4-2023

The Dwelling Places of Israel: Historical Ashkenazi Migration and Settlement

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HNR 499: Honors Senior Project

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April 20, 2023

מה–טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתך ישראל:

"How good are your tents, Jacob: your dwelling places, Israel."[1]

First uttered by Balaam[2] when he found himself unable to curse the Israelites, these words remain a testament to the connection between a people, the places they reside, and the buildings they construct. Over time, Jews inhabited many dwelling places and these buildings have evolved with changing circumstances. With these changes, the interpretation of this verse kept pace. According to Rabbi Yohanan[3], "tents" refers to synagogues and study halls while "dwelling places" means the kingdom of Israel.[4] Rabbi Abba bar Kahana[5] later added that, while the text turns Balaam's curses into blessings, all his intended curses came to pass except one: The synagogues and study halls remained standing.[6] Such buildings were especially necessary since the destruction of the Second Temple[7] shifted the center of communal religious practice away from the temple and towards the synagogue. Rabbi Yohanan's interpretation persisted and Jews continue to recite Numbers 24:5 at the beginning of the blessing said upon entering a synagogue.[8]

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[1] David Stein. *The Contemporary Torah.* JPS, 2006. Numbers 24:5

[2] Balaam was a man renowned for his curses and was sent to curse the Israelites but because he could only do as God told, he blessed the Israelites instead. Stein, *The Contemporary Torah.* Numbers 22-24.

[3] Rabbi Yohanan bar Nappaha taught during the third century and used a strictly analytical method to study *Halakhah*. Solomon Schechter and S. Mendelsohn. "Johanan b. Nappaha (Ha-Nappah)." Jewish Encyclopedia*,* accessed January 27, 2023. https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8719-johanan-b-nappaha-ha-nappah.

[4] Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 105b:17.

[5] Rabbi Abba bar Kahana taught during the third century and was best known for expanding non-legal material in the Talmud. "Abba bar Kahana," Oxford Reference, updated 2003, https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-16.

[6] Talmud, Sanhedrin 105b:19.

[7] The Second Temple was destroyed in 70 CE following the Roman-Jewish War. The Romans reclaimed Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple, leaving only the Western Wall. "Destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE," Religion and Public Life, Harvard Divinity School, accessed January 27, 2023. https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/destruction-second-temple-70-ce

[8] *Siddur Yitzchak Yair HaShalem,* (Rahway, New Jersey: Mesorah Publications, 2020), 6.

According to Rabbi Joan S. Friedman, Jewish life exists in a covenantal relationship involving God, Torah, and Israel.[9] While the interpretation of each of these aspects of Judaism continues to evolve, the oneness of God, the Jewish community, and the teachings of Torah all consistently sit at the center. Torah in its most narrow sense refers to the Five Books of Moses at the beginning of the Tanakh.[10] This definition only encompasses the Written Torah while Judaism also recognizes the Oral Torah, a vast library containing the Mishnah, Talmud, and various law codes, among other texts.[11] The Mishnah was the first major work of rabbinic literature[12] and contains both legal material (*halakhah*) and non-legal material (*aggadah*). The Gemara, a commentary on parts of the Mishnah, binds with these sections to form the Talmud.[13] Both the Mishnah and Gemarah preserve debate on matters of *halakhah* and do not operate as codes of law since they often come to no conclusion on the correct opinion.[14] Jewish law codes such as the Mishneh Torah and Shulkhan Arukh were not created until the Middle Ages.[15] Normative practice changes over time and differs between communities. The largest differences in customs emerged from the geographic distribution of Jews during the Middle Ages.

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[9] Joan S. Friedman. "Jewish Religious Pluralism," *Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity* (New York: CCAR Press, 2017), 11.
[10] Tanakh is a Hebrew acronym for the Torah, Prophets, and Writings. This forms the central component of Jewish scripture and is somewhat akin to the Christian "Old Testament" although the books appear in a different order and the apocrypha included by some Christian denominations are left out.
[11] Friedman, "Jewish Religious Pluralism," 12.
[12] "Mishnah," Sefaria, accessed January 23, 2023, https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Mishnah.
[13] While two Talmuds have been compiled, one in Jerusalem and the other in Babylonia, the Babylonian Talmud is the most studied. Wherever the Talmud is discussed in this paper, it is in reference to the Babylonian Talmud. Barry Scott Wimpfheimer. *The Talmud: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 164-8.
[14] Dvora E. Weisberg. "Why Should Reform Jews Study Talmud?" *Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity* (New York: CCAR Press, 2017), 463.
[15] "Halakhah," Sefaria, accessed January 23, 2023, https://www.sefaria.org/texts/Halakhah

Before 1000 CE, the Islamic world held the largest centers of the Jewish population and those with the greatest cultural output.[16] Jews spanned across the Middle East, North Africa, and Iberia.[17] Due to Islamic leniency towards other monotheists, Jews held guarantees to physical and spiritual security while also paying taxes and holding a status inferior to the Muslim majority.[18] Baghdad held great academies, tracing their lineage back to those who created the Babylonian Talmud.[19] During this time, Few Jews inhabited Western Christendom and those who did left little trace.[20]

Incorporation into Christendom occurred both voluntarily, through moving to Christian lands, and involuntarily, through Christian conquest.[21] The former applies to the Jews who came to the lands of modern France and Germany while the latter to the Jews of Iberia who Spain forcibly converted or expelled following the Christian conquest.[22] Since Jews spread out over a vast area, regional variations came about in customs. Those in northern Europe created the Ashkenazi tradition, those in Iberia and its diaspora created the Sephardic tradition, and those who remained in the Middle East created the Mizrachi tradition. While these constitute the largest branches, others exist such as Ethiopian Jews, Teimani Jews, and Bukharan Jews to name a few. Over time, Ashkenazi Judaism became the most populous and culturally dominant within the Jewish world.[23] As a result, Ashkenazi communities are the main focus here.

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[16] Robert Chazan. *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 1000-1500* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 23.
[17] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 27.
[18] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 24.
[19] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 25.
[20] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 23.
[21] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 23.
[22] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 113-4.
[23] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval,* 129.

From the inception of Israelite law, demarcating Israel as a holy nation set apart by particular practices formed a major component.[24] The Torah calls for some of these practices including to observe and remember *Shabbat*. Two sections discuss the prohibition of work on *Shabbat*:

> Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of your God [*Adonai*[25]]: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days [*Adonai*] made heaven and earth and sea—and all that is in them—and then rested on the seventh day; therefore [*Adonai*] blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.[26]
>
> Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as your God [*Adonai*] has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of your God [*Adonai*]; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and your God [*Adonai*] freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore your God [*Adonai*] has commanded you to observe the sabbath day.[27]

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[24] Christine Hayes. "Lecture 10. Biblical Law: The Three Legal Corpora of JE (Exodus), P (Leviticus and Numbers) and D," YaleCourses, YouTube, December 6, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ5qYM24vUA&list=PLh9mgdi4rNeyuvTEbD-Ei0JdMUujXfyWi&index=10&t=1749s, 29:18.
[25] *Adonai* means my Lord in Hebrew. *Adonai* is used in place of the name of God when reading the Torah or praying.
[26] Stein, *The Contemporary Torah.* Exodus 20:8-11.
[27] Stein, *The Contemporary Torah.* Deuteronomy 5:12-5.

While the text clearly states that work is prohibited, exactly what counts as work remains ambiguous. Therefore, the Mishnah outlines how to fulfill this religiously prescribed deed (*mitzvah*), setting out 39 *melakhot* (creative labors) prohibited on *Shabbat*. The *melakhot* most relevant to the built environment and patterns of Jewish settlement include the prohibitions of carrying from a public domain to a private domain and vice versa as well as lighting fires on *Shabbat*. The former led to the creation of the *eruv,* the symbolic combination of separate domains by creating an enclosure around them.[28] *Eruvin* come in many forms such as a wall, fence, a beam across the entrance to an alleyway, a series of posts and wires, among other elements, often using some combination thereof. The *eruv* demarcates the most convenient places for religiously observant Jews to live while holding little meaning for non-Jews and non-observant Jews.[29] The prohibition against lighting fires on *Shabbat* also limits where observant Jews live. In modern times, this *melakha* extends to starting a car,[30] meaning if an observant person wishes to participate in the synagogue on *Shabbat* that person must live within walking distance.

Outside of religious requirements, the culture surrounding a Jewish community also impacts practices. Elisheva Baumgarten, in “Appropriation and Differentiation: Jewish Identity in Medieval Ashkenaz,” explores how medieval Jews took on some aspects of Christian practice while altering these practices in particular ways. One example the article focuses on is penitential fasting. Medieval Ashkenazi Jews took on

[28] “Mishnah Eruvin,” Sefaria, accessed January 23, 2023, https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Eruvin?tab=contents
[29] Barbara E. Mann. *Space and Place in Jewish Studies*. Key Words in Jewish Studies (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 138, 147.
[30] Louis Jacobs. The Book of Jewish Practice. (Millburn: Behrman House, 1986), 76.

more fasts than other parts of the Jewish world at the time, took on individual fasts as penance for particular sins, and some consulted rabbis to request that they assign penance.[31] Despite the apparent similarity between Jewish and Christian penitential fasting, there were also some differences. Jews publicly asserted their intention to fast at afternoon prayers, fasted until evening, and broke the fast with meat while Christians have less of an emphasis on a public assertion of intent, fasted until midday, and broke the fast with bread.[32] Baumgarten terms the adoption of practices from other cultures as "appropriation" and the changes made to these practices as "differentiation."[33] The tension between appropriation and differentiation also bears out in the built environment. For example, Haredi apartment buildings reflect the style of many other apartments but tend to have larger balconies, more bedrooms, and smaller windows.[34] Another example of this comes from Western Ashkenazi synagogues from the Middle Ages. Synagogues from this era often reflect the architectural forms popular for their time and region while also demonstrating care to avoid church plans.[35]

Throughout history, Jews faced a variety of legal restrictions. Some directly related to the built environment as in the case of height restrictions for synagogues, while others impacted it in a less direct way such as limiting freedom of movement or preventing Jews from joining guilds.[36] The prohibition against joining guilds in particular

