**Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Interaction in Europe**

As Islam grew, so did Muslim conquests. By 725, Muslims had conquered Cordoba, Spain and converted many Berbers (a pastoral people) to Islam. Under Muslim control, Cordoba becomes Western Europe’s largest city. Muslims in Spain were known as Moors. Many Jews lived under control of the Moors. Before Muslim control, Jews were ostracized in Europe and forced to live in independent communities, ghettos. Jews were treated very well under the Moors since Muslims values preach tolerance.

It is against Muslim tradition to charge other Muslims taxes or interests on loans. Therefore, it was up to the Jews, Christians, and other religions to pay the taxes for the Islamic Empire. The Jewish bankers played a vital role in collection of taxes. They were the ones who collected the interest and were able to extend credit for businesses in the Empire.

Around 1031, there was a struggle by Christians to regain control of Spain, known as the Reconquista. During this time, Jews and Muslims alike were persecuted by Christians. This fight for control was intensified by the Crusades (the fight between Jews and Christians for control of Jerusalem).

Spain experienced the growth of a strong national monarchy at the end of the fifteenth century. Muslims had conquered much of Spain by about 725. During the Middle Ages, Christian rulers in Spain had fought to regain their lands from the Muslims. Several independent Christian kingdoms had emerged in the course of the long reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Two of the strongest kingdoms were Aragon and Castile. When Isabella of Castile married Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, it was a major step toward unifying Spain. The two rulers worked to strengthen royal control of the government.

Ferdinand and Isabella also pursued a policy of strict conformity to Catholicism. In 1492 they took a drastic step of expelling all professed Jews from Spain. Muslims, too, after their final loss in 1492 to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, were “encouraged” to convert to Catholicism. In 1502, Isabella issued a decree expelling all professed Muslims from her kingdom. To a very large degree, Ferdinand and Isabella, “the most Catholic” monarchs, had achieved their goal of religious uniformity. To be Spanish was to be Catholic.

After Reconquista, Christian Spain expelled Jews 1492 and Muslims 1502, persecuted heretics during Spanish Inquisition.

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