

# ANTI SEMITISM

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## FOREWORD

"Anti-Semitism prior to 1500" is a historical study which served as the opening paper at a Good Neighbor Conference in Boston. On September 6th and 7th, 1944, representative Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergymen from the metropolitan area met to discuss together the general history of anti-Semitism, to analyze its causes, and to evaluate two specific and current plans for its elimination. Since the Conference was designedly experimental, it drew up no resolutions and offered no long range program. Definite results were obtained, however, through the frank discussions, the common understanding attained and the evident good will and co-operation displayed.

"Anti-Semitism prior to 1500" is not a formulation of the present problem, nor even of the sources and causes of the present problem. The plan of the Conference called for a purely historical study as a basis for the later discussions of existing social forces and trends. Nevertheless, the paper has real value. It provides a definition of anti-Semitism, and a survey of the controverted relationship which existed between the Church and the Synagogue during the Middle Ages.

Naturally, this paper does not contain the last word from Catholic sources on the troubled and troublesome question of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism has its roots too deeply set in history and too ramified through the present social fabric to be diagnosed and cured in one paper or one conference. Rather, other papers must be added to survey the myriad involvements of the movement and then finally to propose an acceptable program of treatment.

Basically the Catholic Church, in the present as in the past, will sympathetically welcome all programs that make for peaceful, just and beneficent relations between fellow citizens. She will insist upon the truth of Her teaching that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, died for all men as their Redeemer from sin. She will hold fast to the historic truth that He died in Jerusalem, accused and judged by the Sanhedrim, condemned to the cross by a Roman procurator. But She will likewise strongly and emphatically teach that His death was caused by the sins of all mankind, pagan, Jewish and Christians—by the sins of Adam and all his children, past, present and future. She will never charge, nor has She ever charged, that the Jewish race was exclusively guilty of His death. She will disavow and condemn, as foul calumny, the charge that Jews, as a race or religion, have been guilty of ritual murder of children or of ritual profanation of consecrated Hosts. Similarly She will repudiate the vicious attempt to make the Jewish people of today the scapegoats for all the world's present economic, social and religious ills. Positively, while upholding and proclaiming the truth and the authority of the Christian dispensation, She will equally recognize, and demand the recognition of, the right of all men to follow the dictates of their conscience and to worship and serve God freely, as their consciences direct.

Within this framework, the problem of anti-Semitism can and must be solved by all "men of good will." Co-operation between members of various and differing religious groups can and must be built upon a foundation of charity, justice, tolerance and prudence. Thus founded, there need be no fruitless discussions of grounds of difference, no agnostic attempts to reduce creeds to a common, mutilated

level, no exclusion of groups because they hold opposed doctrines. The cure for anti-Semitism is not the elimination of religious differences. Rather the task is to draw upon the fund of good will which all faiths can and do create; to increase that fund by strengthening religious faith; and to use that fund to crush ill will whenever and however it presents itself.

The problem, then, is not one of merely presenting facts or discovering truth. Facts and truth are necessary. But beyond these, there must be an eradication of the strongly charged emotions which have been associated with the calumnies, misconceptions and half-truths propagated by and in anti-Semitic minds. This can be done only by spreading the truth in an atmosphere of religious charity and love. It is a task involving both prayer and good works. To the good work of honest and scientific analysis the spirit of prayer and religious devotion must be widely and strongly united, that the ugly movement of anti-Semitism may be crushed and dissipated.

Fortunately Catholics have a supreme example of prayer and good works alike on behalf of the afflicted Jewish people in the person of the Pope. All the while insisting that there are dogmatic differences which separate Catholics from the House of Israel, the Sovereign Pontiff has enunciated sentiments which inspire us to accord the Jews Christ-like charity. As head of the Church he, like other Popes and other Catholics, habitually prays for the Jewish people who were the bearers of the divine revelations up to the time of Christ. The Apostolic See has protected, in word and deed, the Jews against unjust oppression and has strongly disapproved of that hatred which is generally termed anti-Semitism. Moreover, in time of oppression and

persecution by secular rulers the Popes have by positive measures of charity endeavored to alleviate the sufferings of the exiles and wanderers. The example of the Popes is the positive inspiration to Catholics and non-Catholics alike to dissipate, crush and eliminate anti-Semitism.

