Medieval Jewry in Northern France
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THE REIGN OF Philip the Fair was plagued by the problems of periodic warfare and the heavy strains which military campaigning imposed on the royal Treasury. During the last years of the thirteenth century, general taxes were widely levied, based on the new and often resisted principle that all inhabitants of the kingdom bore the obligation of aiding in the defense of the realm. This innovation elicited strenuous objections and, as a result, the government reverted to the older view of military taxation as commutation of the personal obligation to fight. This shift caused a serious drop in royal revenues. It is against this background of continued needs and limited resources that the expulsion of French Jewry in 1306 must be seen.¹

Certainly precedents for such an expulsion were available. The banishment of 1182 at the hands of Philip Augustus had probably not been forgotten. It was, however, unnecessary to conjure up such distant recollections. The late 1280’s and the early 1290’s had seen a series of

expulsions, including one from the entire kingdom of England. These precedents served a number of purposes. In the first place, they simply made wholesale expulsion a feasible act and a viable option. Philip did not have to take upon himself the burdensome onus of innovation. In the second place, the prior expulsions served as a clear indication of the potential profit in banishing the Jews. In these earlier incidents, a number of techniques had been developed. In some instances, the simple expedient of confiscation of the Jews' real estate and the debts owed them was invoked. In others, the animosities of the Christian populace and the widespread desire to see the Jews evicted were exploited, with the local residents taxed for the privilege of having their Jewish neighbors removed. Whatever the technique, the precedents of the late 1280's and early 1290's promised substantial profit to a government perpetually in need of new funds.

An important factor in the royal decision was unquestionably the climate of opinion regarding the Jews. While public sentiment was never pro-Jewish in medieval Christendom, the intensity of anti-Jewish animus did vary, and the deeper the hostility the more easily executed a general expulsion. In fact, at those points at which feelings against the Jews ran high, the king or baron contemplating banishment could hope for both immediate financial gain and significant popular approbation. In this regard, the climate was propitious in the early fourteenth century. We have already noted the proliferation of new anti-Jewish motifs during the last decade of the thirteenth century. The number of localities clamoring for a prohibition of Jewish settlement was on the rise. Perhaps the most striking expression of strong anti-Jewish sentiment was the willingness of the inhabitants of some western French principalities to pay for the privilege of having the Jews expelled from their territories. Philip the Fair and his advisors must certainly have felt that a broad expulsion of the Jews would be greeted with widespread enthusiasm throughout their kingdom. While not a motivation for the expulsion, this popular support undoubtedly made the move a much more appealing one for the royal authorities.

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2See above, chapter 5.
4See above, chapter 5.
5Ibid.
6Ibid.
EXPULSION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Related to this is the availability of charges against the Jews, which could serve as rationalization and legitimization for an act that was essentially one of despoliation. As is the case for most major expulsions of this period, the decree itself has not survived. The one significant contemporary edict of expulsion which is available is that issued by Charles of Sicily for the counties of Anjou and Maine. In that decree, it will be recalled, heavy emphasis was laid upon the misdeeds of the Jews, despite the influence of discernible economic considerations.\(^7\) It seems quite likely that the expulsion of 1306 was similarly overlaid with a veneer of ostensible piety.

The precise details of the events of mid 1306 are difficult to unravel. There is no extensive Hebrew material on this expulsion; the Latin chronicles are sketchy in their description; and the documentary sources are concerned almost exclusively with the efforts to realize revenues in the wake of the banishment. A number of Latin accounts do indicate that there was a sequence of royal moves against the Jews, beginning with a general arrest, moving to a confiscation of goods, and culminating with expulsion.\(^8\) This was not the gradual progression of actions initiated by Philip Augustus in the early 1180's; in 1306 the three stages followed quickly one upon the other, with the climactic act of expulsion obviously in mind throughout.