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[31] Elisheva Baumgarten. "Appropriation and Differentiation: Jewish Identity in Medieval Ashkenaz," *AJS Review* 42, no. 1 (April 2018), 43-7.
[32] Baumgarten, "Appropriation and Differentiation," 44, 58-9.
[33] Baumgarten, "Appropriation and Differentiation," 40-1, 43.
[34] Frieda Vizel. "Chanuka Night Walkthrough of Williamsburg, Brooklyn," Frieda Vizel – Brooklyn Tour Guide, YouTube, December 24, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0petvgeUCE&t=357s; Anna Rahmanan. "The brilliant, not-so-secret reason some Brooklyn balconies are staggered." *Brooklyn: Community & Commerce*, February 12, 2021.
[35] Steven Fine. *Jewish Religious Architecture: From Biblical Israel to Modern Judaism* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 176.
[36] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 144; Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 175.

prevented Jews from obtaining the education they offered and therefore limited the community's access to the work of artisans.[37] At various points in time, Jewish communities have had less access to resources than their non-Jewish neighbors. One stark example of this comes from World War II when Jewish refugees could not take more than 10RMs and ship fare with them when fleeing Nazi territory, arriving destitute in a new country.[38]

At various points in time, Jews fled antisemitic violence both from the state and their non-Jewish neighbors. More often, Jews looked to protect themselves in other ways. One common response that began in the Middle Ages was to live in walled-off areas. While this later became a tool to control the movement of Jews and prevent contact with non-Jews, living in segregated communities initially provided safety and local leaders ordered the construction of walls to entice Jews to move to particular towns.[39]

In summary, both internal and external factors guided the creation of Ashkenazi spaces. The major internal factors include meeting halakhic requirements and navigating the tension between appropriation and differentiation. The major external factors include safety, access to resources, and legal restrictions. To further examine Ashkenazi spaces, there are four major periods to consider: the Middle Ages, the Modern Period, the Shoah, and the Postwar Period. Each period holds different patterns of migration and settlement. The major centers of the Ashkenazi population in the Middle Ages were France, the German-speaking region, and Poland. Those of the

[37] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 175.
[38] Guang Pan. *A Study of Jewish Refugees in China (1933–1945)* (Springer Singapore, 2019), 12.
[39] Chazan, Jews of Medieval, 172.

Modern Period were Poland, Russia, and the United States. During the Shoah, millions of Polish Jews were killed alongside others in Nazi territory and hundreds of thousands fled Europe. After the war, the largest centers of the Ashkenazi population came to be in the United States and Israel, while the once central community in Poland was largely hollowed out.

While the particulars of this history remain unique to Jews, the general trend fits with many other diaspora communities in the pattern of dispersion, maintenance of a distinct ethnic, cultural, and religious identity, and continuous orientation towards a homeland.[40] Diaspora populations have become more important due to an increase in international migration,[41] leading to a greater importance in understanding these kinds of communities.

The Middle Ages

Migration

Since few Jews lived in Northern Europe before 1000 CE, Jews immigrating from southern Europe, influenced in part by the culture of the Islamic world, largely built the Ashkenazi tradition.[42] Those who came to this region, often did so as

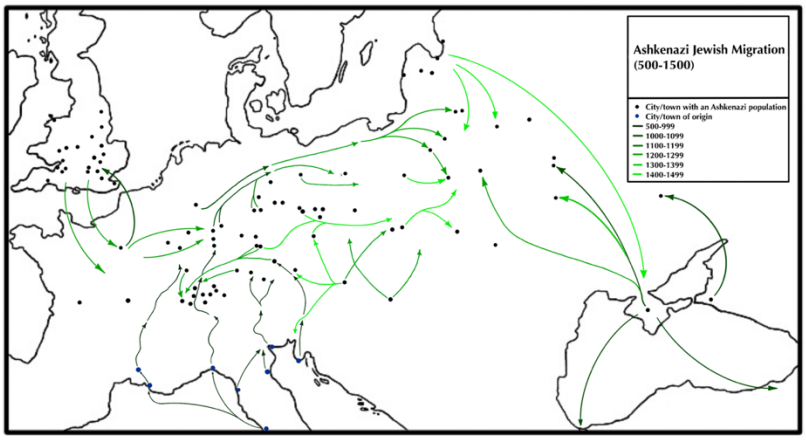

Figure 1. 500-1000 CE, some Jews moved north from towns in southern Europe to towns in modern France and Germany. After 1000 CE, Ashkenazi migration largely went towards the east, especially into Poland.

[40] Kim D. Butler. “Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,” *Diaspora* 10, no. 2, 2001, 192.
[41] Marie McAuliffe ed., Anna Triandafyllidou ed. “World Migration Report,” *International Organization for Migration (IOM): UN Migration*, 2022, 23.
[42] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 24, 129.

merchants searching for economic opportunity,[43] first to the German-speaking region followed by France.[44] After the Norman conquest in 1071, some French Jews went to England[45] and in the 13th century, Jewish immigration to Poland increased significantly,[46] largely due to Poland's relative safety and increased economic opportunity.[47] (Fig. 1)[48]

In conjunction with trade, some Jews also lent money.[49] As the Vatican began emphasizing rules against intra-religious usury, the Jews in Christendom took on more moneylending to fill this gap.[50] Since Jews could lend money, rulers would entice them to settle in their territory to develop their economy, fund projects, and create an easily exploitable tax base.[51] As serfs of the royal chamber, Jews belonged to a lord or king in similar to how other serfs belonged to a lord.[52] Moneylending also had some deleterious side effects and led to greater animosity towards Jews[53] coming from the general populace, in the form of mob violence, or from rulers, in the form of expulsions such as those of England and France in 1290 and 1394 respectively.[54] Jewish refugees from these acts fled to Germany while economic hardship already pushed some Jews to leave for Poland, the trend increased following these events.[55]

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[43] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 132, 172, 216.
[44] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 169.
[45] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 154.
[46] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 194.
[47] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 203-4.
[48] Eliott Buyce. Adapted from Martin Gilbert. *Atlas of Jewish History* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1993), 62; Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 219, 194.
[49] Anna Sapir Abulafia. *Christian-Jewish Relations 1000-1300: Jews in Service of Medieval Christendom* (New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 40.
[50] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 217.
[51] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 156, 159.
[52] Mark R. Cohen. Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages (Princeton University Press, 1994), 45.
[53] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 218.
[54] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 153, 166.
[55] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 194, 203.

Settlement

Central Europe

Halakhah & Customs. The main differences in architecture due to *halakhic* requirements in this period and region occurred within buildings meant for religious purposes specifically. For example, the separation of men and women during prayer led to different accommodations over time. Initially, a curtain separated men and women but as congregations grew and more women came to participate, some places added separate rooms, often placed either below or adjacent to the main hall.[56] In the Rhineland, synagogues were built with large windows.[57] While this was common for churches in the area as well, it is explicitly required for Jews to pray in a building with windows.[58]

Appropriation & Differentiation. In this region, synagogues took on the architectural styles popular for their time such as Romanesque or Gothic.[59] Often, even the same craftsmen worked on some churches and synagogues,[60] although this may be the result of certain legal restrictions placed on Jews. At the same time, certain architectural decisions were made to differentiate synagogues from churches. For instance, the *bimah*[61] sat at

Figure 2. Altneuschul in Prague exemplifies the layout of medieval synagogues with the bimah in the center and a bay of seats on either side.

[56] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 175.
[57] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 174.
[58] Talmud, *Berakhot* 31a:19, 34b:29.
[59] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 174.
[60] Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 44.
[61] The *bimah* is the stand from which the Torah is read.

the center of the hall[62] rather than the front of the hall where a pulpit would be placed in a church. In addition, seats were set on either side of the room facing each other rather than facing towards the front of the hall, similar to contemporary secular buildings.[63] (Fig. 2)[64]

Safety. For the protection of Jewish residents and to entice more to move to a particular area, some towns, such as Speyer, contained a walled-off area for Jews[65] although some also lived in the city center among Christians.[66] Despite the freedom to live outside this location, those living in the center needed a synagogue close by due to the danger of walking to the walled-off one.[67]

Access to Resources. Many Jewish communities lacked the money for large synagogues. As a result, the majority of synagogues in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were just large rooms in existing buildings rather than standalone buildings dedicated to that purpose and the free-standing buildings tended to remain small and simple.[68]

Legal Restrictions. Many legal restrictions existed for Jews in Europe's Middle Ages but the architecturally significant restrictions tended to impact synagogues. For example, height restrictions led to lowering the floor to maintain a tall and imposing hall. Some later interpreted this norm as a symbolic nod to Psalms 130:1 which states, "Out of the depths I called you, O Lord."[69] Some of the laws that altered the architecture were

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[62] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 174.
[63] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 176-7.
[64] "The Old-New Synagogue," *CzechTourism,* accessed February 8, 2023, https://travelsquire.com/pragues-splendid-jewish-heritage-sites/
[65] Chazan, *Jews of Medieval*, 172.
[66] Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 43.
[67] Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 44.
[68] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 175.
[69] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 174.

not due to restrictions on the buildings themselves. For example, candles used for synagogues were heavily taxed, likely also contributing to the prevalence of windows.[70] In addition, the mason's guild barred entry from Jews and therefore masonry generally required outsourcing to Christian craftsmen, although a few Jewish artisans worked on synagogues.[71] Limitations on access to this skill may have contributed to the simple style of many synagogues overall.

Modern Period

Migration

When Europeans began settling in North America, Jews arrived among the earliest colonists.[72] The majority of these first Jewish communities in North America were Sephardic.[73] In 1654, Sephardic families fled Portuguese persecution in Brazil and settled in New Amsterdam.[74] Before 1800, Jewish communities large enough to build synagogues stood in New York, Newport, Charleston, Savannah, Philadelphia, and Richmond. The largest, in Charleston, held 500 people.[75]

The second wave of Jews migrating to North America arrived in the mid-nineteenth century and lasted until its close, largely coming from the German-speaking region.[76] In 1836, whole families and groups of families began moving to the United States from Bavaria.[77] Many moved from this region due to a slump in trade and the heavy-handed taxes and restrictions placed on the Jewish population of this region.

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[70] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 174.
[71] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 175.
[72] Martin Gilbert. *Atlas of Jewish History* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1993), 62.
[73] Nathan Glazer. *American Judaism* (The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 15.
[74] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 12; Jonathan D. Sarna. *American Judaism: A History, Second Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 8.
[75] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 14-5.
[76] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 22.
[77] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 23.