## ANTI-SEMITISM PRIOR TO 1500

This Good Neighbor Conference has been called to offer the clergy of metropolitan Boston an opportunity to discuss frankly the social evil of anti-Semitism. The choice of the subjects for discussion and the assignment of speakers of different religious faiths indicate a conscientious effort to present the historical background of the problem. Therefrom an accurate and realistic appraisal may be made of this question as it exists in our community. This basic honesty of approach and of plan for the future is the best guarantee of an eventual solution, for the problem can only be handled by frank and friendly co-operation between "men of good will" of all groups.

It is unnecessary to state the anti-Semitic question is a problem, a grave and current problem. That is obvious from the wealth of literature of all types and in so many languages. It is likewise evident from the ever increasing oral discussion heard on every side and among all classes. Grave as it is, however, we must not treat it as the only problem of the moment. Anti-Semitism is but another "anti-" movement in a long and ugly series. Thus in America we have a whole class of anti-movements: anti-Christian, anti-Catholic, anti-clerical, anti-Semitic, anti-Negro, anti-Mexican, anti-capitalistic and anti-labor, existing simultaneously and with considerable inter-relationship. This concomitance and this inter-relationship indicate the need for co-ordinated study of the whole field of the present social tension in order that effective social and religious planning may be initiated. Hence we would be well advised not to be over-optimistic of the possible success of this or any other conference, devoted to a study of one isolated movement. Over-

emphasis upon any one sector and plans for its cure alone will but serve to focus over much of the present tension on this one phase, a truly disastrous result.

The compelling necessity for such integrated studies somewhat lessens the significance of this conference. But the agreement upon an acceptable definition of anti-Semitism, the frank avowal of the causes of such movements in the past and a realistic approach to the solution of the problem in conjunction with other solutions for other subversive social and religious trends will be a valuable contribution. The widespread publicity which may be expected for these conference papers will serve to bring to the attention of all men of good will the basic elements of the problem.

## BASIC ELEMENTS OF PROBLEM

The fundamental problem of this conference and more especially of this paper which opens the conference is the proper definition of the term "anti-Semitism." Briefly but with entire accuracy it may be defined as "hatred for the Jewish people," as Pope Pius XI succinctly termed it on March 25th, 1928. We shall do well to note these two terms in anti-Semitism, "hatred" and "the Jewish people." It is hatred alone which precipitates mass violence, hatred which leads to widespread confiscation, hatred which rouses the cry for mass conversion or death, hatred which stigmatizes even the converted Jew as an alien who must be hounded. Sentiments of less intensity do not cause these explosive outbreaks. Hence we must exclude from the scope of true anti-Semitism the minor sources of friction which are mainly due to an inability to appreciate the motive of actions.

This hatred, moreover, is directed against the

"Jewish people." Immediately difficulty arises as to the meaning of this term. Modern anthropologists have scientifically discredited an older belief that the Jews were or are a unit race. They certainly have not been a nation, in the strict sense at least, since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. Today, except for their belief in the one eternal God and in the necessity of circumcision, there is more disparity between the different groups of Jews than between Protestants and many of these Jewish sects. With this phase of the question we cannot long linger for many of its ramifications are still the subject of controversy. A correct statement of the position, as accurate as can be posited at the moment, would assert that the Jewish people are those who practice orthodox Judaism or who have descended from those who did so in sufficient earnestness to be classed as believers. This classification is broad enough to include a diversity of practice today, a diversity bewildering alike to the Jew and the student of social and religious history. It would be a relatively easy matter to understand the opposition between Christians and strictly orthodox Jews; but there is a strange anomaly in the fact that there exists a racial opposition to the Jews who have given up the strict or even lax religious observances—the dietary restrictions, the observance of the holidays—and who today live pretty much the same as their neighbors. To discover the basis for this apparent racial opposition, so baffling alike to the ultra-liberal Jew and the Gentile who dislikes him, is one of the most necessary problems of the moment.

