

Idealism and Interest -- A New View of Examining the Cause of the Expulsion of the Jews in England in 1290

Luhai Liu^{1, a}

¹Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

^a1296638737@qq.com

Abstract

Many previous studies often neglect the personal role of Edward I when examining the cause of the Expulsion of the Jews in 1290, since Edward I was greatly influenced by his mentor, Simon de Montfort in the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, who helped him form the strategy of utilizing idealist image to protect their interests, along with Montfort's hostile attitude towards the Jewish community and pious faith. Consequently, to strengthen his reign, Edward I made the final resolution of the Expulsion to meet the demand of populace with a long-term anti-Semitist tradition seemingly and defend the benefits of the Crown practically.

Keywords

Expulsion of the Jews; Edward I; Montfort; Idealism.

1. Introduction

The history of Jews in England commenced in 1066, when the Jews came from Continental Europe along with the Norman Conquest. Later on, in order to flee from the rise of Crusaders in Continental Europe, many Jews immigrated to England and establish communities in English towns like London, Lincoln, Winchester, Cambridge, Oxford, Southampton and etc. However, in 1290 Edward I issued the Edict of Expulsion, ending the history of Medieval Anglo-Jews lasting for almost three centuries. It was after over 350 years that Oliver Cromwell overturned it in 1657. There are some previous studies upon the cause of the Expulsion of Jews in 1290 from the economic, political, cultural and religious perspectives, yet few have noticed that the factor of the king---Edward I himself also had a great impact on this event.

Since 1950s, many scholars have paid attention to the history of Jews in England, producing a number of outcomes and some also made attempts to examine the cause of the Expulsion of Jews in 1290. For instance, B. Lionel Abrahams's *The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290* analyses this event on an economic view, in which the author argues that the prohibition of moneylending by Edward I in 1275 led to coin-clipping since Jews had lost their main industry, which consequently influenced the resolution of the Expulsion. (B. Lionel Abrahams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 3 (April 1895): 428-458) Nonetheless, Sholom A. Singer's *The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290* utilizes the similar method by indicating that the economic function performed by Jews in medieval England was replaced by external and internal factors, which threatened their presence. (Sholom A., Singer, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 2 (October 1964): 117-136) Additionally, in Robin R. Mundill's *England's Jewish Solution---Experiment and Expulsion 1262--1290*, the causes of the Expulsion are concluded into three aspects---the failure of the Edwardian Experiment, the views of Church towards Jews, and dissolution of the Gascony Jewry. (Robin R. Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution---Experiment and Expulsion 1262---1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998))

However, these studies neglect the personal factor of Edward I, the decider of the Expulsion, such as his idealistic characters, personal experience and influence from others. This essay will elaborate the history of Anti-Semitist events in England, and analyse its connection to the seemingly idealistic character of Edward affected by his mentor Simon de Montfort based on records during the Baronial movement of Reform and Rebellion, which influenced the resolution of the Expulsion of Jews.

2. The Anti-Semitist Tradition of the English Populace

Edward returned from France to England on August 12th 1289. On October 13th 1289, he started an assault upon the corruptions and mismanagement over which some of his justices and officials had presided in his absence, many of whom had had close connections with the bureaucracy which coordinated Jewish affairs. (Robin R. Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution—Experiment and Expulsion 1262—1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 250) The significant resolution to expel the Jews was conducted secretly on June 18th. The deportation of the Jew commenced on June 18th, 1290 and was completed on November 1st. Over the next five years, the liquidation of Jewish property was also initiated. On July 18th, 1290, Edward I issued writs to the sheriffs of all the English counties ordering them to enforce a decree to the effect that all Jews must leave the country before All Saints' Day. The Jews were allowed to carry their portable property, but their houses escheated to the king, with the exception of a small group of favoured people allowed to sell their estimates before the departure. Around 4,000 to 16,000 Jews were banished from the land they had lived in for nearly three centuries, except those registered in *Domus Conversorum*. ('House of the Converts', the building and institution in London for Jews who had converted to Christianity. It provided a communal home and low wages, which was established in 1232 by Henry III. After the Expulsion in 1290, it became the only official way for Jews to remain in England) They immigrated to France, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Spain, Germany and so on. The king's momentous decision provoked no revolt on the scale of the Jewish community. There was almost no historical record of the resistance or conflict this incident caused.

