

“New Christians” → *Revenge Politics?*

Exploring Jewish Expulsions AI

1. Ancient Israel and the first major dispersions

c. 1200–1000 BCE — Israelites in Canaan

The ancient Israelites developed as a people in the southern Levant, eventually forming the kingdoms of **Israel** in the north and **Judah** in the south.

There was no Jewish diaspora in the later sense yet, although Israelites and Judeans did move throughout the region.

722 BCE — Assyrian conquest of Israel

The Assyrian Empire conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel.

Assyrian imperial policy included the **deportation of substantial portions of conquered populations**. This is the historical background to the later tradition of the **Ten Lost Tribes of Israel**.

Other Israelites remained in the territory, while others were incorporated into the Assyrian Empire.

597–586 BCE — Babylonian conquest of Judah

The Babylonian Empire under **Nebuchadnezzar II** conquered Judah.

There were multiple deportations of Judeans to Babylonia, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple around **586 BCE**.

This is the beginning of what is conventionally called the **Babylonian Exile**.

Importantly, this was a **deportation by an imperial conquering power**, rather than Jews being expelled from an existing diaspora country.

2. Egypt becomes a major Jewish center

6th–5th centuries BCE — Egypt

Following the Babylonian conquest, Judeans also lived in Egypt.

One of the best documented communities was at **Elephantine**, where Jewish/Judean soldiers and their families lived in the Persian period.

Later, under Greek and Roman rule, Egypt became one of the world's major centers of Jewish life.

332 BCE onward — Ptolemaic Egypt

After Alexander the Great's conquest, substantial Jewish communities developed throughout Egypt.

Alexandria eventually became one of the most important Jewish intellectual and population centers in the Mediterranean.

So Egypt is especially important because the historical record shows **both displacement into Egypt and the development of a substantial Jewish community there.**

3. Greek and Roman periods

63 BCE onward — Roman domination

Roman rule gradually transformed the political situation in Judea.

66–73 CE — First Jewish-Roman War

The Jewish revolt against Rome ended with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple in **70 CE**.

Large numbers of Jews were killed, enslaved, displaced, or dispersed.

The destruction of the Temple became one of the defining events in Jewish history.

115–117 CE — Diaspora Revolt

Jewish communities in places including **Egypt, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia** participated in revolts against Roman rule.

These conflicts resulted in enormous casualties and destruction of Jewish communities, particularly in parts of Egypt and North Africa.

132–136 CE — Bar Kokhba Revolt

Another major revolt against Rome occurred in Judea.

After Rome defeated the revolt, there was extensive destruction, killing, enslavement, and displacement.

Roman restrictions on Jewish residence in Jerusalem were imposed, and the province was reorganized as **Syria Palaestina**.

This period significantly accelerated the geographic dispersion of Jewish communities.

4. Late antiquity

During the Byzantine/Christian Roman period, Jewish communities continued to exist throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East.

The experience varied enormously by location.

There were periods of relative stability, alongside periods of legal discrimination, violence, forced conversion, and expulsion.

415 CE — Alexandria

Jewish-Christian conflict in Alexandria culminated in violence and the displacement of part of the Jewish population under the authority of the Christian patriarch Cyril.

The exact scope and nature of the expulsion is debated by historians, so it belongs in a historical timeline with that qualification.

5. Islamic conquests and the medieval Middle East

7th–8th centuries

Following the Arab-Muslim conquests, Jewish communities existed across:

- Egypt
- Syria
- Iraq
- Persia/Iran
- North Africa
- Yemen
- Arabia
- Palestine

The legal status of Jews under different Islamic governments varied considerably across time and place.

There were periods of flourishing Jewish intellectual and economic life, as well as periods of persecution, forced conversion, violence, and expulsion.

One important center became **Babylonia/Iraq**, where Jewish scholarship had already developed for centuries.

6. Medieval Christian Europe

This is where formal **countrywide expulsions** become especially prominent.

European governments and religious authorities imposed restrictions including special taxation, occupational restrictions, residence restrictions, forced conversion, and expulsions. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum specifically identifies England in 1290, France in 1394, and Spain in 1492 as major examples. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

1096 — First Crusade

Jewish communities in parts of the Rhineland were attacked during the First Crusade.

Massacres occurred in places including:

- Worms
- Mainz
- Speyer
- Cologne and surrounding areas

1182 — France

King Philip II expelled Jews from parts of his kingdom and confiscated property.