Such restrictions affected both business and personal happiness, controlling everything down to the number legal marriages allowed between Jews in a year.[78] Restrictions on marriage in particular led many couples to emigrate specifically to start a family.[79]

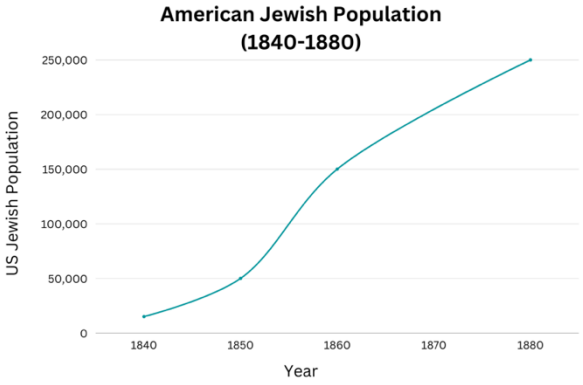

Figure 3. The US Jewish population increased greatly in the mid- to late-1800s, due in large part to immigration from Bavaria.

As a result of immigration from Germany, the Jewish population in the United States increased significantly, from only 15,000 to around 250,000 in the course of 40 years.[80] (Fig. 3)[81] The number of congregations increased from 6 to 50 with the majority following German-Ashkenazic custom rather than Sephardic.[82] At this point, Jews made up an outsized portion of the population in small towns in the West and South rather than concentrating in cities in the Northeast.[83]

During this period, changes also occurred for Jews in Europe. Between 1772 and 1795, the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth came under the rule of Prussia, Austria, and Russia.[84] Russia later gained additional Polish land following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. As a result, Russia controlled many of Europe's largest well-

[78] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 23.
[79] Hasia Diner. "A Time For Gathering: The Second Migration," (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 23.
[80] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 23.
[81] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 23.
[82] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 24.
[83] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 44; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 70.
[84] "On this Day, in 1795: the Third Partition of Poland was concluded," Kafkadesk, Updated October 24, 2020.

established Jewish communities.[85] Russian rule proved far harsher towards Jews than prior Polish-Lithuanian rule. Russia forced many into the Pale of Settlement between 1795 and 1897, a land including parts of modern Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine.[86] At the time, this region held the largest segment of the Jewish population in the world.[87]

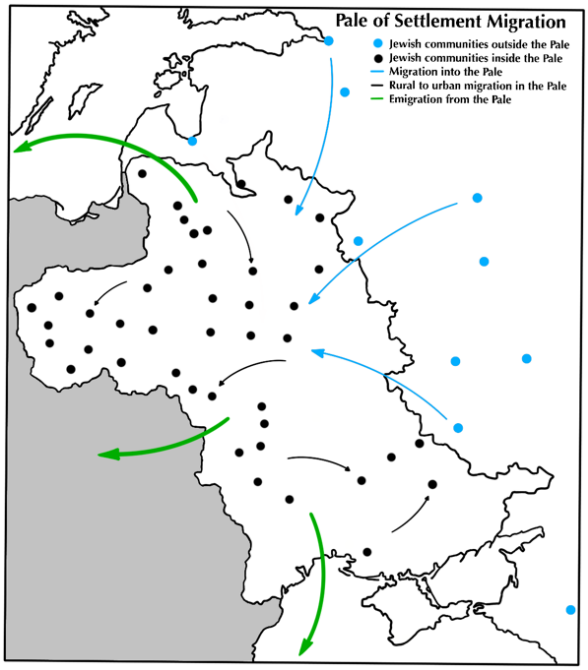

Figure 4. In Russia, Jews were forced to relocate to the Pale of Settlement and from rural areas to urban ones. At the same time, some emigrated to the United States, Ottoman Palestine, or Great Britain.

Alongside the rise in nationalism among other peoples in Europe, the Zionist movement began and, while Jews lived in Palestine prior to 1880, more began to move after this point.[88] At the same time, due to pogroms and anti-Jewish decrees in Russia, many residents of the Pale of Settlement chose to move to the United States.[89] (Fig. 4)[90]

Those who moved to the United States tended to settle in large cities, especially in the Northeast. By 1900, New York held the largest Jewish population of any city in the world[91] and, while Jewish institutions spread throughout Manhattan, the highest

[85] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 71.
[86] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 72.
[87] Rowland, Richard H. "Geographical Patterns of the Jewish Population in the Pale of Settlement of Late Nineteenth Century Russia." *Jewish Social Studies* 48, no. 3/4 (1986): 207–34. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4467338, 207.
[88] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 85.
[89] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 60; Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 76.
[90] Eliott Buyce adapted from Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 72, 76.
[91] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 153-4.

concentration sat in the Lower East Side, holding 64,000 Jewish families.[92] The Johnson Act ended this third wave of migration in 1921 by setting immigration quotas based on country of origin.[93]

Settlement

Eastern Europe

Halakhah & Customs. The creation of new movements within Orthodox Judaism altered the customs of some Jews in the way they viewed places of religious importance. The largest of these movements began in the 18th century when Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, also known as the Baal Shem Tov, worked as a preacher and healer, gathering a group of disciples from the kabbalists of the time.[94] The ideas of this group differed in key ways from other kabbalistic groups due to the emphasis on increasing access to mystical knowledge and anti-ascetic attitude.[95] By the late 18th century, this group had created a mass movement going by the name of Hasidism. The movement later split into different groups all centered around individual leaders called a *tzaddikim*.[96] Outside of Hasidism, the main physical centers of religious life were one's local synagogue and Jerusalem but within Hasidism this expanded to include the dwelling place and court of the *tzaddik*, important synagogues for current and past *tzaddikim*, and the graves of past *tzaddikim*.[97] Often Hasidim made pilgrimages to the court or grave of the *tzaddik*,[98] a practice uncommon in other Jewish movements.

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[92] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 84.
[93] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 79; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 153.
[94] Marcin Wodzinski. *Studying Hasidism: Sources, Methods, Perspectives* (Rutgers University Press, 2019), 1.
[95] Wodzinski, *Studying Hasidism*, 1.
[96] Wodzinski, *Studying Hasidism*, 1.
[97] Wodzinski, *Studying Hasidism*, 232, 236, 240, 242.
[98] Wodzinski, *Studying Hasidism*, 232, 240.

Appropriation & Differentiation. As in the Middle-Ages, Jewish communities adopted some aspects of popular Christian architectural styles of the time period. The Baroque style, associated with the Counter-Reformation, became particularly popular for decoration and furnishings within synagogues.[99] Migration also led Jews to bring different ideas about architecture to different places, for instance, several synagogues in Southern Germany featured a paint scheme common in western Ukraine.[100] One point of difference came from Jews tending to live in urban settlements while the rest of the population remained largely agricultural and rural.[101] Despite this difference, Jews and Christians lived interspersed rather than segregated.[102]

Safety. Pogroms occurred in Eastern Europe throughout the Modern Period both before and after the creation of the Pale of Settlement. For instance, the Chmielnicki Massacres lasted from 1648-1656 and hit towns all across the region.[103] After the creation of the Pale of Settlement, discriminatory legislation against Jewish residents reinforced the image of Jews as pernicious and untrustworthy, intensified the animosity between Jews and non-Jews, and worsened the material conditions of Jews.[104] As a result, these measures increased the likelihood of pogroms and hindered Jewish communities' ability to fund measures for self-defense.

The main protection for synagogues in this region consisted of avoiding attention and antagonism from non-Jews. As a result, these buildings used wood rather than

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[99] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 190.
[100] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 190.
[101] Steven T. Katz. *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (NYU Press, 2007), 34-5.
[102] Katz, *The Shtetl*, 35.
[103] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 56.
[104] Shlomo Lambroza. "The Tsarist Government and the Pogroms of 1903-06," *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 7, no. 3 (October 1987): 293.

masonry, displayed plain exteriors, and were sometimes hidden from view by courtyards or other buildings, often behind a house or within an apartment complex.[105]

Access to Resources. While the exteriors of synagogues tended to remain plain, the interiors exhibited ornate decoration, often fully painted in intricate detail with ceilings featuring mock vaulting, projecting cornices, and decorative friezes.[106] (Fig. 5) This dichotomy demonstrates many Jewish communities retained the resources to build ornate synagogues and simply chose to keep the exterior plain.

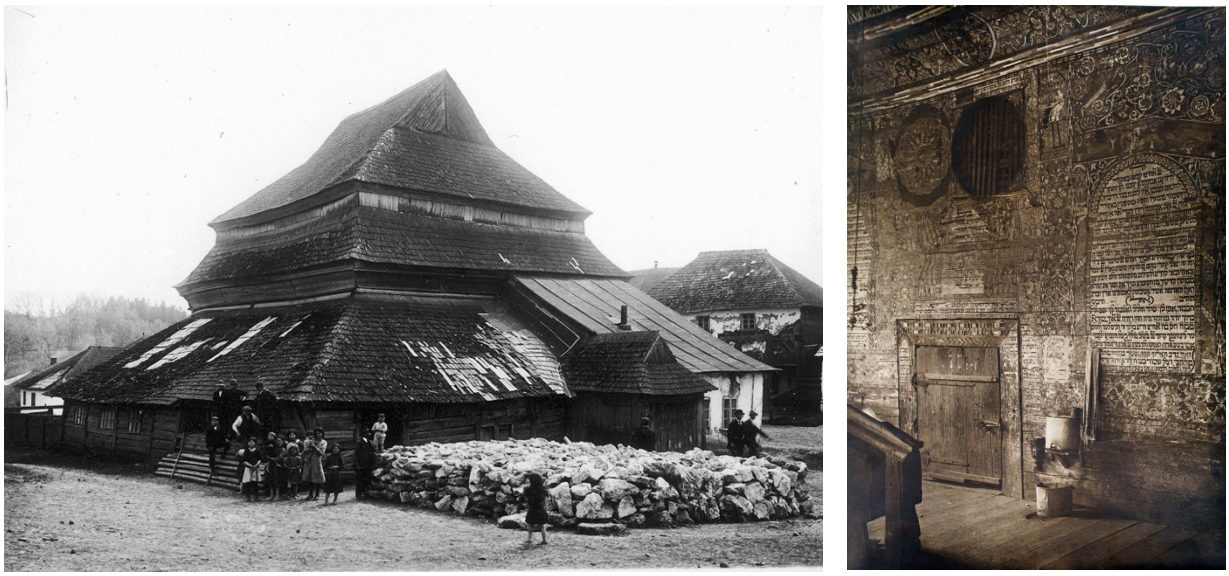

Figure 5. Gwoździec Synagogue exemplifies many in eastern Europe with its plain exterior and decorative interior.[107]