Long before this ultimate banishment, people in England had a demonic image of Jews named "Blood libel", also known as blood accusation, which is an anti-Semitic allegation accusing Jews of murdering Christian children in order to mix their blood into the Passover ceremonial food of matzoh, an unleavened bread. Despite the fact that Jewish law expressly forbids blood sacrifices, the legend created an illusion of Jews as bloodthirsty, demonic, and depraved. (Simon J. Bronner, ed. *Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 382-383) These canards have been a major theme of the persecution of Jews in Europe, and it is widely considered that blood libel originated from England.

The case of William of Norwich in 1144 is the first known accusation of "blood libel". As the historian Hyamson recorded:

William, who at the time of his death was twelve years old, was the son of a widow, who herself was the daughter of a married priest. At the age of eight the child was apprenticed to a skinner in Norwich, and while engaged in that employment he was, according to one account, stolen, according to another, bought by the Jews, after having undergone various tortures in imitation of the passion of Jesus, was martyred on the eve of the festival of Passover, 1144, 45 or 46. (Albert M. Hyamson, *A history of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), 23)

At first, the local officials refused to bring charges against the accused Jews due to the lack of evidence. This inaction stoked outrage among the locals. William was then viewed as a martyr. The immediate result of the accusation seriously affected the fortunes of the Jewish community in Norwich. The populace was so incensed with the Jews that, despite the protection of the Sheriff, many of the Jews of the city were killed, and others fled in all directions to escape a

similar fate. (Albert M. Hyamson, *A history of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), 24)

Another typical case of “blood libel” is Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln, who was an 8 or 9-year-old boy, the son of a local woman called Beatrice. Hugh disappeared at the end of July, 1255. Roughly a month later, his corpse was discovered in the property of a Jewish man named Copin. Afterwards, under threat of torture, Copin “confessed” that he and a group of other Jews from both Lincoln and other towns had gathered together for the ritual torture and sacrifice of a Christian boy. Copin was promised a pardon, but after that, King Henry III arrived in town in October, ordering Copin to be dragged around the city, and then executed. Subsequently, 100 of Lincoln’s Jews were sent to the Tower of London. At least 20 of them were executed, and their property forfeited to the Crown, before the rest were pardoned. (Albert M. Hyamson, *A history of the Jews in England* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), 84)

Similar cases of “blood libel” occurred in England throughout the Middle Ages, and though the details of each were different from one another, most of the accusations contained common elements. They involved the ritual human sacrifice, and slaughter for religious Jewish practice of a Christian, in sadistic ceremonies. “Blood libel” demonstrates the fearsome images held by English populace and it also had a profound influence on Christians’ cognition of the Jewish people in Middle Ages, increasing hatred for Jewish community and resulting in falsely judgment and even bloodshed.

During 11th to 13th century, many anti-Semitic riots and massacres occurred in England triggered by the populace, causing great loss of life and property of the Jews. The participants in these events came from almost all classes of British society, ranging from the aristocracy, clergymen, to the commons. The causes of these incidents were not only accusations as “blood libel”, but also religious fanaticism and the economic pressure since many were in debt to Jews. Among these slaughters, the riot of the coronation of Richard I and the massacre in York were the most famous.