The initial arrest of the Jews seems to have been intended to prevent concealment of goods or funds; the government was interested, above all else, in maximum revenue from the expulsion and despoliation of the Jews. There are reflections of this earliest stage of the royal program in the *Journaux*. The *Journaux* records for February 10, 1308, indicate the payment of over 270 pounds to a knight named Hugo de Cella for his expenses in the seizure of the Jews of the bailliage of Bourges. The period of Hugo's efforts is specified as 151 days, stretching from early June through early November.\(^9\) The arrest of the Jews thus seems to have been underway already in early June. The date widely assigned as the terminal point of the expulsion is the Feast of Mary Magdalene, falling on July 22.\(^10\) The first extant order for sale of Jewish goods stems from August 18, 1306. A memorandum to the bailiff of Tours stipulates that he is to begin selling the goods of the

\(^7\)Ibid.
\(^8\)See, for example, *RHF*, vol. 21, pp. 647, 716; vol. 22, p. 19.
\(^9\) *Journaux*, item no. 5874.
\(^10\)See, for example, *RHF*, vol. 21, pp. 139, 716, 811.
Jews of his bailliage.\textsuperscript{11} By this time, it is likely that almost all the Jews had made their exit from France.

The order established vaguely by the chronicles does then seem to be substantiated. The opening action was an arrest of the Jews, begun in early June 1306. This involved essentially a confiscation of Jewish goods, with an attempt to see that no valuables or useful records would be hidden. At this time a date for the exodus of the Jews was established. With the actual expulsion of the Jews completed by late July or early August, the arduous task of selling Jewish possessions and collecting Jewish debts began.

As noted already, the expulsion of 1306 was not the first banishment ordered by a Capetian monarch. It had, moreover, been foreshadowed by a series of similar edicts in neighboring territories during the last decades of the thirteenth century. Despite twelfth-and thirteenth-century precedents, however, the expulsion enacted by Philip the Fair was by far the most significant suffered by medieval Ashkenazic Jewry to date. The expulsion of 1182 had been serious enough, but between 1182 and 1306 the territory of royal France had grown enormously.\textsuperscript{12} In addition, royal prerogatives had expanded as well. Thus, in 1306, Jews were expelled not only from the royal domain; they were simultaneously banished from a number of important adjacent seigneuries.\textsuperscript{13} The result of the development of royal territory and royal power was that vast areas were now affected by the royal decrees. In this respect, the expulsion of 1306 also overshadowed the edicts of the late 1280’s and early 1290’s. The banishments from Gascony, Anjou, Maine, and even England did not begin to compare in scope to that decreed by Philip the Fair.

The extensive areas included in the edict of Philip IV imposed double hardship on the Jews: large numbers of Jews were uprooted and the process of finding new homes was complicated by the long distances to be traversed before reaching territories open to Jewish settlement. The number of Jews expelled in 1306 is impossible to specify. The observation that it was double the 600,000 supposedly banished from Egypt in Biblical days can only serve as an indication of the fourteenth-century

\textsuperscript{11}Siméon Luce, “Catalogue des documents du Trésor des Chartes relatifs aux Juifs sous le règne de Philippe le Bel,” \textit{REJ} 2 (1881), doc. no. 46.

\textsuperscript{12}Auguste Longnon, \textit{Atlas historique de la France} (Paris, 1888), maps 12, 13, and 14; idem and H.-François Delaborde, \textit{La formation de l'unité française} (Paris, 1922).

sense of significant numbers and of terrible tragedy. A recent study of late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Jewish population in royal France suggests a figure somewhere between 45,000 and 125,000 Jews. Precisely how this would be broken down in terms of northern and southern France is not clear. In a vague and general way, we can only conclude that the number of Jews expelled was significant, certainly far larger than the number involved in earlier French and English expulsions, and that a substantial portion of those expelled must have been northern French Jews, long-time residents of the area under study.

The direction taken by the banished Jews is also not totally clear—again a result of the lack of sufficient Jewish source materials. It seems quite likely that the Jews of the north and those of the south, heirs to differing historical traditions and diverging links with neighboring Jewish communities, probably chose separate havens as they made their way out of France. The Jews of the south seem to have opted to remain in Mediterranean lands. The Jews of the north, on the other hand, seem to have held fast to their Franco-German orientation. Flight westward was of course impossible, since England had already been closed to Jewish habitation. The only real option then was movement eastward into imperial lands. A tangible indication of movement in this direction comes from the tax records for Bar-le-Duc in 1321, revealing the presence of numerous Jews of northern French provenance. Some of the localities from which these Jews originated include Arzillières, Doucey, Épense, Nangis, Rosières, Senonches, and Trainel. While movement eastward allowed northern French Jewry to remain within the ambiance to which it had become accustomed and particularly to associate itself with Jewish communities whose life styles it shared, immigration into the German lands meant some very serious hardships.