While some portray Jewish settlements in eastern Europe as having generated spontaneously and being disorderly, chaotic, and devoid of aesthetics,[108] this view lacks historical basis since sources describe the planning of these towns and historical maps display a grid structure in many,[109] demonstrating the government put resources into

[105] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 184-5.
[106] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 184.
[107] "Gwoździec Synagogue,"*wikiwand*, accessed February 22, 2023, https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Gwo%C5%BAdziec_Synagogue
[108] Katz, *The Shtetl*, 182.
[109] Katz, *The Shtetl*, 183-4.

planning these towns rather than building them in a disorganized fashion based on the whims of residents. Despite this, during the period when the Russian Empire forced Jews into the Pale of Settlement, many lived in poverty. Jewish organizations arranged eating houses, shelters, sites for fuel distribution, and monetary relief for impoverished Jews to relieve the situation.[110]

Legal Restrictions. In the Pale of Settlement, Tsar Alexander II sanctioned regulations on the Jews of Russia on May 3, 1882, known colloquially as the 'May Laws.' These laws decreed that Jews could not settle anew outside towns, boroughs, or existing Jewish agricultural colonies or buy, lease, manage, or sell property outside these areas.[111] The May laws remained in effect until 1917 with the end of Romanov dynasty.[112] Such laws restricted the economic and physical mobility of Jews in the Pale. As a result, they not only restricted the creation of new settlements but limited the development of existing ones.

North America

Halakhah & Customs. All the original synagogues of North America followed the Sephardic rite while most members came to be predominantly of Ashkenazic origin.[113] These kinds of communities differed significantly from those of the Old World. In Europe, Sephardim and Ashkenazim remained rigidly separate and Sephardim viewed themselves as superior to the poorer Ashkenazim, but in the colonies and, later, the United States, the two communities mingled freely and shared congregations.[114] As new

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[110] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 73.
[111] Herman Rosenthal. "May Laws," *Jewish Encyclopedia*, accessed February 13, 2023, https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10508-may-laws
[112] Rosenthal, "May Laws."
[113] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 15-6.
[114] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 15; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 19.

movements emerged, the populations of different areas held different levels of observance. For instance, the Reform movement held lower levels of observance while the orthodox movement held higher levels.[115] As a result, *Halakhah* differed in importance in the formation of different areas.

With the creation of these movements, congregants broke off, creating more synagogues serving overlapping regions. As a result, communities were rarely represented by a single synagogue and these congregations held less power within the community since they could no longer effectively fine or sanction members. If any particular synagogue attempted such tactics, one could simply leave for another congregation.[116]

Appropriation & Differentiation. Some German-Jewish immigrants were part of Reform Judaism,[117] a movement which sought to reconcile Jewish practice with modernity, though largely doing so by adopting Protestant practices such as holding services in English or German, playing the organ, delivering a sermon, and seating men and women together.[118] Since the traditional layout of a synagogue did not fit well with this format, Reform synagogues adopted a layout more similar to Protestant churches. Congregations moved the bimah to the front of the main hall, close to the Torah ark and set up pews facing a choir and preacher. In response, some in the Orthodox movement came to consider the central position of the bimah as a requirement,[119] differentiating themselves from both Christians and Reform Jews. Since Jewish immigrants from

[115] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 31-2, 60; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 185-6.
[116] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 60.
[117] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 31.
[118] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 27-8, 33; Sarna, *American Judaism*, 58.
[119] Fine, *Jewish Religious Architecture*, 191.

eastern Europe tended to be either Orthodox or secular, rather than Reform, their synagogues often followed the traditional model.[120]

At the same time, synagogues in the United States built in the mid-1800s differentiated themselves through their Moorish architectural style (Fig. 6). The differences between this style and those of mainstream American religious and secular architecture immediately marked a building as Jewish and acted as a statement that Jews in America maintained a connection to their history, present both before and outside America.[121]

Figure 6. Central Synagogue in New York provides an example of the Moorish revival style which characterized some mid-1800s synagogues and set their design apart from those of contemporary churches.[122]

Safety. Jews in North America lived in relative safety, a factor which prompted many from eastern Europe to immigrate.[123] As a result, while some Jewish

[120] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 62-3.
[121] Diner, *Second Migration*, 28.
[122] "Central Synagogue," *New York Architecture,* accessed March 16, 2023, https://www.nyc-architecture.com/UES/UES004.htm; Michelle Young. "Top 10 Secrets of Manhattan's Stunning Central Synagogue," *Untapped New York*, accessed March 16, 2023, https://untappedcities.com/2020/03/06/top-10-secrets-of-manhattans-stunning-central-synagogue/
[123] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 60.

neighborhoods in the United States were called 'ghettos,'[124] they were not walled off as the ghettos of Europe.

Access to Resources. Class played a large role in where people could settle, often influenced by how long one's family had been in the United States. This trend broke down into three stages of settlement, all located in different areas.[125]

Areas of first settlement were located in large cities and held the poorest residents. Such places acted a stronghold of Orthodoxy and accommodated traditional religious life well with a wide array of orthodox synagogues, kosher restaurants, Jewish newspapers and books in Yiddish and Hebrew, as well as Jewish schools.[126] While they acted as the first landing point for most immigrating Jews, thousands remained in these areas long-term and across generations. Those who remained tended to be poorer and more religious.[127]

Areas of second settlement generally remained in large cities but in a different part than those first settlement.[128] These areas held predominantly Orthodox synagogues with some modifications[129] in addition to some Conservative synagogues. These neighborhoods contained a few Reform synagogues, largely built by German Jews and rarely by eastern European Jews. These areas held the most Jewish residents between 1920 and 1930.[130]

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[124] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 81.
[125] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 83.
[126] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 83-4.
[127] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 83.
[128] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 84.
[129] Many of these congregations were modern Orthodox. In the first half of the 20th century, the views and practices of modern Orthodoxy were nearly indistinguishable from those of Conservative Judaism. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 237.
[130] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 84.

Areas of third settlement sat in Upper-class residential neighborhoods of either large or small cities. These areas held many Reform temples and few Orthodox synagogues or residents. In small towns, this area tended to blend with that of second settlement.[131]

Since Jews came to hold a generally higher economic standing in the 1920s and 1930s, communities built more synagogues. Between 1927 and 1937 the number of synagogue buildings went from 1782 to 2,851. These buildings became larger and housed more amenities for members such as an auditorium, gym, and classrooms.[132]

The Shoah

Migration & Mass Murder

In 1933, the Nazi Party took complete control of the German government as the only legal political party, forcing out all others through a mixture of threats, violence, and cajoling. By December, the government decreed all authority emanated from the *führer* and all ministers became his executive officers.[133] Within the year, 53,000 Jews emigrated from Germany although 16,000 returned due to hardship in the countries of arrival.[134] Those who waited longer found entry permits more difficult to obtain because countries only gave permits to those who proved they could financially support themselves but after paying additional taxes[135] and buying tickets, little money

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[131] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 84.
[132] Glazer, *American Judaism*, 85.
[133] Yehuda Bauer. *A History of the Holocaust*, Rev. Ed. (New York: Franklin Watts, 2001), 102.
[134] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 131.
[135] The Nazis blamed all Jews for the killing of Ernst vom Rath, a third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris. The killing was carried out by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old student living in Paris who had been trying to kill the ambassador after hearing about his family's mistreatment at the hands of the Nazis. Since mass arrests had been planned well before this event, party leadership took this as a convenient opportunity to begin mass actions against the Jewish population in Germany with the Kristallnacht pogrom. Tens of thousands of Nazis joined to burn synagogues, destroy other property, and physically abuse many Jews, killing at least ninety-one. Following the violence, the German government declared

remained. In addition, one could only buy small amounts of foreign currency at exorbitant exchange rates using Reichsmarks.[136] At the same time, legal employment options for Jews in Germany became increasingly restricted.[137] Those with the money to leave faced restrictions on where they could go since various countries restricted immigration of Jews from Nazi territory.[138] Despite the difficulty, Jewish emigration from Germany increased significantly in the late 1930s (Fig 7)[139] due to accumulating legal restrictions and mass violence.[140]

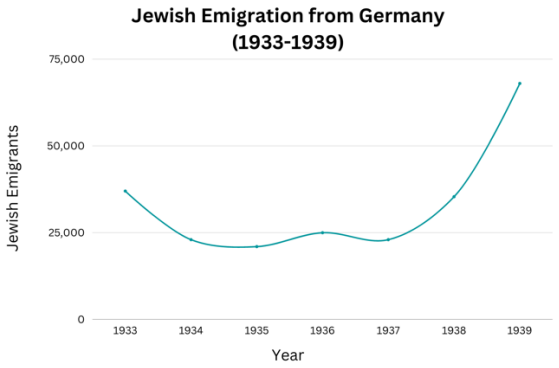

Figure 7. While Jewish emigration from Germany was high in 1933, fewer left in the years following. Once major legal restrictions and mass violence came about leading up to the 1940s, Jewish emigration spiked in response.

German territory expanded throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s. In March 1938, Germany annexed Austria, followed by the Sudetenland in September. By March 1939, Germany occupied the Czech lands and began laying the groundwork for an invasion of Poland by creating a partition agreement with the USSR. In September 1939, Germany defeated Poland and found itself in possession of the largest Jewish population in Europe.[141] In Poland, the Nazis began carrying out the Shoah.

Jews had to pay 1 billion Reichsmarks for the death of vom Rath and 250 million Reichsmarks for insurance benefits for their destroyed property. Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 116-7.

[136] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 132.

[137] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 109-10, 115, 117.

[138] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 100.

[139] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 118.

[140] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 118.

[141] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 105-6; Donald L. Niewyk, ed. *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation,* 3rd Ed. Problems in European Civilization (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), xxiv.