On September 3rd, 1189, the coronation of the new King, Richard I was held in Westminster Abbey, also the first coronation ceremony in the history of England. According to the prior proclamation ordered by the king, women and Jews were not allowed to enter the church to witness the coronation. Nonetheless, the representatives of the Jewish community still managed to attend the coronation. Yet, this triggered unease among the crowd:

...on the afternoon of the coronation day, while the festivities were at their height, a deputation from the Jewish communities of the kingdom presented itself at the gateway of Westminster Hall, bearing rich gifts—probably in the hope of obtaining a renewal of the charter of privileges granted originally by Henry I. Some of them, eager to see the magnificence, took advantage of a momentary disorder to slip in, and were driven out by a zealous doorkeeper with unnecessary brutality. This was enough to arouse the crowd at the palace gates. Several members of the deputation were beaten or trampled to death before they could escape. (Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 17—18)

The rumour soon spread to London, and many believed that it was the king who gave the order to exterminate Jews. Consequently, More and more Christians joined in the attack against the Jews. Suddenly, the entire Jewish community was on fire. Though some of the inhabitants found refuge in the Tower of London or under the protection of friendly neighbours, several perished in their houses, and others were beaten to death when they ventured into the street. Thirty persons lost their lives, amongst them being the eminent Rabbi Jacob of Orleans, not long since arrived from the Continent. (Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 18) When the king heard of this, he immediately dispatched the justiciar, Ranulph de Glanvil and some of the nobles to end the disorder. The outbreak lasted

until the next afternoon, and though the king was furious about this violence, many ringleaders fled away, with only few captured, two of which were later hanged.

Although the later issued royal proclamation guaranteed the safety of the Jews, a series of outbreaks still took place in the port of Lynn, Norwich, Stamford Fair and etc. The worst of these slaughters occurred at York in 1190. In the night of March 16th, when an outbreak of fire caused confusion in the city, a number of the conspirators broke into the house of Benedict of York (who had died of his wounds on his way back from London), murdered his widow and all the other persons whom they found there, seized all the moveable property and set the building in flames. (Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 18) This was the beginning of the butchery at York, and subsequently the mobs attacked on the Jews in town, killing them, looting their property, and burning their houses. Many Jews left their homes, taking their families to seek refuge in the king's castle. Those Jews outside the castle were either baptized or killed. Josce of York, the leader of the Jews in York, asked the warden of York Castle to receive them and they were accepted into Clifford's Tower. However, the tower was besieged by the mob, demanding the Jews to be baptized. The religious leader, Rabbi Yomtov of Joigny, advised the Jews to kill themselves rather than convert to Christianity. Thus, most of them committed suicide and those who did not kill themselves died in the fire, or were slain by rioters.

After the massacre, many Jews were removed to London and Richard I later ordered an investigation into this riot, which revealed that most of the participants were citizens of York and the ringleaders were nobles, many of which were well-known in the northern territory. The main reason why rioters attacked the Jews was that most of them owed a lot of money to the Jews and were unable or unwilling to pay it back. The quickest way to eliminate the debts was to physically destroy the Jews who had lent it, and then to destroy all the IOUs and covenants, as Cecil Roth stated: "On hearing the news of the southern outbreaks, he and various members of the Percy, Faulconbridge, and Darrel families determined to seize the opportunity to wipe out their indebtedness." (Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 18)

These anti-Semitic incidents displayed the hostile attitude among common English people towards the Jews, mainly due to the fact that Jews were external people viewed by Christians, and many people were in Jews' debts. Additionally, out of the crusading enthusiasm, it was widely believed that slaying a pagan's life, a Jew for example, would grant the passage to the heaven. Out of pressure from debts and fear for "blood libel", hatred for Jews grew among both the common folks and the nobles in England, and many wished the Jews to be eliminated or be driven out of England.

3. Montfort's Influence upon Edward I

The decider of the Expulsion, Edward I, was infected by multiple factors, yet the often neglected one worth noticing is that he was also greatly influenced by his mentor and ally during the Baronial Movement, Simon de Montfort, whose anti-Semitic practice, pious belief and passion for the reform had strong impact upon Edward's idealist character and his seeming ambition of protecting the goodness of people of England from the Jews.