As was the case for all such medieval expulsions of the Jews, those Jews unwilling to face the disheartening prospect of establishing new homes did have one significant alternative. Conversion to the Christian faith always saved the individual Jew from the rigors of banishment. Given the signs of some conversion among the Jews of late-thirteenth-

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14 Levi b. Gerson, Perush al ha-Torah, commentary on Leviticus 26:38. In Shevet Yehudah, the observation is ascribed to R. Levi b. Gerson but is cited mistakenly as part of his commentary on Numbers 23:10. Curiously, Samuel Usque transfers this estimate to the expulsion of 1182; see his Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel, trans. Martin Cohen (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 177; 316, n. 28.


MEDIEVAL JEWRY IN NORTHERN FRANCE

century northern France, such action would not have been unthinkable. One of the Latin accounts of the expulsion does mention baptism on the part of Jews but indicates that it was not widespread.\(^{17}\) This cautious description, coupled with the total silence of the remaining Christian sources and the lack of reference in the scanty Jewish materials, makes it plausible to conclude that conversion was in fact an option selected by only a few Jews.

By August 1306 French Jewry no longer existed. Those committed to remaining in France had ceased being Jewish; those committed to remaining Jewish had left French soil. For the government, however, the effort and the profit associated with the expulsion had just begun. Royal records from the first decades of the thirteenth century indicate how intensive the royal campaign to exploit Jewish wealth was.

Robert Mignon, writing in the early 1320's, devoted an entire section of his catalogue of royal accounts to those rolls dealing with the expulsion of 1306.\(^{18}\) The records relating to the sale of Jewish goods and the realization of Jewish loans are grouped by baillie and \textit{prévôté}, beginning with the territories of the north and working southward. For our sector of France this includes the areas of Paris, Senlis, Virmandois, Amiens, Sens, Orléans, Bourges, Tours, Rouen, Caux, Caen, Coutances, Gisors, Troyes, Meaux, Vitry, and Chaumont. Mignon lists a total of twenty-two separate accounts for this area alone, with clear indication that his list is far from complete. Mignon makes it obvious also that the process of collecting and reporting the sums raised stretched over a long period of time. The earliest of the accounts dates from 1307; the latest were audited in the mid 1320's, almost two decades subsequent to the expulsion of 1306 and after a recall of the Jews and a second expulsion had intervened. In a number of instances, Mignon specifies the existence of more than one account for a particular baillie, indicating a series of attempts to hunt down all possible income from the Jews. Mignon also reflects a very careful auditing of the original reports, showing extensive concern for full disclosure by responsible royal officials of all revenues. In view of the cases of malfeasance documented elsewhere, the careful checking described by Mignon was far from superfluous.

Unfortunately, Mignon is rarely precise about the sums realized in the various baillages. In fact, in only one instance does he specify the total revenue recorded in a particular account.\(^{19}\) Clearly, however, in

\(^{17}\) \textit{RHF,} vol. 21, p. 647.
\(^{18}\) Mignon, item nos. 2125–80.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., item no. 2137.
many instances the sums collected and carefully documented were substantial. Indicative of this is Mignon’s report that the account for Jewish goods in the bailliages of Troyes and Meaux showed almost 60,000 pounds still owed by the responsible royal officials. The account for Jewish goods in the baillage of Vitry showed 22,694 pounds still owed, while that for the baillage of Chaumont reveals 21,978 still unpaid by the royal collectors. In the absence of more precise information, we can only conclude that the efforts partially reflected in the accounts described by Mignon must have involved substantial income for the royal coffers, over a period stretching from 1306 through the early 1320’s.