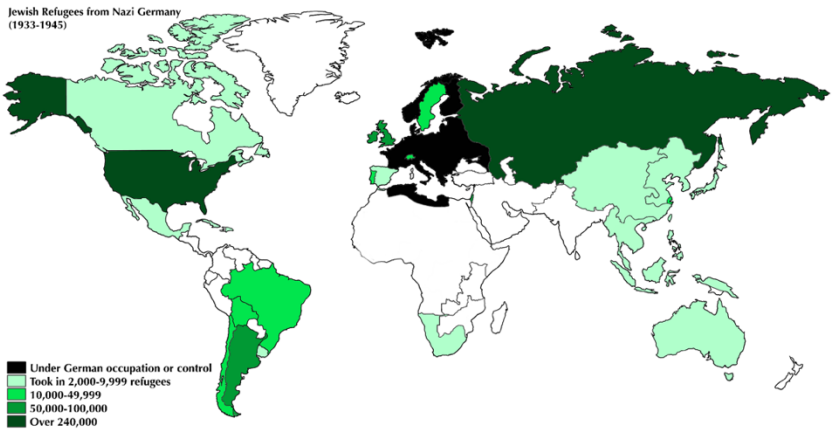

Figure 8. While many early emigrants from Nazi Germany settled in countries that were later occupied, those who went to ultimately safe countries tended to land in the US, USSR, UK, Argentina, or the British Mandate in Palestine.[142]

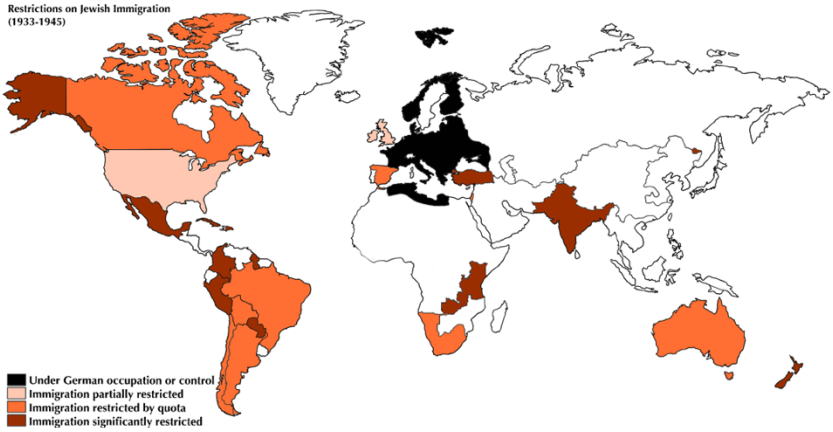

Figure 9. Many countries or regions had restrictions on immigration that prevented entry from Jews fleeing the Nazis. Some with partial restrictions or quotas also took in a large number of Jewish immigrants.[143]

The process of extermination began with the concentration of Jews from the countryside into larger cities. The authorities instructed leaders within these communities to take a census of the Jewish population, take responsibility for moving the population to the city, finding housing, and provisioning during transport.[144] At the same time, the Nazis burned down many old, wooden synagogues and houses while robbing and extorting their Jewish residents, destroying the physical remains of Judaism in eastern Europe.[145]

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[142] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 100.
[143] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 100.
[144] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 155-7.
[145] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 153.

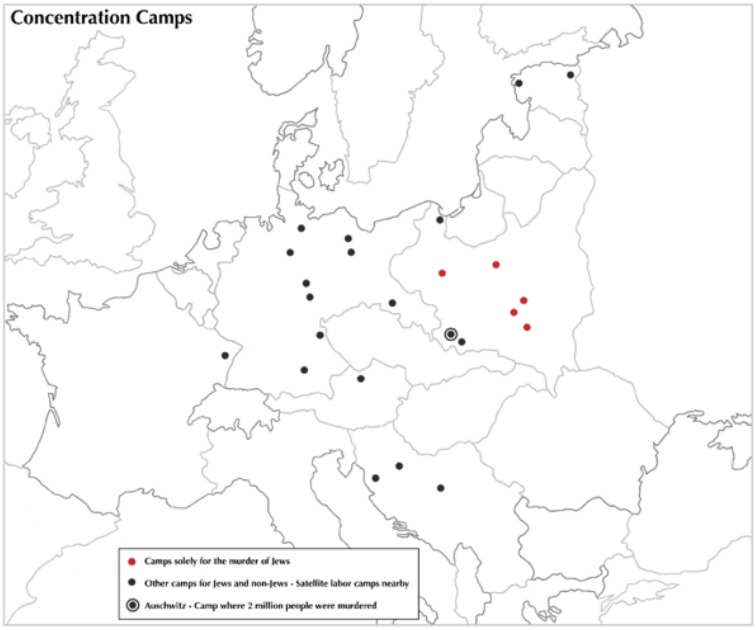

Figure 10. All the death camps were based in formerly Polish territory in addition to Auschwitz, the camp with the highest death toll.

After arriving in the city, the Nazis forced Jews into a walled- or fenced-off area dubiously dubbed the 'ghetto.'[146] These ghettoes served as sources of slave labor for the Nazi regime.[147] Towards the end of 1941, Nazis began the mass murder of all Jews in occupied Soviet territories using the Einsatzgruppen who shot each person individually, killing 1.4 million in this manner. Since this took a significant toll on those carrying out these murders, they began to switch to gas vans in December 1941.[148]

Prior to this point, in 1933, concentration camps had been set up to imprison dissidents and Jews who had police records, including offenses as minor as traffic violations. Although intended to fund the SS, the slave labor from these camps remained cost-inefficient, proving them an economic failure. Following the official decision on the "Final Solution" at the Wannsee Conference in 1942, the Nazis created death camps for the murder of Jews.[149] (Fig. 10)[150] Authorities moved those interned in ghettoes to transition camps, labor camps, concentration camps, and death camps

[146] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 160.
[147] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 183.
[148] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 225.
[149] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 115, 227-8.
[150] Eliott Buyce. Adapted from Richard Natkiel, ed. *Atlas of World War II* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2000), 12; Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 98.

where they awaited transfer to other camps, worked as slaves, were experimented on, and were killed, largely in gas chambers although also through labor, starvation, experimentation, and other methods.[151] (Fig. 11)[152]

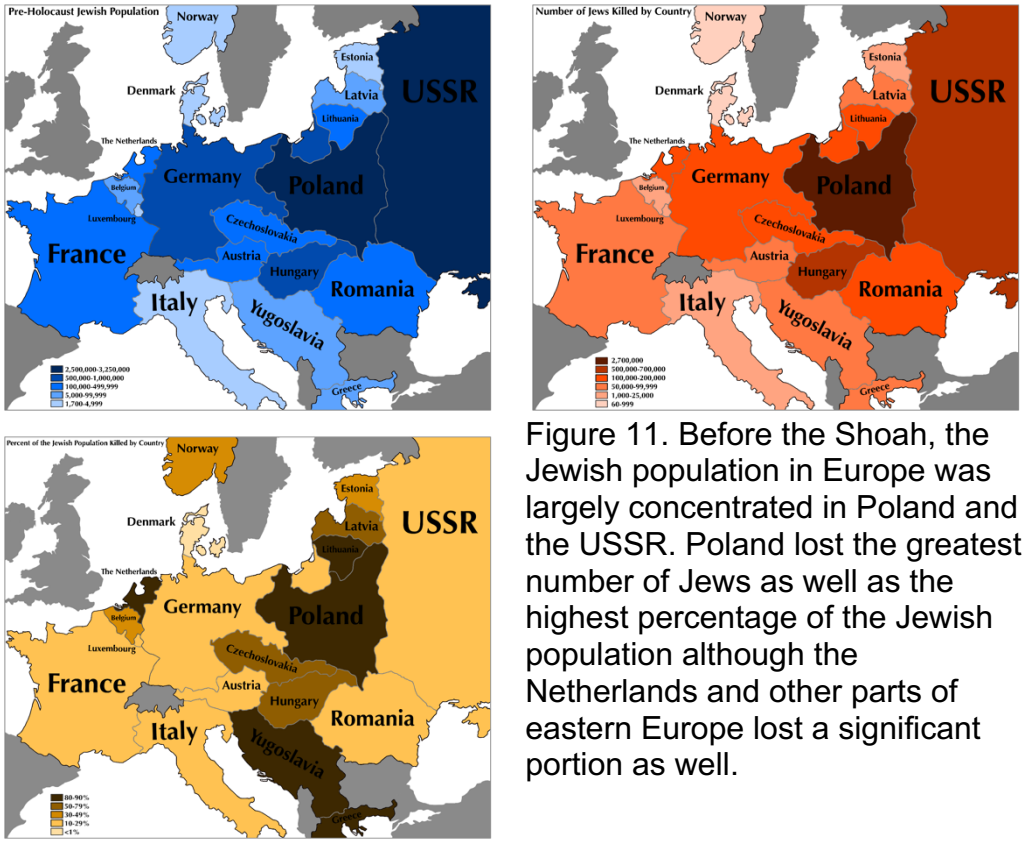

Figure 11. Before the Shoah, the Jewish population in Europe was largely concentrated in Poland and the USSR. Poland lost the greatest number of Jews as well as the highest percentage of the Jewish population although the Netherlands and other parts of eastern Europe lost a significant portion as well.

Settlement

The Warsaw Ghetto

Legal Restrictions. Nazi ghettoes differed significantly from those that came before. To call these spaces ghettoes is largely a misnomer. The ghettoes of the Nazis intended to isolate Jews from non-Jews and acted as a tool for persecution while the original ghettos served as a tool for Jewish community self-defense and never sought

[151] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 228-42.
[152] Eliott Buyce. Adapted from Natkiel, *Atlas of World War II*, 12; Niewyk, *The Holocaust*, xxiv.

complete isolation from their non-Jewish surroundings.[153] This isolation occurred in Nazi ghettoes since Jews were not legally allowed to leave the ghetto, hastily surrounded by a wall.[154]

The Nazis forbade public prayer in the Warsaw ghetto. Nevertheless, at least six hundred *minyanim*[155] met in secret, transforming apartments into synagogues.[156] According to Chaim Kaplan, a diarist and teacher,

> They pick some inside room whose windows look onto the courtyard, and pour their supplications before the God of Israel in whispers. This time there are no cantors and choirs, only whispered prayers. But the prayers are heartfelt; it is possible to weep in secret, too, and the gates of the tears are not locked."[157]

Although those held in the ghetto had little control over their physical surroundings, they repurposed existing buildings subtly to facilitate forbidden activities and in doing so changed the surrounding environment.