Some of the members of the crown held hostile attitude towards the Jews. His mother Eleanor has long been acknowledged as 'the steady enemy of the Jews'; and her uncle Boniface had also been their enemy. It was Eleanor of Provence who, in 1275, had all Jews banished from the towns which she held in dower. (Robin R. Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution—Experiment and Expulsion 1262—1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 60)

Edward I's own uncle and former tutor, Simon de Montfort, shared the same hostility. In 1231, Montfort demonstrated his hatred for the Jews by expelling them from Leicester, "in my time

or in the time of any of my heirs to the end of the world". This was done (his charter declares) for the salvation of his own soul and those of his ancestors and successors. (M. T. Clanchy, *England and its rulers, 1066-1272* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 270) Montfort also practices anti-Semitism as the illuminating leader of the baronial party after the battle of Lewes, (May 14, 1264), as recorded:

A raid upon an Archa was an ordinary incident in the campaign; the bonds, which it was now the rule to retain in lieu of the memorial, were impounded or burned; and Montfort during the brief period of his ascendancy annulled them all by proclamation. Several of the most populous Jewries were also sacked, and multitudes of Jews were massacre. The restoration of peace was followed at no great interval by measures invalidating the rent-charges in which the Jews had to a large extent invested their money, prohibiting the assignment of their debts without royal licence, and the assignment of interest in any event, and providing for the redemption of all freehold estates in land which they had or might thereafter have in their possession. (J.M. Rigg, "The Jews of England in the Thirteenth Century", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 1 (October 1902), 16-17)

This policy was carried still further by Edward I, who abolished legal remedies for the recovery of interest, and limited execution for the principal money to a moiety of the debtor's lands and chattels, (J.M. Rigg, "The Jews of England in the Thirteenth Century", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 1 (October 1902), 17) which indicates the bond between the king and his mentor. To be further, Montfort's hatred for the Jews might also pass on to Edward, contributing to the factors of the Expulsion.

Furthermore, Montfort and Edward I both acquired faithful belief and even fanaticism, which attributed to their behaviours, especially in terms of treating the Jewish community for Edward I. The family of Montfort owed much of its prestige to the reputation of his father, Simon the senior, who was the commander in the suppression of the Albigensian Crusade and was hailed as a martyr after he died in the Battle of Toulouse in 1218. For people in England in that era, Montfort was much more illuminating than other noblemen, crediting to the glory of his father. Montfort also strengthened his association with the Church of England, earning himself widespread respect. He personally kept contacted with Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln (1235-53), whom he probably first met in 1231, when Grosseteste was archdeacon of Montfort's newly acquired borough of Leicester; Walter de Cantilupe, bishop of Worcester (1236-66), a neighbour in the west midlands and, like Grosseteste, a notably energetic pastor; and Adam Marsh (d. 1259), the leading Oxford Franciscan scholar of his generation, (J. R. Maddicott, "Montfort, Simon de, eighth earl of Leicester (c. 1208-1265)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [online edn, Jan 2008 (<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19049>, accessed Nov.16th 2020)]) helping him gain good reputation among the faithful. He also led a monkish life:

In his private life he seems to have been similarly attentive to Christian moral teaching, practising austerities which may have owed as much to the general example of the Franciscans and of his friend Louis IX as to that of his three spiritual advisers. According to sources written after his death, and which therefore need to be treated judiciously but not necessarily sceptically, he used to spend much of the night in prayer, was frugal in food, drink, and clothing, wore a hair shirt, and after his oath to the provisions of Oxford in 1258 even abstained from relations with his wife. (J. R. Maddicott, "Montfort, Simon de, eighth earl of Leicester (c. 1208-1265)", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [online edn, Jan 2008 (<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19049>, accessed Nov.16th 2020)])

This religious devotion further enhanced Montfort's prestige, so that when he died, the people of England regarded him as a saint and worshipped him. In short, the prestige he built up through religious factors made him widely supported by the Church of England, the middle and petty nobility, the townspeople and even the peasants.

Though there was no direct evidence suggesting that Montfort attempted to impose this piousness on Edward I, the latter himself was indeed a faithful Christian, which was revealed in multiple incidents and his early policy concerning the Jews known as the Edwardian Experiment, ending in failure. When he was still a prince, he experienced the conflict between Jews and Christians.

