches were persecuted in most of Europe, but the trials were concentrated in southwestern Germany, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Poland, and parts of France. The total number of accused witches who were tried exceeded 100,000. Torture was used to extract confessions in many areas, but not in others; in England the trials were generally conducted without the use of torture.]

**Document Group A: THE TESTIMONY OF ACCUSED WITCHES AND EYEWITNESSES**

|  |
| --- |
|  (1) "Walpurga Hausmannin. . . has, upon kindly questioning and also torture' . . . confessed her witchcraft and admitted the following. When . . . she had become a widow, she cut corn for Hans Schlumperger.... Him she enticed with lewd speeches and gestures and they convened that they should . . . meet in her . . . dwelling, there to indulge in lustful intercourse .... [ But] it was not the said bondsman who appeared unto her, but the Evil One [the Devil] in the latter's guise .... He made her many promises to help her in her poverty and need, wherefore she surrendered herself to him body and soul .... For food she often had a good roast or an innocent child, which was also roasted, or a suckling pig .... [The Evil One] also compelled her to do away with and to kill young infants at birth .... This she did as follows .... A child of the Governor here . . . she had so infected with her salve that he died within three days .... Three years ago she had sucked out the blood of [citizen] Kung's child, a twin, so that it died.... She had also rubbed a salve on a beautiful son of the . . . Chancellor, . . . this child had lovely faire hair and she had given him a hobby horse so that he might ride on it till he lost his senses. He died likewise...." |
|  Testimony of a licensed midwife at Dillingen, Germany, burned 1587 |

|  |
| --- |
| ( 2) "This movement was promoted by many in office, who hoped for wealth from the persecution. And, so, from court to court throughout the towns and villages of all the diocese, scurried special accusers, Inquisitors, . . . dragging to trial and torture human beings of both sexes and burning them in great numbers .... Nor were spared even the leading men of the city of Trier. For the Judge with two Burgomasters, several Councillors and Associate Judges, canons of sundry collegiate churches . . . were swept away in this ruin .... Meanwhile notaries, copyists, and innkeepers grew rich. The executioner rode a blooded horse, like a noble of the court, and went clad in gold and silver; his wife vied noble dames in the richness of her array. The children of those convicted and punished were sent into exile; their goods were confiscated. " |
|  The Canon Linden, eyewitness to persecutions in Trier, Germany, 1592 |

|  |
| --- |
|  ( 3) "Presently he cryeth out of some poor Innocent neighbor that he or she hath bewitched him. For, saith he, such an old man or woman came lately to my door and desired some relief, and I denied it, and God forgive me, my heart did rise against her . . . and presently my child, my wife, myself, my horse, my cow, my sheep, my sow, my hog, my dog, my cat, or somewhat, was thus and thus handled in such a strange manner, as I dare swear she is a witch, or else how should these things be" |
| Thomas Ady, describing the feelings of an English householder, circa 1650  |

|  |
| --- |
|  ( 4) "There is one Alice Prabury in our parish that useth herself suspiciously in the likelihood of a witch, taking upon her not only to help Christian people of diseases strangely happened, but also horses and all other beasts. She taketh upon her to help by the way of charming, and in such ways that she will tell nobody her sayings. " |
| Report of Churchwardens in Gloucestershire, England, 1563  |

|  |
| --- |
|  (5) Some call me witch,And being ignorant of my self, they goAbout to teach me how to be one; urging,That my bad tongue (by their bad language made so)Forespeaks\* their cattle, cloth bewitch their cornThemselves, their servants, and their babes at nurse.This they enforce upon me; and in partMake me to credit it. \*makes prophesies or predictions against |
|  'The Witch of Edmonton," a poem written in 1621 |

|  |
| --- |
|  (6) "It is seldom that a poor old wretch is brought to trial . . . but there is, at the heels of her, a popular rage that could little less than demand her to be put to death; and if a judge is so clear and open as to declare himself against the impious vulgar opinion, that the devil himself has power to torment and kill innocent children, or that he is pleased to divert himself with the good people's cheese, butter, pigs and geese, . . . cry, this Judge hath no religion, for he doth not believe in witches." |
|  Roger North, brother of the Chief Justice in Exeter, England in 1682 |

|  |
| --- |
|  (7) "Innocent have I come into prison, Innocent have I been tortured, Innocent must I die. For whoever comes into the witch prison must become a witch or be tortured until he invents something out of his head and-God pity him- bethinks him of something .... When at test (the executioner) led me back into the prison he said to me, 'Sir, I beg you, for God's sake confess something, whether it be true or not. Invent something, for you cannot endure the torture which you will be put to; and, even if you bear it all, yet you will not escape, not even if you are an earl, but one torture will follow another until you say you are a witch . . . as you may see by all their trials, for one is just like another. . . . ' Dear child, keep this letter secret so that people do not find it.... Good night, for your father Johannes Junius will never see you more." |
|  Letter of Johannes Junius, the mayor of Bamberg, Germany, to his daughter 1628 |