Access to Resources. Limited space in the ghettoes led to massive overcrowding. In the Warsaw ghetto, there were 15.1 people per apartment and between six and seven people per room. Overcrowding led to epidemics which were used as a justification for keeping Jews and non-Jews separate, claiming Jews were inherently more susceptible to disease.[158]

Residents of many ghettoes, including the one in Warsaw, formed underground organizations focused on social welfare, religion, education, culture, and politics. Some

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[153] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 169.
[154] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 170.
[155] Quorums for prayer made up of at least ten Jewish men, although more people are often present.
[156] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 192.
[157] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 192.
[158] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 160, 169.

of these organizations had been created before the invasions and were funded by the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a Jewish relief organization based in New York. After the United States declared war on Germany, funding continued through Zetos, a front organization for the JDC. These underground organizations and the funds from the JDC allowed for the creation of public kitchens, children's homes, and hospitals.[159] While these groups created 145 kitchens and 46 children's kitchens, the ghetto held far too many starving people to feed. The kitchens fed 135,000 meals daily while transports from other parts of Poland brought 150,000 additional Jews to Warsaw, leaving many without food.[160]

Safety. The safety of those in the ghetto often depended on hiding illegal organizations and activities from the Nazis, giving greater importance to inner courtyards and the rooms overlooking them since these areas sat away from public view, making them more attractive for gatherings for religious, educational, or political purposes.[161]

Political organizing in the ghetto eventually led to an uprising in response to the beginning of the mass murder of ghetto residents at Treblinka. These organizations also created a network of bunkers to hide the population in hopes that some may survive. People stayed in these bunkers for weeks while the uprising lasted a month. A few in these bunkers managed to escape to the Polish part of Warsaw through the sewers and survived.[162]

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[159] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 186-7.
[160] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 189.
[161] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 192.
[162] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 278-9; "In the Bunkers During the Uprising," Voices from the Inferno, Yad Vashem, March 21, 2013, https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/bunkers.asp

Refugees in the USSR

Access to Resources. Around 300,000[163] Jewish residents of the areas in Poland under Nazi occupation fled to the parts of Poland under USSR occupation. The sudden influx of refugees within a few months strained this region economically.[164] Authorities had also dismembered autonomous Jewish organizations that would generally help in these kinds of crises. Nevertheless, local Jewish communities in small towns offered food and housing. Families opened their private homes to refugees while broader communities offered synagogues and schools for housing as well. In addition, some created public kitchens.[165]

Since far more people fled to large cities, these areas often lacked the resources to provide for everyone. In Lvov[166] and Bialystok, the Jewish populations doubled,[167] quickly renting all available homes and rooms. These cities also used synagogues and schools for housing, but many resorted to theaters, railway stations, and parks as well.[168]

Legal Restrictions. While refugees moved into eastern Polish cities, the USSR also required housing for the personnel needed to defend against the Nazis, making them less likely to give housing permits to refugees when vacancies appeared.[169]

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[163] The exact figures for the number of refugees are unknown. 300,000 is the estimate of Bernard D. Weinryb and gained wide acceptance (Pinchuk, 1978, p. 145).

[164] Mark Edele, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed. Atina Grossmann, ed. *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 35-6; Ben-Cion Pinchuk. "Jewish Refugees in Soviet Poland 1939-1941," *Jewish Social Studies* 40, no. 2, March 1, 1978, 145.

[165] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 146.

[166] Now called Lviv

[167] Exact figures are unclear. Some have claimed the increase in the Jewish populations of Bialystok and Lvov was as low as thirty percent, although there is consensus that larger cities were the most popular destinations (Edele et al., 2017, p. 36-7).

[168] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 147.

[169] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 147.

At the same time, the authorities attempted to alleviate the poverty of the refugees by opening public kitchens although not enough to meet the needs of the population. At the same time, the JDC attempted to send money using polish currency to increase food relief, while the USSR declared the currency to be invalid in their territory, ending the project and making those who had not converted their funds destitute overnight.[170]

In the face of immense hardship, some decided to travel farther into the USSR, a practice encouraged by the government. In theory, this could spread out the burden of providing jobs and housing for the refugees and aid in their integration into Soviet society. Some found the conditions in the places they arrived to also be inadequate and returned to eastern Poland. Those who returned were invited to register for food and work although those who did so were arrested.[171]

Safety. The authorities came to view the refugees in eastern Poland as unwilling to adapt to Soviet life.[172] The government hoped to aid this situation by offering a path to citizenship, one rejected by most refugees, hoping to either return home or immigrate to other countries, often the United States or British Palestine.[173] Some even tried to move back to Nazi-occupied territory due to economic conditions, fear of deportation or imprisonment by the USSR, family connections across the border, and ignorance of what was happening in Nazi-occupied territory.[174] Some went as far as attempting to

[170] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 147.
[171] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 149-50.
[172] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 150.
[173] Edele et al., *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 43; Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 150.
[174] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 152.

register with the German commission sent to facilitate population exchange so they could go to western Poland and reunite with their families.[175]

The Soviet authorities viewed this as overt disloyalty and a potential threat to the country's international image.[176] At the same time, the government viewed these refugees as a potential security risk due to family ties across the border, attempted border crossings, and openly wishing to move elsewhere. As a result, some suspected the refugees of participating in espionage.[177]

Based on these suspicions, in June of 1940, all Jewish refugees in eastern Poland, including those who had accepted Soviet citizenship, were apprehended and sent to Siberia and Central Asia.[178] The majority of the deportees went to labor camps where they found high work quotas and some restrictions to movement but avoided the isolation of an ordinary prison.[179] This mass deportation inadvertently saved the lives of the refugees since the Nazis later occupied eastern Poland.[180] As a result, the inability of the Jewish refugees to protect themselves from the Soviet authorities led to their eventual survival.

The Postwar United States

Migration

The influx of refugees from the Shoah brought over 100,000 Jews to the United States, many more religiously observant than those of the past. While the second wave of migration in the late 1800s brought some that would now classify as Orthodox, the

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[175] Edele et al., *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 44; Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 152.
[176] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 153.
[177] Edele et al., *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 44; Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 153.
[178] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 153-4.
[179] Edele et al., *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 46-7.
[180] Pinchuk, *Jewish Refugees*, 155.

members of the Orthodox movement in the current United States largely trace their lineage back to eastern European refugees who left around the time of the Second World War.[181] Following this point, the main Jewish immigration waves to the United States ended.[182]

At the same time, patterns of internal migration in the United States shifted especially among white Americans. The main migration pattern among Jewish Americans in the postwar period followed this trend out of the cities and into the suburbs,[183] although this pattern has occurred at different rates for those from different movements.[184] Secular, Reform, and Conservative Jews led the first to move into the suburbs. The less observant Orthodox followed. Some of the centrist Orthodox then moved to areas with an existing Orthodox population. In contrast, the highly observant Orthodox (Haredim) remained almost entirely urban.[185]

Settlement

Halakhah & Customs

In response to mass suburbanization, some movements altered their approach to *halakhah*. In the Conservative movement, driving to and from a synagogue on Shabbat became permissible to allow suburban congregants to participate in services. This decision departed from traditional halakhic interpretation since turning on a car engine resembles lighting a fire, an activity prohibited on *Shabbat*.[186] Orthodox Jews took a

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[181] Samuel C. Heilman. *Orthodox Jews, the City and the Suburb*, Studies in Contemporary Jewry (Oxford University Press, 2000), 20.
[182] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 83.
[183] Dana Evan Kaplan, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 63.
[184] Heilman, *Orthodox Jews*, 19.
[185] Heilman, *Orthodox Jews*, 24.
[186] Kaplan, *American Judaism*, 64.

different turn by largely remaining in dense urban environments. In these areas, driving is not required to attend services and the proximity of other Orthodox Jews ensures access to kosher food, ritual articles, and Orthodox establishments such as schools. Those who decide to move into the suburbs often move to comparatively dense areas close to the city with existing Jewish populations.[187]

Access to Resources

Part of the difference in where those of different Jewish movements reside revolves around economics. As a result, while Orthodox Jews tend to live in more expensive regions, they also occupy less expensive parts of cities and some may have lacked the funds to move into the suburbs.[188] At the same time, Orthodox Jews remain the most reliant on Jewish establishments. The geographic dispersion inherent in suburbanization thins the economic base for these establishments and decreases the likelihood of their creation.[189]

Safety

The recent rise in antisemitic violence in the United States led to increased security in and around Jewish establishments, especially synagogues.[190] Many congregations hold a difficult balance between ensuring congregants both feel and are safe while also not making security measures overly obtrusive or unwelcoming.[191] Common modes of securing the building include locking entryways, using metal detectors, supplying panic buttons to staff, installing reinforced doors, bullet-proof

[187] Heilman, *Orthodox Jews*, 20-3.
[188] Heilman, *Orthodox Jews*, 19.
[189] Heilman, *Orthodox Jews*, 23.
[190] Maxim G. M. Samson. “White Noise and Unnecessary Evil: Balancing Security and Community in Synagogues,” *Contemporary Jewry* 41, no. 2, 438.
[191] Samson, *White Noise*, 444.

windows, and obstacles between areas with cars and those with people.[192] Some of these are visible to congregants while others are less obvious to ensure that people feel safe attending services while also not feeling as though they have entered a fortress.