Mignon indicates that the revenue realized from Jewish wealth fell basically into two classifications. Many of the rolls detail the revenue from Jewish possessions, that is, from sale of Jewish movable goods and of Jewish real estate; others record income from Jewish debts assiduously collected by royal officials. Each type of income presented its own problems.

Many of the documents dealing with the aftermath of the expulsion are deeds of sale. One of the most important bureaucratic activities subsequent to 1306 was the effort to sell Jewish holdings and to turn real estate into the always-needed ready cash. The substantial documentation shows sale of many Jewish communal possessions, such as synagogues, schools, and cemeteries. There is, in addition, disposition of private holdings as well, including homes, fields, and vineyards. In some instances the sums realized from these sales were high. The most valuable single parcel of Jewish land was the Jewish cemetery of Paris, valued at 1,000 pounds. The high assessment of well-situated land in the rapidly growing capital is not surprising. The Jewish cemetery at Sens, along with an adjacent house, was sold for 400 pounds, and the cemetery at Mantes was appraised at 200 pounds. While communal facilities usually fetched the highest prices, private dwellings also proved extremely valuable. Thus a 1313 document records the sale of a particularly well-situated and probably well-built Jewish home in Provins for 400 pounds.

Sale of Jewish property was an arduous task, involving the energies of a plethora of royal agents. Equally important, however—and perhaps more difficult—was the attempt to collect the debts owed the expelled

20 Ibid., item nos. 2151-53.
21 Registres, doc. no. 1427.
22 Luce, “Catalogue des documents,” doc. no. 75; Registres, doc. no. 560.
Jews. The prerequisite for effective realization of these debts was, first of all, the availability of adequate records. With the early-fourteenth-century royal retreat from support of Jewish lending, governmental information on Jewish loans may have dwindled. Thus the confiscation of Jewish records became extremely important and was a major goal of the seizure of the Jews and their assets which took place prior to expulsion. Royal officials were brutally indiscriminate in sequestering Jewish documents, with no distinction drawn between business and personal affairs. Thus, one of the major legal questions to arise in the wake of the expulsion concerned women whose marriage contracts had been seized along with their husbands' business deeds.

While the materials impounded included in some instances governmentally drawn-up charters, in most cases they were far less formal. Examples of confiscated Jewish business books have survived from the neighboring duchy of Burgundiy. While the details of Jewish bookkeeping at this stage are obscure, it is obvious that the Jewish notebooks must have presented very serious problems to those royal agents striving to use them for the practical purpose of collecting pre-1306 debts. Given the difficulties involved in utilizing the Jewish records and the normal propensity of debtors to avoid payment, we can readily comprehend the dimensions of the dilemma that plagued royal officialdom.

Legislation of 1310 and 1311 reveals some of the issues which hounded the king's collectors. On January 11, 1310, Philip made his first major pronouncement on the collection of Jewish debts. He ordered, first of all, that debts more than twenty years old were to be held invalid. The assumption governing this clause was that such old debts were likely to have been paid at some earlier point. More significant was the series of provisions made for proving that less antiquated debts had been repaid. These stipulations provided that (1) a combination of the debtor's possession of the loan instrument along with his oath that the obligation had been discharged would constitute sufficient proof of payment; (2) a pre-1306 Jewish memorandum indicating discharge of the debt would alone suffice as proof of payment; and (3) in cases involving less than ten pounds, the oath of a debtor of good reputation plus the testimony of a trustworthy witness would void the obligation. A third major item in the legislation of 1310 was the disa-

24 See above, chapter 5.
25 Abba Mari of Lunel, Minhät Kenaot (Brody, 1837), p. 179.

198
vowal of usury. The brief mention of this issue raises the suspicion that it was simply an empty gesture made in the direction of Church sensitivities. In view of the very complicated procedures and the extensive bureaucratic activities occasioned by Louis IX's serious attempt to free his government from the moral stigma of profit from usury, the curt provision of Philip rings hollow. Finally, imprisonment and violence were rejected as methods for the collection of unpaid obligations. The edict of Philip reflects some very serious agitation on the part of—or at least on the behalf of—the debtors of France. Some amelioration of the lot of these debtors was provided, at least as regards easier avenues for proving repayment of a debt and exclusion of cruelty in the collection of unpaid obligations. Elimination of interest seems far less likely.