On Ascension Day 1268 Edward was in Oxford when a Jew stopped a procession going towards St Frideswide's where the annual sermon was to be preached. The Jew tore the rood from the bearer and trampled it under foot in the presence of the Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University and the parochial clergy. It was Edward who sent the news of the event to his father at Woodstock... Edward was personally only too well aware of the prevalent religious and lay feelings towards the Jews. (Robin R. Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution—Experiment and Expulsion 1262—1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 64)

When Edward succeeded the throne, as a more zealous sovereign than his father Henry III, he wished more Jews could convert to Christianity. In 1279 he ordered all Jews to attend the sermons preached by the Dominican Order during Lent. He also paid more attention to the welfare of *Domus Conversorum* established during Henry III's reign, and in the year 1280, King Edward I had issued precise regulations for the management of the *Domus*, (Michael Adler, "History of the 'Domus Conversorum' from 1290 to 1891", *Transactions* (Jewish Historical Society of England), 19) in order to increase the number of the converts. This similarity might suggest that Edward I considered Montfort as one of his companions with strong piousness.

Apart from anti-Semitic view and piousness, Montfort was also an idealist acknowledged by the academia. J.R. Maddicott's perspective on analysing Montfort's motive of reform is very representative. In his opinion, Montfort was an ambitious reformer with novel political ideas, regardless of the factors of his debt dispute with Henry III and his personal political desire. (J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 121) Since the beginning of the reform, Edward had been in control of Clare and his followers, yet Edward sought opportunities to forge alliance with the opposite Montfort.

On the feast of St. Edward (Oct. 13) which was royally celebrated by the king at Westminster, the community of the bachelery (A group of the knights or energetic young reformers dissatisfied with the barons) of England signified to Sir Edward the king's son, to the earl of Gloucester, and to the others sworn to the counsel of Oxford, that the lord king had wholly done and fulfilled all and each of the things which the barons had provided and put on him to do; and that the barons had done nothing to the profit of the commonwealth as they had promised but to their own good and the king's hurt everywhere, and that unless some amendment was made therein another resort should reform the past. Sir Edward instantly answered for himself that the oath which he had made at Oxford he had made unwillingly, but that he was not therefore unprepared to stand willingly to his oath, and to expose himself to death for the community of England, and for the profit of the commonwealth according to the oath at Oxford; and he straitly ordered the barons who were sworn to the counsel that unless they fulfilled their oath aforesaid he himself would stand to the death with the community, and have the promises fulfilled. The barons then seeing that it were better that they should fulfil what was promised rather than others, caused their provisions to be publicly promulgated. (W. H. Hutton, *Simon de Montfort and his cause, 1251-1266* (London, D. Nutt; New York, G.P. Putnam's sons, 1907), 101-102)

From this incident, it can be indicated that Edward shared the passion of protecting the outcome of the reform as Montfort. In response, Clare seemed hesitated about the reform yet Montfort demonstrated his anger as the historian Matthew Paris recorded his words:

"I do not care to live or hold communication with people so fickle and deceitful. For we have all joined in promising and swearing to carry out the plans which we are discussing. And as for you, my lord earl of Gloucester, the higher your position is above us all, so much the more are

you bound to carry these wholesome statutes into effect;" (Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris's English history from the year 1235 to 1273*, Vol III, trans. J. A. Giles, William Rishanger (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854), 326)

Montfort's people-centred passion and idealistic merits quite matched the aspiration of Edward to preserve the interests of the populace. Soon after this speech, Edward forged a new alliance with Montfort, also as a long-term friendship. Along with Montfort's anti-Semitic attitude and piousness, the idealist image of a fearless reformer might help guide Edward's measure concerning the Jews, and ultimately lead to the resolution of the Expulsion.

4. The Political Scheme Behind Idealism

Edward I, like Montfort, tried to present an image of a novel reformer and a people-centred monarch, and many nobles also acquired the same aspiration in his era. In the academia, greatly influenced by William Stubbs' view of Constitutional History, while judging the cause of the Baronial Movement, many historians believe that the gentry had a strong sense of patriotism and enlightenment, and therefore regard them as defenders of rights and freedoms. In this political crisis, many noblemen participated in the reform in the name of "community" or other idealist slogans. The notion of "community" probably also affected Edward I not only in the Baronial Movement but also in his reign after succeeding the throne.