The Modern State of Israel

Migration

Immigration During Ottoman Rule

The seeds for the creation of the State of Israel were sown well before 1948 both by Jews moving to the region and agreements made between European powers. Large-scale Jewish migration from Europe to Palestine began in the early 1880s with the First *Aliyah*.[193] Over the next three decades, the Jewish population jumped from around 25,000 to around 85,000. At this point, Jews made up 12 percent of the total population. The Jewish population of this region also became less geographically concentrated. Before the 1880s, two-thirds of Jews in Ottoman Palestine lived in Jerusalem while in 1914, only half lived in the city.[194]

The British Mandate in Palestine

During WWI, the British government announced support for the creation of a Jewish state through the Balfour declaration.[195] Following the end of the war, the League of Nations issued a charter of the Palestine Mandate for the British.[196]

In 1922, the British issued the first White Paper, declaring restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine among other promises.[197] Due to the quota and restrictions on

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[192] Samson, *White Noise*, 443.
[193] Bernard Reich. *A Brief History of Israel* (Washington D.C.: George Washington University, 2005), 14.
[194] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 14.
[195] Sami Adwan, Dan Bar-On, Eyal Naveh. *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, PRIME: Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (New York: The New Press, 2012), 8-9.
[196] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 16.
[197] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 32-7.

immigrants with no financial means, some came to the land illegally. Such measures became necessary for many Ashkenazim due to Hitler's rise to power although some immigration also came from Mizrachim especially from Iraq and Yemen.[198] In 1939, the third White Paper significantly restricted Jewish immigration allowing only 75,000 Jews to enter the land over the course of five years in addition to restrictions on land purchases from those already living there.[199] The same year, the Nazis defeated Poland and began the concentration of Jews in ghettoes.[200] While the third White Paper technically allowed 15,000 Jews to immigrate each year, in practice, the British never filled this quota for legal immigration. Due to the genocide in Europe, illegal immigration continued.[201] Following the end of the Shoah, the British opposed all new Jewish immigration to Palestine despite the Nazis displacing hundreds of thousands of Jews. Between 1945 and 1948, 70,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine illegally.[202]

In 1947, the British began the process of ending mandatory rule in Palestine and turned the issue over to the newly formed United Nations (UN). The UN proposed partition of the land to create a Jewish state and an Arab state along with an international regime for the area around Jerusalem due to its perceived holiness for both Jews and Muslims. The Yishuv accepted the plan while Arab leaders both in and outside Palestine rejected it.[203]

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[198] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 68.
[199] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 84.
[200] Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*, 105-6, 160.
[201] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 96, 102.
[202] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 37, 39.
[203] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 40-2.

The State of Israel

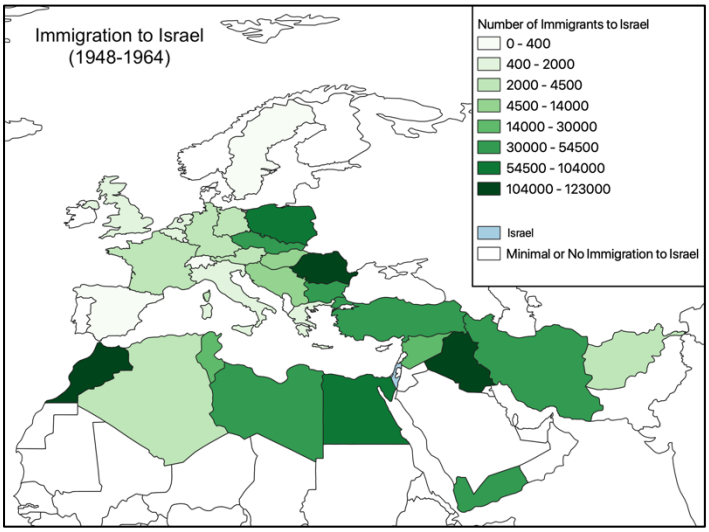

Figure 12. Morocco, Iraq, and Romania had the largest number of residents moving to Israel followed by other parts of the Middle East and eastern Europe.

Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948, the same day the British mandatory authority withdrew from the area.[204] The neighboring Arab states met the declaration with war and by 1949, Israel held more territory than the partition plan had originally granted.[205] In 1950, the State of Israel issued the Law of Return which allowed for nearly unrestricted Jewish immigration.[206] After this point, hundreds of thousands of Jews immigrated. Over 100,000 came from Europe and over 200,000 from other parts of the Middle East.[207] (Fig. 12)[208]

In 1967, following Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, the state occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem.[209] The same year the UN called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" with resolution 242.[210] Israeli forces continued

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[204] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 45.
[205] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 46-53.
[206] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 61-2.
[207] Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 110.
[208] Eliott Buyce. Adapted from Gilbert, *Atlas of Jewish History*, 110.
[209] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 90.
[210] Reich, *Brief History of Israel*, 94. Resolution 242 was written in an English version and a French version. The English version called for "withdrawal from territories" while the French version called for "withdrawal from *the* territories." Israel agreed to the English version, interpreting this phrasing to mean withdrawal from *some* of the occupied territories while Arab governments agreed to the French version, interpreting the definite article as calling for withdrawal from *all* occupied territories. Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 211.

occupation of the territories[211] until 1982 when Israel returned control of Sinai to Egypt.[212] (Fig. 13)[213]

A movement to settle in the occupied territories also began during this period. Gush Emunim, a group with messianic aspirations based around Jewish settlement throughout the Land of Israel, was established in 1974 and sought permission for permanent Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. By 2005, there were 145 settlements and 230,000 settlers. In August, the seventeen settlements in the Gaza Strip were evacuated, leaving 128 settlements in the West Bank.[214]

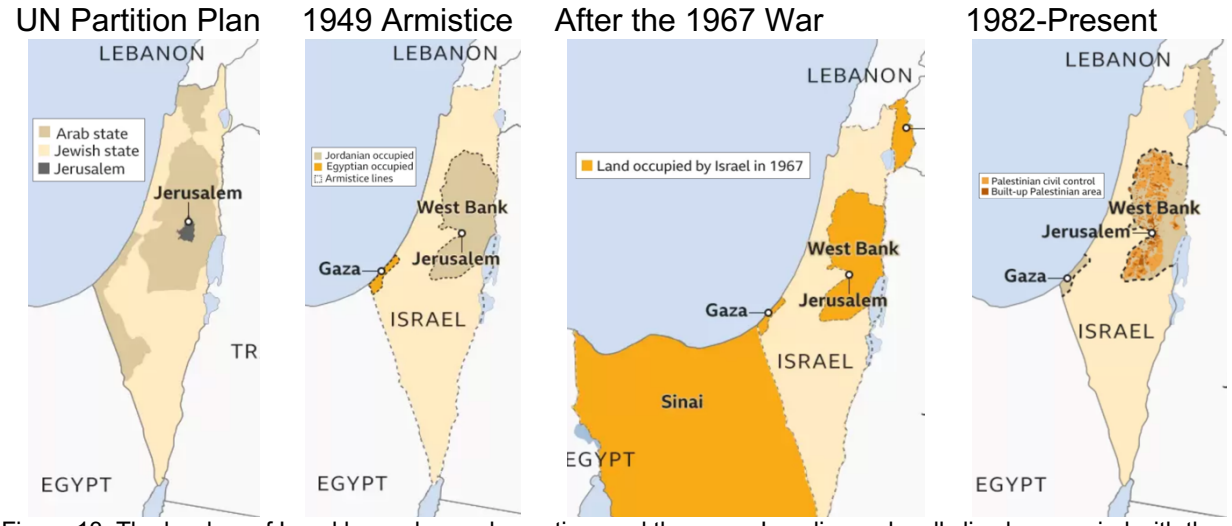

Figure 13. The borders of Israel have changed over time and the areas Israelis can legally live have varied with them.

Settlement

Halakhah & Customs

Among the Ashkenazim in Israel, levels of religiosity and observance of *halakhah* differ significantly ranging from Charedi to entirely secular. Some changes to the built environment have been made to allow for increased observance, especially as it relates

[211] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 211.
[212] William Claiborne. "Sinai Reverts to Egyptian Control Today," *The Washington Post*, April 25, 1982.
[213] "Israel's borders explained in maps," *BBC,* September 16, 2020.
[214] Adwan et al., *Side by Side*, 248-50.

to Shabbat. These include the construction of *eruvin* around areas with many who are religiously observant and elevators that stop at every floor on *Shabbat*, so the buttons need not be pressed.[215] Secular Jews make up around 50 percent of the Jewish population while Charedim make up around 10 percent with others falling in the middle.[216]

Appropriation & Differentiation

Jewish and Arab architecture hold some distinctive qualities.[217] At different points in time, Israeli architects have distinguished their buildings from those of Palestinians by building many from concrete and holding to modernist styles, often drawing on influences from Europe. Others sought to imitate Palestinian architecture. One way they did so was by covering a concrete building with stone from the area to give the building the appearance it was made of stone.[218]

In addition, linguistic objects mark space as Israeli, Palestinian, or mixed as part of a symbolic construction of space. The three major languages present in Israel are Hebrew, Arabic, and English[219] while the three main population groups are Jewish-Israelis, Palestinians with Israeli citizenship (Israeli-Palestinians), and Palestinians who rejected Israeli citizenship (non-Israeli Palestinians). East Jerusalem constitutes the

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[215] Peter Lintl. "The Haredim as a Challenge for the Jewish State: The Culture War over Israel's Identity," *SWP Research Paper* no. 14, Berlin: German Institute for International Security Affairs, December 2020, 20.

[216] Kelsey Jo Starr, David Masci. "In Israel, Jews are united by homeland but divided into very different groups," *Pew Research Center*, March 8, 2016.

[217] Mann, *Space and Place*, 75.

[218] Alona Nitzan-Shiftan "On Concrete and Stone: Shifts and Conflicts in Israeli Architecture." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 21, no. 1, 2009, 55-6.

[219] Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Elana Shohamy, Mohammad Hasan Amara, Nira Trumper-Hecht, "Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: The Case of Israel," *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2006), 11.

major center of non-Israeli Palestinians.[220] When items use only one language, Jewish areas tend to use Hebrew. Some Israeli-Palestinian areas also tend to use Hebrew although others tend to use Arabic. East Jerusalem uses only Arabic for single-language items.[221] When multiple languages are present, Jewish areas tend to opt for Hebrew and English, Israeli-Palestinian areas for Hebrew and Arabic, and East Jerusalem for Arabic and English. Palestinian localities, regardless of citizenship status, are more likely to display Hebrew, Arabic, and English all together than Jewish ones.[222]

Safety

The largest structures built to ensure Israeli safety are the wall and the roads. The wall sits almost entirely within the west bank and separates Israel and major Israeli settlements from some Palestinian towns and cities.[223] Those who are not Israeli citizens also face restrictions or outright prohibition against using the main arteries through the West Bank[224] for fear that Palestinians will use these to enter Israel or Israeli settlements. Those who wish to use the "restricted use" roads must obtain a permit which is denied over a fifth of the time. In addition, while on these roads, one must stop at military checkpoints. The separation of the road systems divides not only Israelis and Palestinians but also Palestinians from one another.[225] (Fig. 14)[226]

[220] Ben-Rafael, *Linguistic Landscape*, 12-3.
[221] Ben-Rafael, *Linguistic Landscape*, 17.
[222] Ben-Rafael, *Linguistic Landscape*, 17.
[223] "Map of the Separation Barrier in the West Bank," *B'Tselem*, February, 2008.
[224] "Map of Forbidden Roads in the West Bank," *B'Tselem*, August, 2004.
[225] René Backmann. *A Wall in Palestine*, trans. A. Kaiser (New York: Picador, 2010), 178-9.
[226] B'Tselem, *Separation Barrier*; B'Tselem, *Forbidden Roads*; Backmann, *Wall in Palestine*, 178-9.