While the edict of 1310 reflects basically the complaints of the debtor class and the accommodations made by the government, legislation enacted the following year reveals some of the more extreme expedients adopted by royal authorities in gaining the information necessary for full collection of debts. As a result of the grievous state of documentation and in light of the possibility of claims, just and unjust, that the obligation had already been discharged, the government decided to utilize the testimony of those witnesses best able to decipher the Jewish records and to refute unwarranted assertions of prior payment—namely, the Jews themselves. It is unclear precisely when the utilization of Jews for the purpose of clarifying obligations still owed began. The royal order of August 22, 1311, indicates that the practice was already in existence. In this edict, the inducement for Jewish return is spelled out. The Jews were offered one-third of the income collected with their aid. This is again reflective of the serious problems encountered by the government in enforcing Jewish debts. The willingness to forgo 33 percent of the profits is a significant gauge of the government's growing sense of futility. Actually, the edict of August 1311 represents ostensibly the termination of this partnership in loan collection and in fact proclaims the end to all enforcement of Jewish debts except those extremely well-established. The expulsion of the Jews recalled to aid in debt collection, the disavowal of further attempts to enforce obligations owed the Jews, and the call to all royal commissions to cease activities and to report their income looks again like a major victory for the debtor class.

MEDIEVAL JEWRY IN NORTHERN FRANCE

In fact, however, the efforts to collect Jewish revenue continued. As noted already, the records described by Mignon show collection and auditing going on well past 1311, in fact down into the 1320's. Indeed a key stipulation of the charter extended to returning Jews by Louis X in 1315 provided that these Jews be permitted to claim debts owed them prior to 1306, with the Jew receiving one-third of the sum collected and the government two-thirds. This is, of course, precisely the arrangement noted earlier. It seems quite plausible that the permission to return in 1315 was motivated—at least in part—by hopes of profiting from some of the funds still outstanding.

As indicated, it was extremely difficult to realize fully the anticipated riches from the legacy of pre-1306 French Jewry—whether through sale of Jewish property or through collection of Jewish debts. These difficulties were complicated by the normal problems of malfeasance on the part of those officials entrusted with important fiscal responsibility.

As early as 1308, the central authorities were concerned that the accounts for Jewish affairs be brought to Paris for careful reckoning. The edict of August 22, 1311, which seemingly signaled the end of the campaign to collect Jewish debts, stipulated that all the commissioners dealing with Jewish affairs were to bring their records to Paris for auditing. Mignon, in his description of the accounts of many of these commissions, indicates that the records were very meticulously examined.

By early 1312 evidence appears for misappropriation of funds, with suitable penalties levied against the guilty royal agents. On February 12, 1312, the viscount of Orbec was fined 1,000 pounds for his misdeeds with regard to the collection of revenues from the sale of Jewish goods. More interesting yet are the proceedings of June 1312. Perrequin of Milli, a Jew, who had served as a governmental agent prior to 1306 and who was probably one of the Jews recalled to aid in the pursuit of Jewish debts, brought charges of malfeasance against the commissioners for Jewish affairs in the bailliage of Bourges. The case was taken up by Parliament, and the royal officials in question were absolved of wrongdoing. Shortly thereafter, however, on June 29, the king established a new commission to look into irregularities in the

29 Ibid., p. 596.
30 Registres, doc. no. 752.
31 Ordonnances, vol. 1, p. 489.
32 Olim, vol. 3, p. 749, case no. 32.
33 Ibid., p. 675, case no. 40.
collection of revenues from Jewish property and debts. This new commission was to be composed of three members—two clerics and one lay advisor—and was to be aided by the testimony of a number of Jews recalled specifically for that purpose. These Jews were to remain in royal France only briefly, solely in connection with their function on the new royal commission. Provision was made, however, for the recall of a series of such Jews, should the situation warrant. The inducement for return was again the standard kind of sharing in the revenues gained. A number of cases during 1314 show the new commission hard at work, receiving the moneys accruing from sale of the property of those officials found guilty of absconding with funds from Jewish goods and loans.