During the baronial opposition to Henry III, the barons cast themselves as representatives of the community of the realm, (Mark L. Honeywell, *Chivalry as Community and Culture: The Military Elite of Late Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England*, (PhD diss., University of York, 2006), 97) indicating participations in political affairs. The concept of "community" greatly emerged in late 13th century, and with the increasing frequency of wars, as captains in the campaigns in Scotland and France, many military elites provided the necessary manpower and leadership for the prosecution of warfare. In fulfilling this role, it was suggested that they were party to a collective experience that to some extent cut across social status and, at the same time, marked these men out as a distinct social group in English society in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. (Mark L. Honeywell, *Chivalry as Community and Culture: The Military Elite of Late Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England* (PhD diss., University of York, 2006), 85)

Many scholars noticed the significant role played by the gentry during the Baronial Movement, as many fought for "community". B. Wilkinson stated that:

Perhaps the most important single point to be made about the political opposition to the Crown in this period is not that the magnates stood solely for their own interests, though indeed their interests were never neglected, but precisely the reverse. It is the point that, over and beyond their own privileges and profits, the magnates generally stood for the interests of the regnum, that is of the "nation," and obtained what may, for want of a better term, be called a national support... Certainly the establishment of limited monarchy in England depended largely on the ability of magnates and middle classes to find a community of interests in opposition to the Crown. (B. Wilkinson, "English Politics and Politicians of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Speculum*, no. 1 (January 1955), 46)

As mention in Part II of this essay, Edward I showed the same intension on the feast of S. Edward (Oct. 13), when he declared that he was prepared to expose his death to the community of England. Before the Expulsion, Edward tried to avoid the deportation and maintain harmony between Jews and Christians as well as improve the status of the English people. In 1275, Edward I commenced the Edwardian experiment, aiming to solve the problems caused by debt and money lending, as well as forbid money lending which was against the Christian creed. The ban on money lending was not only imposed on Jews, but also on Christians. In addition, the king also issued the Statute of the Jewry, which outlawed usury and encouraged the Jews to

take up other professions and competed with Christians. Yet, compared to Christians, the Jews had a weak social base, since they were mainly engaged in the business of money lending and usury, so many Jews still undertook their original industry, which was considered a threat to the Christian society. It seemed that Edward I had no choice but to expel all the Jews to protect his Christian subjects.

However, Edward I, defending the sake of people of England was just an excuse to fulfil their personal interest or political ambition, as T. F. Tout stated that: "Opposed by the barons, distrusted by the people, liable to be thrown over by their master at each fresh change of his caprice, the royal subordinates showed more eagerness in prosecuting their own private fortunes than in consulting the interests of the State." (T. F. Tout, *The history of England from the accession of Henry III to the death of Edward III* (London, New York [etc.]: Longmans, Green and Co, 1905), 52) Among all fortunes, the gentry were more eager to seize land, since the basis of aristocratic power and privilege was, of course, wealth, and wealth was firmly based on land. (Michael Prestwich, *The three Edwards: war and state in England 1272-1377* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006), 126)

Moreover, compared with the late Middle Ages, the social environment of the 13th century also allowed the gentry to arm themselves to protect their private interests. On the one hand, since the reign of Henry II, the ownership of land in England had shown a steady trend. The land was less subject to the interference of the Lord, and not only the holder himself was hardly threatened by the resumption of the land by the Lord, but his successors could follow the tradition of inheritance. In medieval England, land seizures occurred mainly before the first half of the 12th century and after the late 14th century, and in 13th century, even rebels did not necessarily lose their land. This undoubtedly connived and encouraged the aristocracy to fight against the Crown. On the other hand, in the political context of the time, rebellion was not considered treason. This conclusion is also supported by relevant research, as Claire Valente reckons that in public opinion, rebellion could be both legitimate and politically profitable in early 13th century. (Claire Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt in Medieval England*, (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 34) In the resistance with the king, the commitment to force and exploitation of distinction is also visible: barons not only claimed to defend the law and their right to consul, but used force in their conflicts with the king in limited and incremental fashion and only engaged in open revolt as a last resort. (Claire Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt in Medieval England*, (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 42)

