

Jewish immigration into Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries



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The Jews came to Britain in the 11th Century and formed small colonies. They were over-taxed and persecution began in earnest during the crusades under Richard I in the early part of the 12th Century with riots and massacres. The persecution reached a climax in around 1290 when King Edward I banished all Jews. The Jews then fled to France and Germany.

PushFactorsMarket day at the Pale of Settlement. Rzhishchev, Ukraine. Friends & Partners website. Accessed 05/02/04

The Russian Pogroms ('Pogrom' - mob attack approved by the authorities on the property and life of a religious, racial or national group.) Following the murder of Tzar Alexander II in 1881, there was a spate of pogroms (Russian for 'devastation') in Southern Russia. This resulted in large numbers of the Jewish population fleeing the country, some 90% to America.

Jewish Pogroms. Spartacus Educational Website. (2004). (1) 19th Century engraving of a Jewish Pogrom. (2) The Horrors of Human Ignorance. (3) More die in a Pogrom. Pictures courtesy of Friends & Partners website. (2004)

The term 'pogrom' is generally associated with attacks on Jews. Its origins can be found in Russia toward the end of the 19th Century following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by a young Polish student. " Under every kind of outrage they died, mostly at the door of their homes. They were babes, butchered at the breasts of their mothers. They were old men beaten down in the presence of their sons. They were delicate women violated and murdered in the sight of their own children". Reverend W. C. Stiles, preaching in Russia during a pogrom in 1903. The 'Doctor's Plot'

Stalin accused nine doctors, six of them Jews, of plotting to poison and kill the Soviet leadership. The innocent men were arrested and, at Stalin's personal instruction, tortured in order to obtain confessions. " Beat, beat, and again <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-immigration-into-britain-in-the-19th-20th-centuries/>

beat," Stalin commanded the interrogators. The Jewish Visual Library. (2004). The Doctor's Plot was the culmination of a sequence of events that began in the early part of the 19th Century. However, in 1948 another decision from the very top of Russian Government was made to crush Jewish culture. The Jewish Anti-fascist Committee was shut; all Jewish literature was removed from book-stores and libraries. The remaining Jewish schools were closed. Authors were arrested, as were actors and journalists. Jews holding positions of power were dismissed, as were teachers and lecturers at the universities. 25 leading Jewish writers were arrested and, it emerged later, secretly executed at Lubianka Prison during August 1952. This was the inauguration of Stalin's plan to clean up Russia. Subsequently, the nine doctors mentioned above were arrested and beaten into confession - the so called 'Doctor's Plot'. Luckily for them, the dictator died just few days before the start of the trial on 5th March, 1953. Economic decline. The Jewish were originally inn-keepers, street sellers, middle-men ; small merchants, traders, etc. With the caving in of this time-honoured market, along with growing intolerance, came the forcing of them into waning industries and outdated means of survival in the cities, or they were forced to live in deficiency in rustic backwater areas. A Russo- Jewish Pass authorising the holder to leave the Pale for 6 - 8 weeks at the most Friends ; Partners website. (2004) Pale of Settlement The Jews in Russia were confined to an area to the East known as The Pale of Settlement, and could leave only for short periods and only for legal and trade-related reasons. They required a pass for such journeys. It was an area on the western edge of the Russian Empire, " which comprised of about 15 'governments' in European Russia, and about 10 in the Russian part of the former Poland". LIPMAN, V. D. (1990). The 'Pale' was on the <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-immigration-into-britain-in-the-19th-20th-centuries/>

western Russian border between the Baltic and Black Seas, and ran mainly through Polish territory. The term 'Pale' refers to fences made of wood from which the boundary was marked with wooden 'pales'. 1.) 2.) 3.)1) According to the 1898 census there were 5, 378 water carriers in the Pale. (2) Making wine at the Ukraine Pale. (3) 2 Blacksmiths at the Pale. Online at www.friends-partners.org. accessed 05/02/04