Whence arises, then, this hatred of the Jewish people, so intense at times that it extends even to the Jew who is one only by descent? We may dismiss at once the belief that there is an innate hatred among all races for the Jews. The history of the Jew in China and India affords ample proof of the falsity of this belief. The fact, too, that the Jews

cannot be scientifically identified as a race should further disprove it. Nor can this hatred arise merely from their "alien-ness," for again history has recorded the presence of other alien groups who were not treated with such venom. Rather must it be said that this hatred arises from deep fear of the influence of the Jews, whatever that influence may be thought to be at the moment. At one time it is fear of their hostile political activities; at another it is fear of their usurious and crippling financial control; again it is fear of their open opposition to the established religious order; and yet again it is fear of the alleged Jewish enmity for Christianity. Oft-times two or more of these fears may be conjoined in varying degrees of emphasis, a variation, too, which changes during the same period from place to place. That some of these fears have been based upon or exaggerated by calumnious accusations is all too evident from history. That these calumnies live long after they have been proven false is likewise another sad phenomenon. All these facets of anti-Semitism must be correctly evaluated before any attempt at an eventual solution can be begun.

## FUNDAMENTALLY JEW IS DIFFERENT FROM ALL RACES

Fundamentally the Jew is different from all other peoples because of his belief and practice or because of a tradition of such religious activity. Through the ages he has endured all types of persecution to retain that belief and practice. Millions of them have resisted the blandishments of social equality, of political prestige, of normal cultural life that they might remain Jews. To that constancy of purpose, to that indomitable courage we pay glowing and deserved tribute. But our very tribute is witness to the difference that exists and will exist

as long as Judaism and other religions co-exist. The problem of anti-Semitism which rises to the point of hatred is not primarily nor fundamentally religious.

The elimination of the religious basis for anti-Semitism is important. Rationalists for the last one hundred and fifty years have kept insisting that one religion is as good as another, that differences are of no concern as long as they do not disturb the common weal. They have insisted that a man's personal beliefs or practices are his own concern and must be legally recognized and protected; they promise that in an atmosphere thus free from repression differences will gradually be minimized or even eliminated. These sincere men have failed to accord proper importance to the place of religious beliefs in human life, as experience has shown. There certainly has been no repression of Jewish belief or practice in either England or America in the last half century, even though there have been restrictions of other religious beliefs, as in the case of the Mormons. Yet today in both countries we note a rising tide of rabid anti-Semitism and this even though in both countries there is less concern with religion than ever before. It follows, then, that a rising tide of anti-Semitism can co-exist with a loss of interest in religious truths. Moreover, if we analyze the statement that anti-Semitism derives from religious hatred, it must be because this religious hatred and anti-Semitism are fomented either by Church leaders or are inherent in the different religions. The last may be dismissed as historically false for the story of every religious repression by the people shows that some other cause or basis is more fundamental than any religious causes which have been asserted. The other conclusion that anti-Semitism of the violent type has been fomented by Church leaders can be dismissed, quite as summarily, by the testimony of history. Because of the

prevalence of the charge, especially today, we must later return to a discussion of this. Having eliminated the religious basis for the hatred we must see from history the truth of our claim that other elements are present.

In this historical study we must be prepared to accept the fact that an official policy is not overturned by one man or by a number of men, acting individually, if proper ecclesiastical or political authority denounces such actions. It is unfair and dishonest to stigmatize with opprobrium any religious group as a group because of the actions of some individuals even in positions of authority or respect, which actions have been repeatedly denounced by their superiors. It is all too true that there have been grave violations of charity and decency toward the Jews in the past on the part of those who by their position and training should have acted differently. In some cases they have been responsible for the introduction of the calumnious accusations which have since caused such untold suffering. All of us righteously and rightfully condemn such men and such actions, but let not our accusation extend to the group of which they were unworthy members. Such an extension, by both sides of any intense question, from individuals to groups, has caused incalculable harm and may serve to distort the present problem.

With the definition of anti-Semitism propounded and some delineation of the problem thus made, we can now turn our attention to the past.

## WANDERINGS AND SUFFERINGS RECORDED

There is no more extraordinary page in history than that which records the sufferings and wander-

ings of the Jewish people. For the first thousand years or more of their life history, the Hebrews were simply a small nation in western Asia, like any other except in their possession of a monotheistic religion. They were mainly agriculturalists and shepherds. Some time prior to 1600 B. C. they emigrated to the northern portion of Egypt because of a widespread famine. This sojourn lasted over four centuries during which they rapidly increased both in numbers and wealth. A reorganization of national life, following the expulsion of the foreign ruling class from Egypt, brought to public attention the power of the Hebrews and their position in a quarter where, if inclined to be disloyal they could lend invaluable aid to Asiatic invaders. The fear of the Hebrew power and possible disloyalty caused measures to be taken by the Egyptians, first of repression, then of oppression and finally of racial extermination through the order to kill all male children. These failed. A growing Hebrew national consciousness, fear of this alien group and a series of plagues led the ruler of Egypt, held by many to have been Rameses II, to accede to the exodus of this nation from within his borders. Here is the first recorded instance of mass violence against the Hebrews as a people and it was caused by a fear of their power and possible disloyalty.