**GROUP B: RELIGIOUS OPINIONS**

|  |
| --- |
|  (1) "As for the question, why a greater number of witches is found in the fragile feminine sex than among men . . . the first is, that they are more credulous.... The second reason is, that women are naturally more impressionable, and more" ready to receive the influence of a disembodied spirit; and that when they use this quality well they are very good, but when they use it ill they are very evil.... But the natural reason is that she is more carnal than a man.... And it should be noted that there was a defect in the formation of the first woman, since she was formed from a bent rib, that is, a rib of the breast, which is bent as it were in a contrary direction to a man... And since through this defect she is an imperfect animal, she always deceives. |
|  Kramer and Sprenger, The Hammer of Witches, a handbook used by the Inquisition, written in 1484 by two Dominican monks |

|  |
| --- |
|  (2, "It has recently come to our ears, not without great pain to us, that . . . many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the Catholic faith, give themselves over to devils male and female.... We therefore, desiring, as is our duty . . . to remove all impediments by which . . . the . . . inquisitors are hindered in the exercise of their office . . . do hereby decree, by virtue of our apostolic authority, that it shall be permitted to the . . . inquisitors . . . to exercise their office of Inquisition and to proceed to the correction, imprisonment, and punishment of the aforesaid persons for their said offences and crime... |
|  Pope Innocent VIII, "The Witch Bull." 1484 |

|  |
| --- |
|  ( 3) ". . . sorcerers or witches are the Devil's whores who steal milk, raise storms, ride on goats or broomsticks, lame or maim people, torture babies in their cradles, change things into different shapes so that a human being seems to be a cow or an ox, and force people into love and immorallty . . . not that the Devil is unable to do these things by himself without sorcerers, for he is lord of the world yet he will not act without human help." |
| Martin Luther, preaching in 1522  |

|  |
| --- |
|  (4)"Moreover, in order that we may be aroused and exhorted . . . Scripture makes known that there are not one, not two, nor a few foes, but great armies, which wage war against us. For Mary Magdalene is said to have been freed from seven demons by which she was possessed [Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2], and Christ bears witness that usually after a demon has once been cast out, if you make room for him again, he will . . . return to his empty possession [Matt. 12:43-45]. Indeed, a whole legion is said to have assailed one man [Luke 8:30]. We are therefore taught by these examples that we have to wage war against an infinite number of enemies.... |
|  John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536 |

|  |
| --- |
|  (5) "I suffered terribly from fear of Hell and the devils, whom I thought I saw [everywhere] . . . and sometimes with great rolling flaming eyes like saucers, having sparkling firebrands in one of thelr hands, and with the other reaching at me to tear me away to torments. Oh the leaps that I have made, the fright that I have had, the fears that I was in." |
|  From the diary of a young Protesant boy, late 16th century, E. Rogers, Some Account of the Life and Opinion of a Fifth-Monarchy Man, 1867 |

**DOCUMENT GROUP C: SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS**

|  |
| --- |
|  ( 1) The bodies of aged persons are impure, which, when they [become diseased with malice, they use their very breath and their sight, being apt for contagion, and by the Devil whetted for such purpose, to the vexation and destruction of others. For if they which are troubled with the disease of the eyes called opthalmia do infect others that look earnestly upon them, is it any marvel that these wicked creatures, having both bodies and minds in a higher degree corrupted, should work both these and greater mischiefs?" |
| W. Fulbecke, "A Parallele or Conference of the Civil Law, the Canon Law and the Common Law", 1618 |

|  |
| --- |
|  (2) ". . . that childish old hags called witches can do anything to harm men or animals . . . I fight with natural reason.... My object is also medical, in that I have to show that those illnesses, whose origins are attributed to witcnes, come from natural causes.... Since witches are usually old women of melancholic nature and small brains [women who get easily depressed and have little trust in God], there is no doubt that the Devil easily affects and deceives their minds by illuslons and apparitions that so bewilder them that they confess to actions that they are very far from having committed.... From consideration of their age and sex, Christians should be less ready to throw these poor mindless old women into dark, black, stinking prisons unfit for humans and inhabited by evil spirits that torment the prisoners." |
|  Johan Wier (a Belglan physlclan), De Praestigiis Daemonum, 1563 |

**Document Group D:**

**WITCHCRAFT STATISTICS DRAWN FROM CONTEMPORARY COURT RECORDS**

|  |
| --- |
|  1) OCCUPATIONS OF THE HUSBANDS OF THOSE ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT IN AN ENGLISH REGION, 1546-1680 |
|  OCCUPATIONS OF HUSBANDS |  NUMBER RECORDED, 1546-1680 |
|  Laborer | 23 |
| Farmer | 11 |
| Tailor | 4 |
| Yoeman | 4 |
| Mason | 2 |
| Sailor | 2 |
| Beer Brewer | 1 |
| Shoemaker | 1 |
| Weaver | 1 |
| Gentleman | 0 |
| From Alan Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study, 1970 |

|  |
| --- |
| 2)MALES AND FEMALES EXECUTED IN SOUTHWESTERN GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, AND SELECTED PARTS OF FRANCE |
|  AREA |  MALES | FEMALES |
| Southwestern Germany | 238 (18%) | 1,050 (82%) |
| Switzerland & Selected Parts of France | 305 (22%) | 1,060 (78%) |
| From Alan Macfarland, Witchcraft in Tudor anmd Stuart England: a Regional and Comparative Study, 1970 |

|  |
| --- |
| 3)AGE OF SUSPECTED WITCHES |
|   | DATES | SIZE OF SAMPLE | MEDIAN AGE |
| Basel | 1609-1617 | 10 | 60 (1 under age 50) |
| Fribourg, Germany | 1607-1683 | 9 | 60 (2 under age 50) |
| Geneva | 1537-1662 | 95 | 60 (24 under 50) |
| Essex, England | 1645 | 15 | 60 (2 under 50) |
| Deot ofthe Nord, Fr. | 1542-1679 | 39 | 55 (14 under 50) |
| From H.C. Eric Midelfort, Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 15652-1684: the Social and Intellectual Foundation, 1972 |