The expulsion of 1306 had been decreed with the objective of gaining significant royal income from the confiscated estates of the banished Jews. In large measure, the goal of the expulsion had been achieved—substantial sums had in fact been realized; at the same time, serious difficulties had been encountered along the way. Some of these problems had eventually necessitated the recall of a number of Jews whose aid had been enlisted through a promise of shared revenues. By 1315, with the bulk of the moneys from the Jews already collected, the new king, Louis X, decided to issue a general edict of recall for the Jews. While the factors in this shift of royal policy are complex, one hope was still related to the expulsion of 1306—the possibility of squeezing out yet more of the moneys that had been owed prior to 1306. One of the conditions offered the returning Jews was the option of claiming old debts—with the monarchy receiving its ubiquitous 67 percent.

The history of medieval Jewry in northern France concludes for all practical purposes during the summer of 1306. Sporadic Jewish presence down through 1394 forms only an epilogue to the vital chapters of medieval French Jewish life. Although our study ends also with 1306, the charter of 1315, inviting Jews to return and resettle in France, is worth brief examination. The charter of 1315 established a new foundation for Jewish settlement in France. French Jewry had never shared the German Jewish tradition of political charters. Even after the expulsion of 1182, the return of the Jews to royal France in 1198 occasioned

34 Registres, doc. no. 2085.
35 Ibid., doc. nos. 2085, 2222, 2225.
36 Ordonnances, vol. 1, p. 596.
no broad statement of Jewish rights and limitations.\textsuperscript{37} Subsequent to 1315, however, French Jewish life was to be weakly grounded in an explicit set of royal stipulations.\textsuperscript{38}

In a pious preamble, the reasons for the recall are established. These include heavy pressures exerted by the Jews and supposedly by the populace. The case for readmission of the Jews was buttressed by appeals to the august figures of the popes and of Saint Louis, the most distinguished of the Capetian line, and by reference to traditional Church views of the basic necessity for toleration of the Jews. All of this coalesces into an impeccable argument for the return of the Jews, a move the motivation for which probably lies elsewhere.

Having established a compelling rationale for reentry of the Jews, Louis then proceeds to make the three basic stipulations which would govern their resettlement: (1) The Jews might return for a dozen years, residing in those places which prior to 1306 had been open to them. This qualification is a reflection of the growing tendency towards exclusion of the Jews from certain localities during the reign of Philip the Fair. (2) The Jews were to earn their livelihood from crafts or from dealing in good merchandise. This is taken almost verbatim from the 1235 and 1253 edicts of Saint Louis, whose image had loomed so large in the preamble to the charter. Significant is the elimination of Louis's overt repudiation of usury. The result is a curious evocation of the stance of Saint Louis, but without the actual moneylending prohibition. (3) The Jews were to display prominently the badge which distinguished them from their Christian neighbors.

The next set of provisions in this unusually well-organized charter deals with issues likely to arise in regard to pre-1306 Jewish wealth. The Jews might collect debts owed prior to 1306, retaining one-third of the money and remitting two-thirds to the government. We have already suggested that this arrangement may have had more than a little to do with the decision to readmit the Jews. Pre-1306 Jewish communal property was to be returned to the Jews in exchange for proper payment; where this would prove impossible, suitable alternatives would be offered for Jewish purchase. Books still held were to be repossessed by the Jews, with the exception of the condemned Talmud.

The final group of stipulations deals explicitly with some of the issues raised by renewed Jewish presence. While the Jews were being readmitted for only twelve years, provision was made for a gradual exodus

\textsuperscript{37}See above.
\textsuperscript{38}Ordonnances, vol. 1, pp. 595-97.
should the right of settlement not be renewed. In case of nonrenewal, the Jews were to be given a full year to close down their affairs and to leave. Eventually, however, even the basic guarantee of twelve years residence was not observed.

