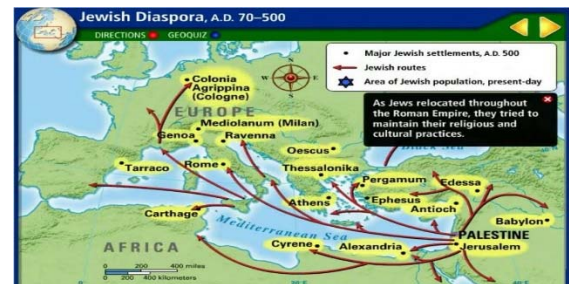


Jewish Diaspora



Location: Middle East (Palestine), Europe

Time Period: 70-500 C.E.

Description: *Diaspora* refers to Jewish communities scattered “in exile” outside of present-day Israel. Although the term refers to the physical dispersal of Jews throughout the world, it also carries religious, philosophical, and political connotations, as the Jews perceive a special relationship between the land of Israel and themselves.

Causes: Around the first century C.E., about four-fifths of the Jews lived within the Roman Empire, but they looked to Israel (then called Palestine) as the center of their religious and cultural life. The Romans permitted the existence of religions throughout the Empire, but they expected everybody to worship the Emperor as a divine being. Jews refused to recognize the Emperor as a god, and they rebelled against Roman rule in 65 C.E. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and drove the Jews out of Palestine.

Effects: Diaspora Jews in Europe and the Middle East would grow to outnumber the Jews in Palestine, and the chief centers of Judaism shifted from country to country (e.g., Babylonia, Persia, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, and the United States). Jewish communities gradually adopted distinctive languages, rituals, and cultures, some submerging themselves in non-Jewish environments more completely than others. While some lived in peace, others became victims of violent anti-Semitism over many centuries.

Anti-Semitism in the Middle Ages



Location: Europe (England, Spain, and Italy)

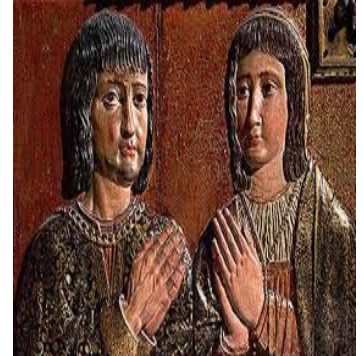
Time Period: 1000-1400 C.E.

Description: Anti-Semitism is hostile behavior exhibited toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.

Causes: Hostility toward Jews dates to ancient times, as Jews were criticized and punished for their efforts to remain a separate social and religious group. The rise of Christianity greatly increased hatred of Jews. Leaders of the European Christian (Catholic) Church promoted false theories as facts, including: all Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth and the scattering of the Jewish people was punishment for continued failure to abandon their faith and accept Christianity. However, the conversion of individual Jews was also perceived as insincere and as having materialistic motives.

Effects: At a time in which faith was perceived as the principal form of self-identity and intensely influenced both public and private life, Jews found themselves increasingly isolated as outsiders to society. As outsiders, Jews were objects of stereotyping and subject to acts of violence. Jews often became scapegoats for many natural catastrophes. For example, many people believed that Jews brought on the "Black Death," the plague that killed millions of people in Europe in the 14th Century, though historians have now traced the origins of the disease to pests brought from Asia along the Silk Road.

Spanish Inquisition



Location: Spain, Portugal, North Africa

Time Period: 1478-1834 C.E.

Description: The Spanish Inquisition was established by secular rulers, King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella, who had just united their two kingdoms to create Spain. A tribunal court system used by the Catholic Church to root out, suppress and punish heretics, baptized members of the church who held opinions contrary to the Catholic faith.

Causes: Reasons for the Inquisition included a desire to foster religious unity and weaken local political authorities and rebel alliances. Money was another motive -- the government made a profit by confiscating the property of those found guilty of heresy. Jews were banished a few years later when the Alhambra Decree in 1492, after which many Jews converted to Catholicism. These converts were accused of secretly continuing to practice Judaism and they became targets of the Inquisition.

Effects: While questioning suspects, the Inquisition used torture mainly against those suspected of Judaism and Protestantism. Torture was always used to obtain the confession of the accused, not a punishment itself. It was applied without distinction of sex or age, including children and the elderly. By 1490, the Inquisition had burned at the stake 2000 people and reconciled another 15,000. Over the course of its history, the Inquisition processed a total of 341,021 people accused of heresy, of whom at least ten percent (31,912) were executed.

Russian Pogroms



Location: Russian Empire (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus)

Time Period: 1821, 1881-1884 C.E.

Description: *Pogrom* is a Russian word meaning “to wreak havoc, to demolish violently.” Historically, the term refers to violent attacks by local non-Jewish populations on Jews in the Russian Empire and in other countries. The first such incident to be labeled a pogrom is believed to be anti-Jewish rioting in Odessa in 1821.

Causes: In Tsarist Russia, economic, social, and political resentment of Jews reinforced traditional religious antisemitism. It was also rumored that Jews were connected to the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II by members of the socialist movement. During the 1880s, the Russian government enacted anti-Jewish legislation limiting the number of Jews who could attend universities and preventing Jewish law school graduates from joining the bar. In 1882 Czar Alexander III (Alexander II’s son and successor) authorized the “May Laws,” which restricted where Jews could settle, forbade non-Jews from issuing mortgages to Jews and prohibited Jews from conducting business on Sundays.

Effects: The Russian government adopted a systematic expulsion of the Jews from Moscow in 1891–92. A mass Jewish emigration began from Russia to the United States and other countries. One reaction to the pogroms was the birth of a nationalist and Zionist movement among the Jews of Russia, which called for the creation of a Jewish state in the Biblical homeland of Canaan (first Palestine, then Israel).

The Holocaust



Location: Nazi Germany and German-occupied territories

Time Period: 1941-1945 C.E.

Description: The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

Causes: Like many anti-Semites in Germany, Adolf Hitler blamed the Jews for the country's defeat in World War I. Hitler was obsessed with the idea of the superiority of the "pure" German race, which he called "Aryan". This would be the beginning of the "Final Solution", a systematic extermination of people that Hitler and the Nazis considered "undesirable" - Jews, Romas (Gypsies), Jehovah's Witnesses, and the disabled. Many Germans' acceptance of Nazi policies was facilitated by broader support for the Nazi regime during the years of economic improvement, the popularity of Hitler as a strong leader, and foreign policy successes in the 1930s that restored Germany to great power status after its humiliating defeat in World War I.

Effects: Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany and its occupied territories to ghettos and to killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities. German SS and police units, supported by units of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS, murdered more than a million Jewish men, women, and children, and hundreds of thousands of others.

Establishment of Israel



Location: Israel (formerly Palestine)

Time Period: May 14, 1948 C.E.

Description: On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the creation of the State of Israel and became its first prime minister. The United States officially recognized the State of Israel and the Soviet Union soon followed suit.

Causes: Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the British assumed control of Palestine. Great Britain issued a mandate over Palestine which included calling for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. The Arabs were opposed to Jewish immigration to Palestine and stepped up their attacks against the Jews. At the end of World War II, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust were violently turned away from Palestine. The British handed the issue over to the United Nations. After much debate and discussion, the UN recommended the partition of Palestine into two states - one Jewish and one Arab. The Jews accepted the UN resolution while the Arabs rejected it.

Effects: Israel was placed in the midst of four Arab nations — Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt — and the presence of Israel has led to constant contention between Israel and the Arab world. Both the Israelis and the Arabs claim land in Palestine as theirs by ancestral rights, and war has periodically broken out between them.