After years of wandering the Children of Israel were able to settle their nation in Chanaan. The subsequent history up to the conquest of Palestine by Rome is an involved series of individualistic tribal activities, temporary unification into a kingdom, and eventual discord which by the last third of the tenth century before Christ, resulted in two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The Israelitic Kingdom lasted for two centuries until its destruction in 722 B. C. by Sargon II, of Assyria, who vigorously repressed the rebellion against him, and gradually merged the Israelitic stock into the composite race



of Samaritans or transplanted them to Northern Mesopotamia and Western Persia. There they developed and thence they spread to Southern Russia and perhaps to the region of Khurdistan. The Kingdom of Judah endured for three and a half centuries. It was overcome early in the 6th century B. C. by the Babylonians under Nabuchodonosor, again as the result of an unsuccessful rebellion. The Jews, as they have since been called, were transported to Babylonia or escaped to Arabia and perhaps to India. This Babylonian Captivity lasted only 60 years, after which a portion of the Jews returned to Jerusalem to reestablish their nation. These Palestinian Jews now embarked upon difficult times.

External forces, as well as internal conflicts, made precarious their fight for autonomy. From 323 B. C. on, Palestine became the battleground for Egyptian, Syrian and Roman ambitions. Internal conflicts arose from the opposed religious interpretations of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, which overflowed into the realm of politics and later led to armed intervention by Rome. Contact with Hellenism under Antiochus IV of Syria brought about a violent persecution of the Jews who refused to yield one iota of their beliefs and practices. This violence left an unbridgeable gap between Judaism and Hellenism, even though the Bible was translated into Greek and thereby brought into contact with the Roman world. This antagonism between Jews and Hellenism had many repercussions in the next four centuries, notably in Alexandria and Cyprus where outrageous brutality occurred. The position of Palestine on one of the major crossroads of world travel brought about its eventual absorption into the Roman Empire under Pompey in 63 B. C. Internal dissensions, continuing apace with a flurry of activity by false Messianic leaders, caused eventual open rebellion which was quelled by Titus in the

period from 66 to 71 A. D. Thereafter the Palestinian Kingdom of Judah ceased to exist. But Jews were now to be found in China, India, Babylonia, Arabia, Ethiopia and throughout the whole Roman Empire, with the possible exception of Britain.

Under the rule of the Romans the Jews are generally said to have been favorably treated. Their citizenship in local cities and even in Rome was early recognized; later they were accorded the privileges of full Roman citizenship. They were exempt from the obligation of offering sacrifice and could enjoy full practice of their religious rites, except that involved in Temple ceremonial. The transient interferences with their lives as Jews—namely, the order of Caligula that he be accorded divine honors by all; and the interdict of Hadrian against circumcision, the reading of the Law and the observance of the Sabbath—are generally interpreted as abnormalities. But it is important to note that the Roman Empire did order, even if only once, the temporary abolition of Judaism as a religion and that it did enforce an actual change of its essential worship throughout the duration of the Eastern and Western Empires by its refusal to allow the Temple to be rebuilt. To minimize this latter and to overlook the constant political rebellion which occurred on the part of the Jews for a full century is to effect a grave distortion of the historical picture. The Jews were not completely free under the Roman Empire. Following the destruction of the Temple, the Roman interference with religious activity of the Jews was prompted by Roman political purposes.