13th century — France

Additional expulsions and restrictions occurred.

1290 — England

Edward I ordered the expulsion of Jews from England.

This is one of the clearest examples of a formal national expulsion in medieval Europe. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

Jews were subsequently prohibited from openly returning to England for centuries.

7. France

France experienced **multiple expulsions and readmissions**.

Major dates include:

- 1182
- 1306
- 1322
- 1394

The 1394 expulsion under Charles VI became effectively permanent until the gradual return of Jewish communities centuries later.

The French experience illustrates why simply saying "France expelled the Jews once" is misleading: different territories and periods had different policies.

8. Spain

Spain is one of the most important cases.

Under Muslim rule, Jewish communities had periods of considerable cultural and intellectual development, although conditions varied.

The Christian reconquest progressively changed the political environment.

1391

Major anti-Jewish massacres occurred in Spain.

Many Jews converted to Christianity, voluntarily or under coercion.

These converts became known as **conversos** or, in some contexts, **New Christians**.

1478 — Spanish Inquisition

The Inquisition was established to investigate Christians suspected of secretly practicing Judaism or Islam.

1492 — Expulsion from Spain

Ferdinand and Isabella issued the **Alhambra Decree**.

Jews were given the choice of conversion or departure.

Many left for:

- Portugal
- North Africa
- Ottoman territories
- Italy
- the Balkans
- the Middle East

This created the enormous **Sephardic diaspora**.

9. Portugal

1496–1497

Portugal followed Spain's example.

King Manuel I ordered Jews to leave, but departure was heavily restricted and many Jews were **forcibly converted**.

Portugal subsequently developed its own Inquisition.

Consequently, the Iberian expulsions produced a large Jewish diaspora extending across the Mediterranean, Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and eventually the Americas.

10. Italy and German-speaking territories

There was never a single unified "Italy" or "Germany" during most of this period.

Instead, individual kingdoms, duchies, bishoprics, and city-states adopted their own policies.

Jewish communities were expelled from numerous places, including:

- Sicily
- Naples
- various German cities

- Austrian territories
- Italian city-states

This is why a comprehensive list has to distinguish **territorial expulsions from countrywide expulsions**.

11. Eastern Europe and Russia

Jewish communities became particularly large in Eastern Europe.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth eventually became one of the world's greatest centers of Jewish population.

Later, the Russian Empire acquired large Jewish populations through the partitions of Poland.

18th–19th centuries — Russian Empire

Rather than simply expelling all Jews, Imperial Russia imposed extensive restrictions on Jewish residence.

The most famous was the:

Pale of Settlement

Jews were generally restricted to designated western territories of the Russian Empire.

There were also:

- expulsions from particular cities
- restrictions on settlement
- occupational restrictions
- forced relocations
- pogroms

These policies produced enormous migration to Western Europe and the Americas.

12. United States and Western Europe

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, millions of Jews migrated from Eastern Europe.

Major destinations included:

- United States
- Canada
- Britain
- Argentina
- Brazil
- South Africa
- Australia

This was largely **migration**, rather than expulsion.

That distinction matters.

13. Nazi Germany — 1933–1945

This represents a fundamentally different historical category.

The Nazi regime first attempted to **exclude Jews from German society and encourage/force emigration**.

From 1933 through 1941, Nazi Germany pursued increasingly aggressive forced-emigration policies. More than **340,000 Jews emigrated from Germany and Austria** during the Nazi period. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

After the beginning of World War II, Nazi policy became increasingly focused on deportation and mass murder.

From 1941 onward, the Nazis implemented the **Final Solution**—the systematic mass murder of Europe's Jews.

Approximately **six million Jews were murdered** in the Holocaust. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

This therefore should **not** simply be placed on a list of "countries that expelled Jews." It was genocide, accompanied by deportation, forced labor, ghettos, expropriation, and mass murder. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

14. After World War II

By 1945, Jewish communities throughout much of Europe had been devastated.

Hundreds of thousands of survivors became displaced persons.

Between 1945 and 1952, **more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons** lived in camps and urban centers in Germany, Austria, and Italy. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

Many did not return to their prewar homes because their communities had been destroyed and because of continuing antisemitism and postwar violence. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

15. Middle Eastern and North African Jewish communities

This is another major part of the history that should be treated separately from European expulsions.