Overall, the social environment of the 13th century allowed the gentry to take up arms and rebel when their interests were compromised and could not be effectively maintained through peaceful resorts. Therefore, the perspective of "English community" is still to be discussed when elaborating the occurrence of political crisis in 13th century, and that of the private interests of nobles are obviously more convincing. This interest included many aspects such as land, marriage, military service and so on. Among all these aspects, land was the most valued by the gentry, as in feudal society, land was most stable and secured. During the Baronial Movement, the factor of land was significant, revealing in these two respects: Firstly, in 1263, the reformists fought for power by seizing land and immediately faced the issue of returning the land after taking power; Secondly, when the royalists won in 1265, they severely punished their opponents with the general confiscation of land, whom they called "the Disinherited". Nonetheless, the factor of land was also crucial as the cause of the Movement. It was the king's unequal distribution of land that caused the discontent of the domestic aristocracy, led by Clare and Montfort, and triggered the reform. Therefore, it seemed that Montfort's idealistic image was merely an excuse for his eagerness for lands.

As the idealism of the gentry such as Montfort was not true, the same merits of Edward I was also full of doubts. As mentioned above, the Edwardian Experiment did attempt to assimilate

the Jews into the Christian society, yet it was on the basis of discrimination. The Statute of Jews not only made regulations on economic scale, but also imposed strict social restrictions:

It re-established the wearing of the tabula and introduced a new poll tax on each Jew or Jewess over twelve years of age. It prevented a Jew from enfeoffing either a Jew or a Christian with rents, houses and tenements and from acquitting any Christian of his debts without the express permission of the Crown by royal licence. In granting the Jews the Crown's protection, it even clarified their constitutional position by stating that they had no legal right to plead a case or be brought to trial in any court except the king's court 'whose bond-men they are' (serfs). Finally, it confined all Jews to live in the walled towns, where they were to be exempt from taxes because they were answerable to the king for taxes. (Robin R. Mundil, *England's Jewish Solution—Experiment and Expulsion 1262—1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 120)

Thus, it can be illustrated that the essence of the Edwardian Experiment was to discriminate against the Jewish community and let the Jews compete with the Christians. The king attempted to bring the economic activities of the Jews into the range of social morality, but because the rights of Jews were not correspondingly strengthened, they did not change as quickly as expected. Moreover, monetary borrowers were still needed by the Crown, so the Statute was not strictly enforced, and the Jews still lent money. The failure of the Edwardian Experiment symbolled the failure of the king's attempt to integrate the Jews into the social and economic system. Edward I was unable to handle the Jewish affair in a normal way, so his late policy towards the Jews became harsher and more radical.

Furthermore, the value of the Jews decreased by the time of Edward I, when England encountered more wars, such as Crusading in 1270 and conflicts with Scotland, Welsh and France. As Wales became a part of the kingdom 1284, Edward I had accomplished many great military achievements. However, huge financial demands subsequently followed, such as building castles in Wales to ensure the conquest, which cost 90,000 pounds, (Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages* (Yale: Yale University, 1996), 338) while the annual income of Edward I's royal estates was only 14,000 pounds. By this time, the Jews were not able to give the king the sufficient financial aid.

As king's private properties, the king had the right to restore the property which the Jews had been deprived of yet the Jews were also at his mercy. To investigate possessions of Jews and levy taxes, the most immense of which was tallage, Exchequer of Jews was established, later taking part in administrative and judicial areas. The king also borrowed money from the Jews, but the Jews' own economic strength declined simultaneously.