## JEWISH PROBLEMS INCREASED WITH DECLINE OF ROMAN EMPIRE

With the gradual disintegration of the Roman

Empire, the rise of Christianity to a position of a recognized and later of a favored position in the Empire, the spread of the Moslem Empire and religion, and the gradual development of the nations of Europe, the story of the Jews becomes even more involved and difficult. Within two generations after the Edict of Milan, the Roman Empire became a Christian state, a fact that was to have extraordinary political and social repercussions for the next 1600 years. This new political institution recognized the supremacy of the State in political matters, the supremacy of the Church in religious matters, and the subordination of each to the other in the realm of the other. Under this regime the Jewish religion, always a recognized religion, passed from its privileged position under polytheism to a privileged position under a Christian imperial government and later to a recognized position under a Christian feudal regime. The appreciation of that change in status is important if we are to gain a proper perspective of this period. Under pagan imperial Rome, Judaism was a minority monotheistic sect amid a series of polytheisms; its monotheism was recognized in law through the granting of certain exemptions from polytheistic administrative procedure. Under Christian imperial Rome and under the Christian feudal regime, Judaism was a minority monotheistic sect, now in the presence of a dominant trinitarian monotheism. While to polytheism Judaism represented only an eccentric religion with certain tenets difficult or impossible to assimilate socially and politically, to the Christians Judaism represented a religion whose mission was fulfilled and whose place in the divine economy had ended with the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. Clergy and people alike saw that if Judaism were the true religion in any period following the death of Christ, their Christianity was based on the greatest fraud in history. To the Jew, on the other hand, if Christian-

ity were correct, then Judaism had failed to accept the Messiah who had been promised, had outlived its mission which was to prepare for the coming of that Messiah and which was to be completed through His teaching. The Jew and the Christian of the Middle Ages, equally with the orthodox Jew and the Catholic of today, understood the problem similarly: the truth of one religion was the guarantee of the falsity of the other. However much some may regret the possible religious, political or social effects of that statement, we must accept it as the exact and essential point on which Church and Synagogue differed in the medieval period.

Nor is this merely the question of an unfounded, purely suppositious belief on the part of the Catholic and Christian Church. The Church knows beyond any shadow of doubt that She is the true religion, divinely founded and divinely protected. Hence She can, without malice, call all other religions false. Far from being a conflict between mutually opposed sects between whom no real choice can be made, the opposition is between a Church, guaranteed by God to be in full and complete possession of religious truth, and the Jewish faith which continues to reject the truths which have been divinely revealed.

## RELATIONSHIP OF CATHOLIC CHURCH TOWARD THE JEW

The position of the Catholic Church with regard to the Jews has been and still is that the Jewish religion, as existing, represents the direct antithesis and contradiction of Catholicism. For that reason and for that reason alone She has striven to preserve Catholics from such contact with Jews as might cause harm to the purity of their Catholic faith. To attempt to read into the Church's activity in both

papal and conciliar legislation an ebb and flow based on the reign of philo-semitic and anti-semitic popes is false history. Rather is it certain that the same basic principle has ever been present and that its applications range in stringency as the immediate occasion demands. Finally let it be understood that most of this legislation, born of a Christian State structure, has now been abrogated with the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1918.

To attempt to analyze each piece of legislation, to determine the time limits and the extent of its enforcement, and to correlate some of the contradictions, will be utterly impossible in a paper of this type. Hence the broad outlines of such legislation will be drawn, the fundamental reasons for it discussed and outstanding applications studied. Under such a plan we may present the legislation and promulgations regarding the Jews under these headings:

(1) Measures of direct protection of the faith of Catholics. These include the prohibition of marriages between Jews and Christians, the interdiction of Jews from political, civil or professional positions which exercise authority over Christians, the prohibition of circumcision of Christian slaves by Jewish owners and at times even the retention of such slaves, the destruction of the Talmud and the severe prohibition against reading that collection and the prohibition of Jewish interference with converts from Judaism to Christianity.

(2) Measures separating the social life of the Jews from that of Christians. These include laws requiring wearing of distinctive clothing, separation into given districts, interdiction from partial or complete exercise of certain professions or trades, prohibition of ownership of real estate, interdictions from appearing on the streets during the last three days of Holy Week, and protective rules concerning usury.

(3) Measures circumscribing the religious life of the Jews. These include the penalty of heresy against converts to Judaism from Christianity, the restriction of the number, the ornamentation, and size of synagogues and the prohibition against erection of new ones, the destruction of the Talmud, and enforced attendance at conversational sermons.

(4) Measures of protection for the Jews. These include the recognition of their religion under law, the prohibition of baptism by force, the guarantee of safe return to Judaism of forced adult converts therefrom, the protection of the synagogues or the restoration thereof if they had been wilfully damaged by Christians, and the defense of the Jews against such calumnies as ritual murder, ritual profanation of consecrated hosts and the poisoning of wells at the time of the Black Death. This is a long list and only summary treatment of each individually can be expected.