After World War II and especially following the establishment of Israel in **1948**, Jewish populations in several Arab countries experienced combinations of:

- discriminatory legislation
- arrests
- violence
- property confiscation
- restrictions on employment
- expulsions
- pressure to leave
- voluntary migration
- departures connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict

The circumstances were **different in each country**, so it is misleading to treat all of them as one identical event.

Countries experiencing major Jewish population decline included:

Iraq

Iraq had a Jewish community with roots extending back to the Babylonian period.

Following the creation of Israel, Iraqi Jews faced increasing restrictions and persecution.

A large proportion eventually left, particularly during the early 1950s.

Egypt

Egypt had a Jewish community numbering in the tens of thousands.

Following the 1956 Suez Crisis, many Jews were expelled or pressured to leave, with property confiscations and restrictions also occurring.

Libya

The Jewish community largely disappeared following violence and emigration in the 1940s–1960s.

Yemen

The ancient Jewish community largely departed, particularly during **Operation Magic Carpet (1949–1950)**.

Syria

The Jewish population declined dramatically during the 20th century amid restrictions and political instability.

Lebanon

Lebanon retained a Jewish community much longer than some neighboring states, but its population declined substantially during the 20th century.

Iran

Iran is different again. Its Jewish population declined substantially after the **1979 Iranian Revolution**, but Iran did not simply expel its entire Jewish population.

16. The other side of the 1948 displacement

There is an equally important historical population movement involving **Palestinian Arabs**.

The 1948 war produced a mass Palestinian refugee crisis. Contemporary U.S. diplomatic records estimated approximately **725,000 Palestinian Arab refugees** by 1949, while also documenting Jewish refugees from the conflict. ([Office of the Historian](#))

The causes and circumstances of Palestinian displacement remain historically and politically contested. Contemporary U.S. records described flight and expulsion as

components of the broader displacement, while Israeli officials at the time attributed the exodus primarily to the war and actions of Arab forces and leaders. ([Office of the Historian](#))

This belongs in the same historical timeline because the displacement of **Jewish populations from parts of the Middle East and North Africa** and the displacement of **Palestinian Arabs in 1948** occurred within the same rapidly changing regional conflict, although they were different historical processes.

17. Israel after 1948

With the creation of the State of Israel, Jewish refugees and displaced persons had a new destination.

The new state absorbed large numbers of Jews from:

- Europe
- Iraq
- Yemen
- Egypt
- Libya
- Syria
- other Middle Eastern and North African countries

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum reports that approximately **140,000 Holocaust survivors entered Israel during the first few years after its establishment**, while the overall postwar Jewish refugee movement also included people going to the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and other countries. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

18. The broad historical pattern

If we compress the entire history, it looks like this:

Ancient Israel/Canaan

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Assyrian deportations — 722 BCE

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Babylonian deportations — 597–586 BCE

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Babylonia + Egypt + Persian Empire

↓

Greek/Hellenistic diaspora

↓

Roman conquest

↓

70 CE — destruction of Second Temple

↓

115–117 — Diaspora Revolt

↓

132–136 — Bar Kokhba revolt and Roman repression

↓

Late Roman/Byzantine period

↓

Islamic Middle East and North Africa

↓

Medieval Christian Europe

↓

England — 1290

↓

France — repeated expulsions

↓

Spain — 1492

↓

Portugal — 1496–1497

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Eastern Europe / Russian Empire

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19th-century mass migration

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Nazi persecution and Holocaust — 1933–1945

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Postwar Jewish displacement

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1948 and aftermath — major Jewish population movements from Arab/Muslim-majority countries

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Israel, United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Latin America and elsewhere

↓

Present day

The key distinction

The historical record does **not** support a simple explanation that Jews were repeatedly expelled everywhere for one single reason.

The documented causes include **imperial conquest and deportation, religious persecution, forced conversion, political and economic motives, nationalism, antisemitism, wartime displacement, civil conflict, state discrimination, and—in some cases—voluntary migration**. The US Holocaust Memorial Museum specifically documents expulsion, discriminatory laws, forced conversion, residence restrictions, and other forms of persecution across different historical periods. ([Holocaust Encyclopedia](#))

And there is another important point for your research: **the Jewish diaspora is considerably older than Christianity, Islam, medieval Europe, or modern Israel**. The Assyrian and Babylonian deportations created major Jewish populations outside the ancient homeland centuries before the Roman period.