At the end of the 12th century they had probably paid to the Treasury about 3,000 pounds a year, or one-twelfth of the whole royal income, and for some parts of the thirteenth century the average collection of tallage has been estimated at 5,000 pounds; but in 1271--by which time the royal income had probably grown to something like the 65,000 pounds a year which the Edwards are said to have enjoyed in time of peace--Henry III, when pledging to Richard of Cornwall the revenue from the Jewry, estimated its annual value, apart from what was yielded by escheats and other special claims, at no more than 2,000 marks. (B. Lionel Abrahams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 2 (January 1895): 241) From 1270 to 1290, when Britain's fiscal revenue rose to an average of 43,000 pounds per year, the proportion of tallage dropped to 3%. (Barnett D. Ovrut, "Edward I and the Expulsion of the Jews", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 4 (April 1977): 226)

Although tallage was not the only way that the king plundered the Jews, it accounted for a decreasing proportion of the fiscal revenue, which showed that the Jews' ability to support the royal family financially was decreasing in this period. Moreover, as the demand of the king increased and the economic capability of the Jews decreased, the king sought new supporters,

turning to the Italian banking companies, the only organisations in Europe that could supply the Crown. From all the greatest cities of Italy from Florence, Rome, Milan, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, and Asti--they had spread to many of the chief countries of Europe, to France, England, Brabant, Switzerland, and Ireland. They were thus the greatest financial agents of the time. When Edward I required funds to sponsor his troops, he borrowed it from the Italian firms when he diverted to his own use the tenth that was voted for his intended second Crusade, they gave security for repayment. (B. Lionel Abrahams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 2 (January 1895): 241-243) The amount was tremendous:

Between 1298 and 1308 the Friscobaldi Bianchi alone, one of the thirty-four companies that he employed, received in repayment nearly 100,000.2 He was compelled to favour them, although he attempted to stop their usury. He gave them a charter of privileges. He presented them with large sums of money. He bestowed on the head of one of their firms high office in Gascony. At various times he placed under their charge the collection of the Customs in many of the chief ports in England. (B. Lionel Abrahams, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 2 (January 1895): 243)

Edward's close connection with the Italian banking companies made the Jews unnecessary to him, and these financiers from Italy and Gascony gradually replaced the Jews for the Crown. "The Gascons were essentially war financiers; their loans coincided with Henry's expeditions into France. They were also of considerable aid to Edward. The presence of Italians became significant under Edward I. A comparison between loans contracted by the king and Jewish tallages paid to the Crown is instructive." (Sholom A. Singer, "The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290", *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 2, (1964), 126—127) Especially during the reign of Edward I, Italian financiers played a very important role in the royal finances. By comparison, the contribution of Jews was even more insignificant.

Therefore, though it seemed that possibly affected by Montfort or his own idealistic ambition and people-centred characters, Edward I expelled the Jews throughout the country out of protecting the interest of the English people, yet it actually indicated the complete failure of the Edwardian Experiment and the losing financial value of the Jews, which were the deep cause of the Expulsion in 1290 to preserve the interest of the Crown. Possibly, like his mentor Montfort, Edward I utilized the political slogan to create a people-centred image of him and in order to protect his personal interests and fortify his reign, he discovered that expelling the Jews was the way that both met people' satisfaction and abandoned the declining value served from the Jewish community. Therefore, the Expulsion of Jews in 1290 was a perfect scheme to ensure Edward I's throne.

The Expulsion of the Jews in 1290 was a vital incident in the history of Medieval England, and as many previous studies lack the analysis of Edward I himself while elaborating the cause of the Expulsion in 1290, which actually took an immense part in the ultimate resolution. By revealing the long-term anti-Semitic history in Medieval England, the English people acquired a dramatic hatred to the Jews, calling to drive these outsiders out of their homeland. During the performance in Baronial movement of Reform and Rebellion, Edward I was influenced by Montfort's anti-Semitic attitude, religious passion and most significantly, seemingly idealistic and people-centred image, under which mined the political scheme to ensure his throne as well as gain popularity.

In conclusion, the Expulsion can be viewed as a cunning strategy for Edward I, since the Jews had gained a great deal of hostility and lost their financial value serving as a source of countless fortunes. Though it lacks proof to verify whether Edward I planned this scheme or not, it can be illustrated by the great influence from his mentor, Montfort, who led the Baronial Movement not to benefit the national interests but rather his own ones. Thus, probably this essay will provide another perspective of analysing the cause of the Expulsion of Jews in 1290.

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