The Catholic Church has always maintained that fundamental in the life of every creature is his relationship with his God. Being fundamental, that relationship must be completely protected from any unjust interference and from any contamination of the revealed truths which govern proper worship. This guarantee of the full religious exercise looks not only to the individual Catholic but also to any and every other believer. But full freedom to non-believers must be restricted when their activities interfere with Catholic worship or tend in some degree to contaminate Catholic truth.

To protect the faith of Catholics the Church forbade such contact with Jews as might lead to continued religious discussion, to participation, active or passive, in Jewish religious ceremonial, and to control, direct or indirect, of Christians by Jews which might occasion the restriction of the practice of Catholicism. The extension of this to the destruction of books which contain teachings opposed to

the Church or blasphemies against Christ and the Church is simply a safeguard against external contamination. It is important to note here that such legislation follows inevitably from the relationship between Judaism and Christianity and is independent of the moral character or actual practice of Jews individually or collectively. The extent and the character of the restrictions are frequently determined by the latter characteristics. To the interdiction from certain professions and to the order for the destruction of the Talmud much objection has been raised on the grounds that these were unnecessary and unwarranted. Keeping in mind the Church's position, we see that the Church acted consistently in saying to the Jews, "You are an alien in a completely Christian framework; if you stay, it is on our terms; if you feel that your cultural development is impeded, you may either be baptized or leave; but these restrictions are for the safeguard of the majority and must be enforced." To the destruction of the Talmud more serious objection is raised because this was definitely denying the Jew even his religious books. When the condemned blasphemies and the anti-Christian utterances were deleted, the Talmud was allowed to be used by the Jews. History shows, then, that the Church placed definite restrictions upon Jewish activity whenever it constituted a danger for Catholics. These restrictions, in essence, were entirely logical and reasonable.

## MEASURES SEPARATING JEWS FROM CHRISTIANS ANALYZED

The analysis of the measures separating the life of the Jews from that of the Christians involves factors other than religious. The regulations derive, like the preceding, from the Church's protection of Her children from threatened dangers, but the ap-

plications, insofar as Western Europe is involved, are dependent upon the whole social fabric of the feudal system. Fundamental to the feudal structure was the oath of allegiance based upon land and a pyramiding structure of such oaths in an interlocking arrangement from the serfs to the King. Ownership of land was primary to the exercise of political and social control. Hence such ownership was prohibited to Jews lest they exercise such lordship and control over Christians. Far from resenting this situation, the Jews accepted it for two reasons; their desire to keep their capital liquid, to be able to move quickly either from personal desire or through forced expulsion, and their desire to keep their communal solidarity without the obligations incumbent on landed tenure. A further proof of the existence of this attitude is the fact that not once in the records of this six-hundred year period have I found a demand on the part of a Jew for such ownership nor a complaint that such a demand was rejected. As the feudal system developed, the Jews became equivalently a guild or a portion of the royal household in an extended sense. They were the King's own. Because of this position they had to accept certain obligations, one of which was a distinguishing badge to indicate the social group to which they belonged. The wearing of such badge or garb was prevalent throughout medieval Europe. Priests and monks of various orders and congregations, guild members, knights, professional men, even peasants of different localities had distinguishing marks which they at first wore freely and later by legislation after abuses crept in. The "Jew badge," so called, was not the instrument of social degradation that modern authorities have read back into the legislation of the period, but an administrative application of a custom normal to a group of resident strangers. True its universal application at the time of the Fourth General Council of the

Lateran has the earmark of penal legislation; but it was prompted by abuses which had arisen, chiefly in conjunction with the Albigensian and associated heresies. The similar separation into local districts was both the result of the desire of the Jews for communal solidarity and the effect of an administrative procedure which departmentalized various groups in particular sections. These, then, were questions of administrative procedure which were not essentially and exclusively calculated to degrade the Jew but rather to have him conform with the established custom of the period.

