

# Anti-Semitism through the Centuries

## First to Third century

50

Jews ordered by Roman Emperor Claudius "not to hold meetings", in the words of Cassius Dio (Roman History, 60.6.6). Claudius later expelled Jews from Rome, according to both Suetonius ("Lives of the Twelve Caesars", Claudius, Section 25.4) and Acts 18:2.

66–73

Great Jewish Revolt against the Romans is crushed by Vespasian and Titus. Titus refuses to accept a wreath of victory, as there is "no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God." (Philostratus, Vita Apollonii). The events of this period were recorded in detail by the Jewish-Roman historian Josephus. His record is largely sympathetic to the Roman view and was written in Rome under Roman protection; hence it is considered a controversial source. Josephus describes the Jewish revolt as being led by "tyrants," to the detriment of the city, and of Titus as having "moderation" in his escalation of the Siege of Jerusalem (70).

c. 119

Roman emperor Hadrian bans circumcision, making Judaism *de facto* illegal.

c. 132–135

Crushing of the Bar Kokhba revolt. According to Cassius Dio 580,000 Jews are killed. Hadrian orders the expulsion of Jews from Judea, which is merged with Galilee to form the province Syria Palaestina. Although large Jewish populations remain in Samaria and Galilee, with Tiberias as the headquarters of exiled Jewish patriarchs, this is the start of the Jewish diaspora. Hadrian constructs a pagan temple to Jupiter at the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, builds Aelia Capitolina among ruins of Jerusalem.<sup>[4]</sup>

167

Earliest known accusation of Jewish deicide (the notion that Jews were held responsible for the death of Jesus) made in a sermon *On the Passover* attributed to Melito of Sardis.

## Fourth century

315–337

Constantine I enacts various laws regarding the Jews: Jews are not allowed to own Christian slaves or to circumcise their slaves. Conversion of Christians to Judaism is outlawed. Congregations for religious services are restricted, but Jews are also allowed to enter the restituted Jerusalem on the anniversary of the Temple's destruction.

386

John Chrysostom of Antioch writes eight homilies Adversus Judaeos (lit: Against the Judaizers). See also: Christianity and antisemitism.

## Fifth century

439 January 31

The Codex Theodosianus, the first imperial compilation of laws. Jews are prohibited from holding important positions involving money, including judicial and executive offices. The ban against building new synagogues is reinstated. The anti-Jewish statutes apply to the Samaritans. The *Code* is also accepted by Western Roman Emperor, Valentinian III.

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## Sixth century

529–559

Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great publishes *Corpus Juris Civilis*. New laws restrict citizenship to Christians. These regulations determined the status of Jews throughout the Empire for hundreds of years: Jewish civil rights restricted: "they shall enjoy no honors". The principle of *Servitus Judaeorum* (Servitude of the Jews) is established: the Jews cannot testify against Christians. The emperor becomes an arbiter in internal Jewish matters.<sup>[clarification needed]</sup> The use of the Hebrew language in worship is forbidden. Shema Yisrael ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord is one"), sometimes considered the most important prayer in Judaism, is banned as a denial of the Trinity. Some Jewish communities are converted by force, their synagogues turned into churches.

## Seventh century

694

17th Council of Toledo. King Ergica believes rumors that the Jews had conspired to ally themselves with the Muslim invaders and forces Jews to give all land, slaves and buildings bought from Christians, to his treasury. He declares that all Jewish children over the age of seven should be taken from their homes and raised as Christians.

## Ninth century

807

Abbassid Caliph Harun al-Rashid orders all Jews in the Caliphate to wear a yellow belt, with Christians to wear a blue one.


## Eleventh century

1008–1013

Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ("the Mad") issues severe restrictions against Jews in the Fatimid Empire. All Jews are forced to wear a heavy wooden "golden calf" around their necks. Christians had to wear a large wooden cross and members of both groups had to wear black hats.

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 Jews (identifiable by Judenhut) are being massacred by Crusaders. 1250 French Bible illustration

1096

The First Crusade. Three hosts of crusaders pass through several Central European cities. The third, unofficial host, led by Count Emicho, decides to attack the Jewish communities, most notably in the Rhineland, under the slogan: "Why fight Christ's enemies abroad when they are living among us?"

## Twelfth century

1190 February 6


All the Jews of Norwich, England found in their houses were slaughtered, except a few who found refuge in the castle.

1190 March 16

500 Jews of York were massacred after a six day siege by departing Crusaders, backed by a number of people indebted to Jewish money-lenders.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Thirteenth century



 Judensau at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Regensburg

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13th century

Germany. Appearance of *Judensau*: obscene and dehumanizing imagery of Jews.

c. 1260

Thomas Aquinas publishes *Summa Contra Gentiles*, a summary of Christian faith to be presented to those who reject it. The Jews who refuse to convert are regarded as "deliberately defiant" rather than "invincibly ignorant".