In 1804 the establishment introduced a process branded 'The Dual Policy of Forced Assimilation' (Online at www.friends-partners.org) intended to drive the Jews out of the Pales and into the much larger cities. This was introduced because of the Jews' perceived destabilising of the existing feudal system. The Charter of Disabilities This is an 'umbrella term' for a series of restrictions placed upon Jewish activities and designed to 'disable' the Jewish success-train, rather than a well documented operation of Government. As with the 'Doctor's Plot' in the 20th Century, as outlined above, the idea was to make it as difficult as possible for the Jewish people to assimilate themselves into society. They were prevented from entering university, from holding any official jobs and from teaching. Pull Factors" In 1655, a Madeira-born rabbi, Menasseh ben Israel, presented a petition to Oliver Cromwell demanding that the Jews be readmitted to Britain. The outcome was one of no decision, though the three leading judges declared there to be no legal reason why the Jews should not be readmitted in to Britain. They continued..." the expulsion was of royal prerogative and there was, therefore, no statute to repeal". LIPMAN, V. D. (1990). Employment Employment was high on the Jews' priority list, especially when you consider the fact that of those Jews gainfully employed in Russia in 1897, only 5% were in the professions with some 18. 6% labouring. The 1901 census showed that of the 25, 000 plus Russo/Polish-

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born Jews living in London, a massive 90% (40% male & 50% female) worked in the tailoring, with the remainder working in the boot, shoe, and slipper and the furniture trades. (LIPMAN, V. D. 1990). Employment was sometimes offered by the more affluent Jews who had become established in society and sometimes held positions of power, yet this was frequently prepared on a short-term basis as 90% of the Jews who came to Britain did so en-route to America.

Housing Conditions Another pull factor was improved housing conditions. The already over-crowded Victorian Cities would have been squeezed to breaking point by the incoming migrants, the ongoing demolition and the scarcity of affordable rented accommodation. In 1885 The Royal Commission on the Housing of the working Class found, " a mass of evidence... that the pulling down of buildings inhabited by the poor, whether undertaken for philanthropic, sanitary or commercial purposes, causing overcrowding into the neighboring slums with the further consequence of keeping up high rents". (LIPMAN, V. D. 1990). Photograph showing destruction of home (Kishinev) following pogrom 1903. A typical sight in these times, and an immense Push & Pull factor. Online at www.friends-partners.org. accessed 05/02/04

This slumming was usually a transient measure upon first arrival in Britain. There was a tendency to move on to America as soon as enough money could be scraped together.

Education Education was usually offered both part and full time. Funding was eventually provided by way of British Government grants in the late 19th Century, but was only available to schools that submitted themselves to governmental inspections as the Gentile schools did. With the opening of credible Jewish schools in Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester in the mid-late 19th Century with a desire to help the poor Jews, the news spread and <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-immigration-into-britain-in-the-19th-20th-centuries/>

the number of pupils rose dramatically. Ease of Access There were no passport restrictions in Britain until 1901, so ease of entry would have been a deciding factor. It was close, and therefore passage would have been cheap. Britain had a tolerant community, at least to the point where the Jews were not being killed in the streets like in some other European countries. They were free to practice their faith without fear of violent reprisals. There had been an existing Jewish community for a number of years in London. There was work available, usually labouring, and if no work could be found, there was always the chance of the wealthier Jews supplying clothing and safe passage to America. Conclusion The racist feeling in Britain really kicked off in 1901 with the forming of the BBL (British Bros League) which came about as the result of inaccurate information, "... 90, 000 Jews had settled in Britain in the first nine months of 1901". SCHAMA, S. (2001). The 1901 census report estimated the figure to be more like 30 aliens per 1000 indigenous. Further, historian V. D. Lipman suggested the true figure to have been confused with the total number of those arriving to settle, and those arriving 'en route' to America. So the real figure of those Jews arriving and settling in Britain between 1881 and 1905 was about 100, 000. High rents, poor, cramped and therefore unhealthy conditions. Sometimes there was more than one family to a room, with exact demography unreliable due, in part, to inaccurate information, and dishonest landlords who deliberately mislead when completing the census forms so as to avoid entering the correct figures of tenants housed in their crumbling properties. It is not difficult to see the perpetual persecution experienced by the Jews.

Maltreatment extending back to the early 11th Century in Britain, then in Spain and Portugal, and more recently (and for a prolonged period) in Russia. <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-immigration-into-britain-in-the-19th-20th-centuries/>

The Jews consider themselves to be 'The Chosen Ones' yet are considered by a sizeable number of the world's religions to be sub-human. The reasons for this attitude toward an entire race are, at best, tenuous, and at worst, laughable. The Jews have advised world leaders on financial strategies and means of supporting far away wars, have financed crusades and battles throughout the centuries, and yet they are still hounded.