With the question of usury and of interdiction from partial or complete exercise of certain trades or professions we come to a discussion of the then current social and economic factors. The problem of usury is one which challenged the attention of the Church through the entire medieval period. During this era the Church fought with all the weapons at her command against a practice which had ruinous social and economic results. That fight was a losing one because of the conflict of many factors, not the least of which was the money which, from the licensing of usury, came to the coffers of the Crown and political favorites. After untangling this complicated skein, certain conclusions can be validly established. Some Jews were usurers; other Jews were connected with the usurers in the management of estates, in the collection of moneys, in the selling of goods which had been pledged. There were likewise Christian usurers, notably the Lombards and the Cahorsin or Ultramontanes. The rates of all groups were high, in many cases ruinously so, but the rates exacted by Jews seem to have been no higher than those of Christians in all or even the majority of instances. Contrary to a frequent charge it is an historical fact that the Jew was not pushed into the business by the connivance of the Church to provide a solution to an economic problem which

She refused to allow her own members to settle. The strangulation of economic life which resulted from usury caused widespread irritation, violence and eventually expulsion for Jew and Christian usurer alike and that on the ground of usury alone. There was some religious resentment against the Jewish usurer as a Jew but it is by no means a universal concomitant phenomenon. From these conclusions we can state categorically that the Jew is not innately a usurer, that the conflict with him as usurer was inherently an economic conflict, and that his usury alone was not responsible for the widespread strangulation of economic life which occurred from time to time in the medieval period.

As to the interdiction from partial or complete exercise of certain trades or professions we can arrive at no general conclusions. In some instances, such as the prohibition of Jewish lawyers pleading in Christian matrimonial cases, we can see wise administrative procedure. In the rejection of the Jew from certain guilds we can see the factor of greed. In the restriction of Jewish medical activities we can see both superstition and the fear of use of lax or non-Christian moral standards. But, generally speaking, each case must be studied separately; no universal conclusions can be drawn.

## PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE JEWS

The third series of measures, those circumscribing the religious life of the Jews, are inexplicable to people who feel that one religion is as good as another or who proceed on the assumption that from theoretical principles full freedom must be accorded to all. The Church has maintained in theory and practice that Hers is the only correct, divinely revealed and hence authoritatively binding doctrine.

Rejection of that doctrine in whole or in part is the rejection of the word of God Who cannot err. Hence continued rejection of the Church's doctrine by an adult baptized Catholic must mean the obstinate rejection of truth. There is nothing strange about that viewpoint. We find it more difficult, however, to understand why such obstinate rejection should lead to the death penalty, reserved as it is today for murderers and traitors. To the medieval Catholic such rejection was traitorous and they accorded to it the capital penalty. The Catholic certainty of the truth of Catholic belief gave basis for an insistence that non-believers should attend sermons on that Catholic faith, since it was hoped that upon hearing the explanation of the correct doctrine they would immediately embrace the faith and be assured of all the graces of salvation. Conversions, however, from such enforced attendance were negligible, precisely because of the pressure applied. These restrictions upon Judaic life are understandable enough from the viewpoint of the medieval Catholic, as was the destruction of the Talmud, previously discussed, for its alleged blasphemies and anti-Christian utterances. The restrictions upon the synagogue building flow from the same principle, although the motives for this have frequently been distorted by historians. If the Jewish religion was one which God Himself had superseded, then its buildings in style, size, ornamentation and number should not be allowed to rival the churches of the true religion. Considerable harshness has been frequently noted in the interpretation of this legislation and much unfairness was shown, which is to the everlasting discredit of those responsible. Again, though, these measures have proceeded from a fundamental belief in the correctness of the Christian religion and from a desire to protect the purity of the religion from any contamination.

Within these limits the Church has maintained

that the Jews were free to practice their religion among themselves. That may seem a contradiction in terms in view of the large number of the actual restrictions. However, let us be fair about it. They were granted their synagogues, even in Rome and Avignon. Violations of the synagogue or destruction thereof were punished by requiring not only the repair or rebuilding of such buildings but extra financial penalties as well. Cases where this was overlooked or actually forbidden are so few as to be clearly contrary to the general trend. The Jews were guaranteed their freedom to remain Jews. Popes and Councils alike forbade the forced baptism or molestation of Jews and backed up that legislation. True it was violated and not infrequently, even by ecclesiastics. But it would be unfair to maintain that the Church officially winked at such practices, considering the severity of papal language on these occasions. In general, too, adult Jews who were forcibly baptized, were allowed to revert to Judaism when the popular clamor abated and this frequently by express papal command. Finally the Popes courageously and in face of general popular antagonism have defended the Jews against calumnious accusations, notably of ritual murder, of ritual profanation of consecrated hosts and of the poisoning of wells at the time of the Black Death. The two calumnies, ritual murder and ritual profanation, still reappear, occasionally under the names of estimable men, despite their repeated designation as vicious calumnies by Popes. This protecting charity amid wise administrative procedures has been the official tradition of the Church.