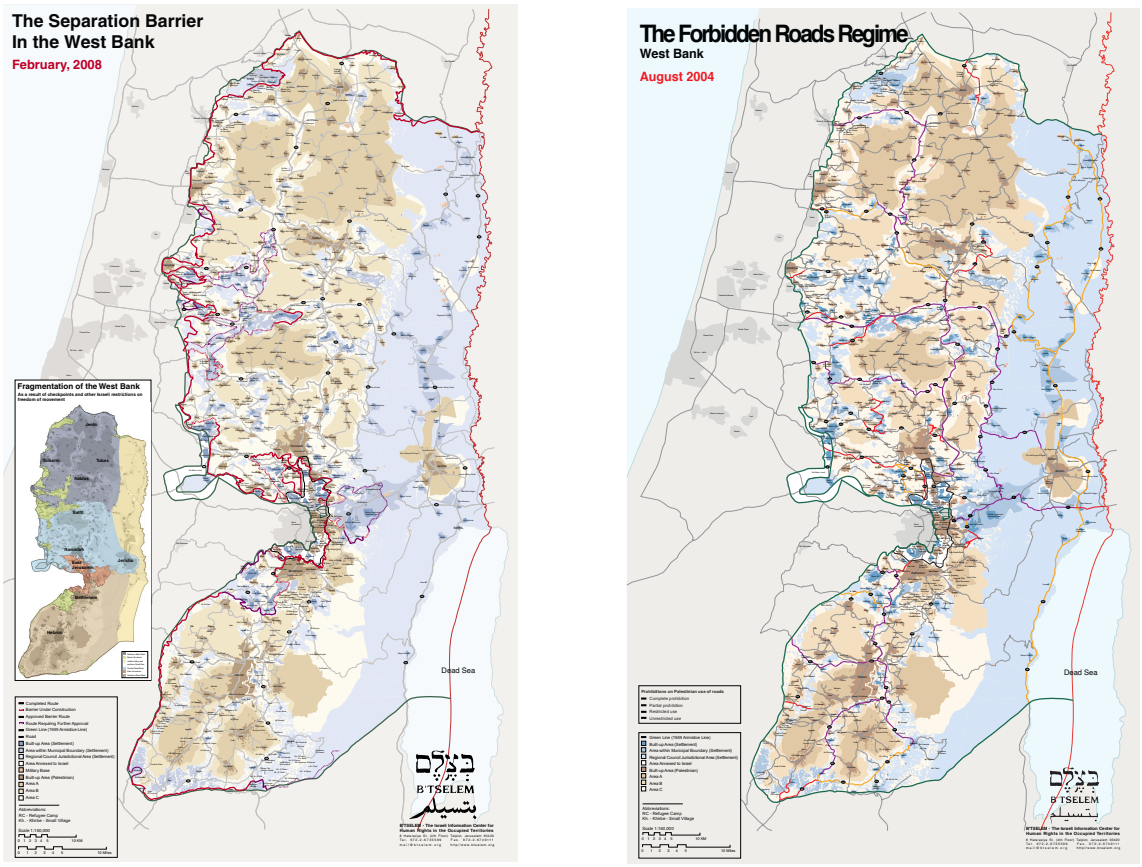

Figure 14. The wall, while intended for security purposes, also created a border that connects Israeli settlements to the State of Israel proper while separating them from Palestinian towns and cities. Both the wall and road restrictions work to split the territory of the West Bank and inhibit the movement of Palestinians.

Summary

Migration

The major push and pull factors in Ashkenazi Jewish migration revolve around economic conditions and antisemitism. Places with greater economic opportunity and fewer restrictions on the kinds of work Jews could engage in tended to entice people to move while legal restrictions and violence against Jewish communities pushed many away. In the Middle Ages, economic opportunity led Jews to move into central Europe and create a distinct Ashkenazi community. As the economic prospects of Jews in central Europe narrowed, and legal restrictions and antisemitic violence increased, large

swaths of the Jewish population moved east into Poland. In the Modern Period, legal restrictions led Jews from the German-speaking region to immigrate to the United States, later joined by others fleeing the poverty, legal restrictions, and mass-violence in the Russian Empire. During the Shoah, hundreds of thousands fled the genocide, largely heading for the USSR, United States, Argentina, and Palestine. After the war, the State of Israel declared independence and 100,000 Jews from Europe immigrated, often in search of a place where they may be safe. (Fig. 15)[227]

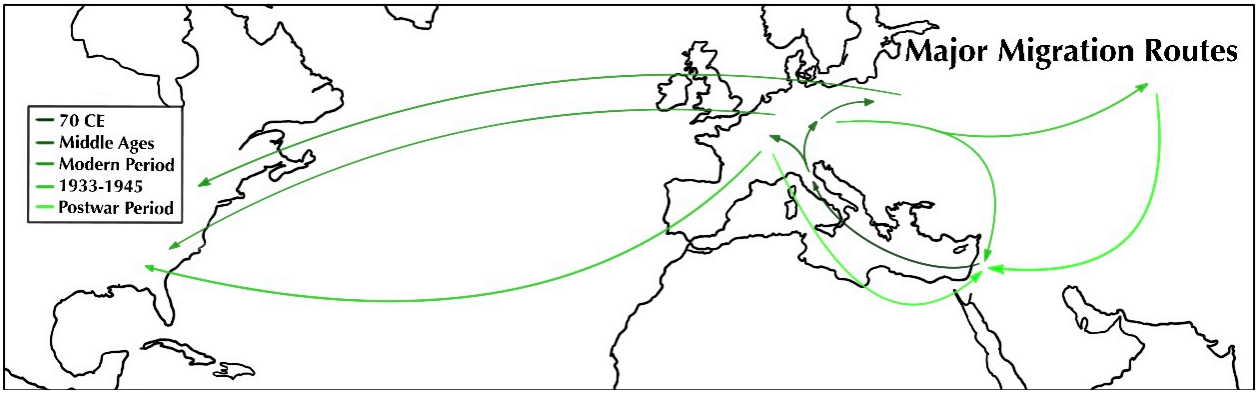

Figure 15. Overview of Ashkenazi and proto-Ashkenazi Jewish migration.

Settlement

Factors from both inside and outside Ashkenazi communities have shaped the settlements of this population. The need for safety, access to resources, and legal restrictions have been externally imposed while the tension between appropriation and differentiation and adherence to halakhic requirements came about internally. These factors held differing levels of importance throughout history. In times and places where the external factors dominated the lives of Jews, the internal factors played little role in the creation of Jewish spaces since when communities faced massive restrictions and safety and resources could not be guaranteed, religious requirements and borrowing

[227] Eliott Buyce. “Major Migration Routes in Ashkenazi History,” March 29, 2023.

and rejecting aspects of the surrounding culture became less important to the shaping of the built environment.

Significance of Findings

Nested Diasporas

The migration and settlement patterns of Ashkenazi Jews demonstrate the concept of nested diasporas. All Jews expelled from the Land of Israel by the Romans in 70 CE and their descendants formed the broader Jewish diaspora. Those who went to central Europe and created the Ashkenazi tradition became a diasporic community from southern Europe and the Islamic world. As such, they maintained some connection to their areas of origin more so than the surrounding Christians. Those who moved to eastern Europe maintained many parts of the culture of central Europe, including Yiddish, a language largely based on German. As often occurs with diasporic communities, each reacted to the changes in their surrounding environment and came to appear rather different from one another. Germany gave rise to the Reform movement which later grew significantly among the German Jewish diaspora of the United States. Poland saw little of this development and the main fault lines among Jews in this region came between Orthodoxy and secular political movements. After the Russian empire took control of this area and a large Russian Jewish diaspora began in the United States, the differing ideas and cultures of these two communities became evident. These differences, alongside class divides, led these groups to live in different communities, frequent different synagogues, and build different kinds of Jewish establishments. While both a part of the Jewish diaspora and Ashkenazi diaspora, their

differing positions as part of the German and eastern European diasporas led to differences between the communities they built.

Broad Application

While Ashkenazi Jews have been placed in a unique situation, the trend of dispersion, maintenance of a group boundary, and ongoing orientation towards a homeland fit neatly with many other diaspora communities.[228] These populations face distinct pressures both from the surrounding society and within their communities. At times, such pressures directly contradict one another.[229] These pressures and individual and collective responses to them have become increasingly important as international migration has increased[230] leading to growth in the size and influence of diaspora communities. Understanding patterns in the migration and settlement of one diasporic population in the past and present may lead to better planning for others in the future.

Conclusion

While many factors shaped the migration and settlement of Ashkenazi Jews, the extensive role of antisemitism remains striking. Legal discrimination and violence from both state actors and civilians played a significant role in where people left, where they went, and the places they built or were forced to inhabit. The through line of walls as both a tool of safety and subjugation creates complex questions of how to ensure measures intended for safety cannot be coopted for other ends. Questions also arise when these walls come down. How can groups integrate politically, economically, and socially without requiring complete cultural assimilation? While the answer to this

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[228] Butler, “Defining Diaspora,” 192.
[229] Pnina Werbner. “Theorising Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain.” *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 30, no. 5, September 2004, 895-911.
[230] McAuliffe et al., “World Migration Report,” 23.

question remains open, the continued existence of Jews as a distinct religious and ethnic community stands as a resounding triumph against the forces of both extermination and assimilation.