The major concern in this third section of the charter is moneylending. The discussion of Jewish lending begins with a repetition of the encouragement of crafts and trade. If, however, the Jews should peradventure slip into moneylending, they were to take as interest no more than two pennies per pound per week, precisely the rate specified by Philip Augustus more than a century earlier. Likewise repeated from Philip Augustus is the provision that the Jews must not begin to compound interest within the first year of the loan and that the debtor might pay his obligation at any point, with the interest ceasing at that juncture. Another old prohibition is the exclusion of Church vessels from Jewish moneylending business—they were not to be accepted by the Jews as pawns. The next two clauses are reminiscent of the edict of Louis VIII and of the early legislation of Louis IX. They outlaw governmental involvement in Jewish lending. The authorities were not to enforce Jewish usury in any way. This is, of course, a rather mild stipulation, reflecting the stand taken by Louis VIII in 1223, a position which Louis IX went far beyond. Louis IX's ordinance of 1230 is represented in the provision that no royal letters were to be drawn up in support of Jewish loans. The explicit implication was that the Jews could assure return of their moneys only through the depositing of pawns. The attitude on Jewish lending is generally moderate; the charter includes no enactments from the harsher legislation which followed 1230.

Finally, arrangements were provided for adequate regulation of Jewish affairs through the appointment of two governmental agents charged with the responsibility for France's newly recalled Jewish inhabitants. This, like so much else, reflects the bureaucratic stance adopted by Philip the Fair, the monarch who had exiled these same Jews.

Most of the details of the ordinance of 1315 thus find their roots in pre-1306 Jewish life. What has changed dramatically is the foundation for renewed Jewish settlement in northern France. The totality of this change is a result of the slow erosion of Jewish status through the latter half of the preceding century and the finality of the coup de grace administered by Philip IV.

Thus, in mid 1306, the creative stage of medieval Jewish history in northern France drew to a close. The French kingdom had ultimately proven inhospitable to Jewish life. The Jewish presence in France
medieval jewry in northern france

would only reemerge significantly with a comprehensive restructuring of French society.

The expulsion of 1306 must not obscure the achievements of medi­val French Jewry. Jewish communities had grown and spread across the face of northern France for a number of centuries. Severely limited in their economic outlets, these Jews had proven remarkably adaptable and enterprising in capitalizing on the minimal opportunities offered to them. Cultural and religious creativity had not been long in developing. Particularly the period between the late eleventh and the mid thirteenth century had seen an efflorescence of Jewish scholarship that was to enrich all subsequent Jewish intellectual endeavor. The northern French component of Ashkenazic Jewry had certainly carved out for itself a distinguished place in its people’s long history.

And yet all these efforts failed to win the Jews a permanent place in medieval France. The French kingdom became and remained almost Judenrein. It seems fruitless to pinpoint any one specific element that brought about this failure. The constellation of factors that led to the events of 1306 has been delineated—growing popular hostility, crushing royal financial needs, the total political vulnerability of the Jews. When we proceed, however, to ask what gave rise to the popular animosity or what fostered complete dependence on the ruling powers, we shall always return to the underlying issue—a society so thoroughly organ­ized around Christian life as to make Jewish presence inevitably peripheral and marginal. It was the distinct “otherness” of the medieval Jew that roused widespread antipathy, limited economic opportunities (often forcing the Jews into the kinds of enterprise that heightened hatreds), and threw the Jews headlong into the camp of the established authorities (again augmenting animosities). That Jews could settle as widely and as usefully as they did was the result largely of the im­maturity of European society at this stage, making possible certain economic roles, and of the vigor and ingenuity of these Jewish pioneers. The economic maturation of European society and the more effective spread of Christian identity made Jewish life less and less viable.

As this process took place, there were essentially two options avail­able. In the smaller and less organized states of central Europe, Jewish life continued, with a diminishing economic role and burgeoning dangers from popular resentment. In the larger and better organized states of the west, especially England and France, Jewish life officially and abruptly ended. Which of the two alternatives was ultimately the better can be debated.

In 1306, while Jewish life in France ended for a period, the Jews of France and the life style which they had so painstakingly created found
new homes for themselves. These Jews moved eastward into Germany and eventually onward into areas of Christendom once more immature and hence once more hospitable. Eventually, many centuries later, France was to become the first great European state to restructure itself thoroughly and, in the process, to create a new and more dignified place for Jewish life. Lamentably, the tragedies of this second stage of Jewish life in France may be traceable in no small measure to the legacy of the first.