1275

King Edward I of England passes the Statute of the Jewry forcing Jews over the age of seven to wear an identifying yellow badge, and making usury illegal, in order to seize their assets. Scores of English Jews are arrested, 300 hanged and their property goes to the Crown. In 1280 he orders Jews to be present as Dominicans preach conversion. In 1287 he arrests heads of Jewish families and demands their communities pay ransom of 12,000 pounds.

## Fourteenth century

1305

Philip IV of France seizes all Jewish property (except the clothes they wear) and expels them from France (approx. 100,000). His successor Louis X of France allows French Jews to return in 1315.

1348

European Jews are blamed for the Black Death. Charge laid to the Jews that they poisoned the wells. Massacres spread throughout Spain, France, Germany and Austria. More than 200 Jewish communities destroyed by violence. Many communities have been expelled and settle down in Poland.



1349 burning of Jews (from a European chronicle written on the Black Death between 1349 and 1352)

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## Fifteenth century



Simon of Trent blood libel. Illustration in Hartmann Schedel's *Weltchronik*,

1492 October 24

Jews of Mecklenburg, Germany are accused of stabbing a consecrated wafer. 27 Jews are burned, including two women. The spot is still called the *Judenberg*. All the Jews are expelled from the Duchy.

## Sixteenth century



Jews from Worms, Germany wear the mandatory yellow badge. A moneybag and garlic in the hands are an antisemitic stereotype (sixteenth-century drawing).



## Anti-Semitism through the Centuries



Bookcover of *On the Jews and Their Lies*  
1543

In his pamphlet *On the Jews and Their Lies* Martin Luther advocates an eight-point plan to get rid of the Jews as a distinct group either by religious conversion or by expulsion:

"...set fire to their synagogues or schools..."

"...their houses also be razed and destroyed..."

"...their prayer books and Talmudic writings... be taken from them..."

"...their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb..."

"...safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews..."

"...usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them..."

and "Such money should now be used in ... the following [way]... Whenever a Jew is sincerely converted, he should be handed [certain amount]..."

"...young, strong Jews and Jewesses [should]... earn their bread in the sweat of their brow..."

"If we wish to wash our hands of the Jews' blasphemy and not share in their guilt, we have to part company with them. They must be driven from our country" and "we must drive them out like mad dogs."

1555

In Papal Bull *Cum nimis absurdum*, Pope Paul IV writes: "It appears utterly absurd and impermissible that the Jews, whom God has condemned to eternal slavery for their guilt, should enjoy our Christian love." He renews anti-Jewish legislation and installs a locked nightly ghetto in Rome.



# Anti-Semitism through the Centuries

1871

Speech of Pope Pius IX in regard to Jews: "of these dogs, there are too many of them at present in Rome, and we hear them howling in the streets, and they are disturbing us in all places."



The treason conviction of Alfred Dreyfus.

## Twentieth century

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Roman Catholic Church adhered to a distinction between "good antisemitism" and "bad antisemitism". The "bad" kind promoted hatred of Jews because of their descent. This was considered un-Christian because the Christian message was intended for all of humanity regardless of ethnicity; anyone could become a Christian. The "good" kind criticized alleged Jewish conspiracies to control newspapers, banks, and other institutions, to care only about accumulation of wealth, etc. Many Catholic bishops wrote articles criticizing Jews on such grounds, and, when accused of promoting hatred of Jews, would remind people that they condemned the "bad" kind of antisemitism.<sup>[19]</sup>



The victims of a 1905 pogrom in Dnipropetrovsk.

1921–1925

Outbreak of antisemitism in USA, led by Ku Klux Klan.

1933–1941





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## Twenty-first century

2001

Antisemite demonstrations during the World Conference against Racism 2001, in Durban.

2005 December

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad widens the hostility between Iran and Israel by denying the Holocaust during a speech in the Iranian city of Zahedan. He made the following comments on live television: "They have invented a myth that Jews were massacred and place this above God, religions and the prophets." Continuing, he suggested that if the Holocaust had occurred, that it was the responsibility of Europeans to offer up territory to Jews: "This is our proposal: give a part of your own land in Europe, the United States, Canada or Alaska to them [the Jews] so that the Jews can establish their country." See Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Israel

2006 March

Two synagogues in Montreal, Canada were vandalized with spray-painted swastikas and Nazi SS symbols.<sup>[38]</sup>

2008 26–29 November Mumbai, India

Nariman House, a Chabad Lubavitch Jewish centre in Colaba known as the Mumbai Chabad House, was taken over by two attackers and several residents were held hostage. The house was stormed by NSG commandos and, after a long battle, the two attackers were killed. Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivkah Holtzberg, who was six months pregnant, were murdered with other hostages inside the house by the attackers. Indian forces found the body of six hostages inside the house.