## ACCUSATIONS HURLED AT CHURCH DENIED

Before concluding this discussion we must treat of the accusation made on so many sides that the

official attitude of the Catholic Church has been responsible for the outbreak of modern radical anti-Semitism. These authors point to the parallel between all the modern actions and the legislation and the events of the medieval period; the examples cited are the "Jew badge," the enforced restriction of the ghetto, the exclusion from positions in political, civil or professional life, and even the mass-murders. The argument receives various developments. In general it proceeds from the unbridgeable gap which Christianity has placed between itself and the Jew, which thereby places the Jew in a subordinate and inferior position and which requires that the Jew be made a mere vassal and a wanderer. To this is often added the accusation that the Church stigmatizes the Jewish race as "Christ-killers" and hence the most odious of murderers. Further developments include the charges that the Church had deliberately misrepresented, either by silence or by positive lie, the true position of the Pharisee, the true picture of the Crucifixion, the essence of the early and later conflict between Christianity and Judaism, and the nobility of the contribution of the Jew to civilization. This last is even amplified to the point that the Jews gave the world Christ Himself, the early Christians and the entire Catholic religion which then ungratefully persecuted its forebear and robbed her of her inheritance. In many cases such theses are presented with citations from Catholic sources and with the most imposing array of scientific critical apparatus. Rash indeed would he be who would attempt to overturn such supposedly respectable historical conclusions! For they are only supposedly respectable!

As stated in the earlier portion of this paper, instances of anti-Semitism must be judged from the end sought or attained. Radical anti-Semitism which would eliminate Jews, which seeks to exclude them by death or expulsion, which denies them a part in

society because of their race alone is one thing—a thing incidentally which has been vehemently condemned by Pope Pius XI. Such anti-Semitism is based on hatred. The opposition to religious tenets which are the direct antithesis of Christian principles and which seeks neither exclusion nor death is quite another. There is no instance in official Church pronouncements which even hints at universal exclusion or mass murder. Temporary exclusions, occurring outside the limits of this paper, were ordered by Popes for specific violations. The ejections from European countries took place under secular authorities, with no command or hint from the Papacy, and even in spite of their protests on occasions; the reception of these wanderers into the Papal States is proof both of the charity of the popes toward the Jews and of the papal opposition to such ejections.

But even when this point is admitted, some scholars still maintain that the accusation against the Jews of deicide or "Christ-killers" has been and is the basis of all antagonism and is the source of the element of hate in anti-Semitism. Bluntly it should be said that the Church has never officially said or stated that the Jews as a race are responsible for the death of Christ. True, some Christian writers have made such an interpretation of the Gospel phrase, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Such men are of the negligible minority and Catholic tradition has definitely excluded that interpretation, as impartial examination will show. It is also true that certain rabble rousers have preached such a doctrine in time of crisis to arouse men to violence. But it is not nor has it ever been an official interpretation of the Church.

Objection is likewise made to the charge that those Jews who actually procured the death of Christ were guilty of deicide, were Christ-killers. Some historians have attempted, but in vain, to

show that such an accusation is false. Since their argument is based upon a conglomeration of rationalistic interpretations and of apocryphal narratives of the trial and crucifixion of Christ, their conclusions may be rejected forthwith. Other students for more practical reasons feel that the Church is unwise and unfair to the Jews to connect even unworthy representatives of their race or religion with this heinous crime. This suppression of historical facts would be a dangerous procedure because it would lead to increased tension when the suppression is discovered. This then brings us to the fundamental statement, that radical anti-Semitism is due to the stigmatization by the Church of the Jew as a member of an unorthodox religion.

### VERY NATURE OF CHURCH BELIES ANTI-SEMITIC ATTITUDE

The Church has thus termed the Jew a member of an unorthodox religion. But it has not thereby rejected him as an individual nor condemned him as inferior in himself. The Church as a religious organization ardently yearns and sincerely prays for the conversion of the Jew; once baptized, each Jewish convert is received into full fellowship and communion of faith, thereby proving the absence of any belief that there is an essential inferiority due solely to religion. As previously seen the Church would act contrary to her mission of salvation for all were She to be a partner in the movements of mass-violence, in the pogroms or in the systematic destruction and extinction of the Jewish race. Let it be remembered that the conversion of the Jews to Christianity is one of the marks of the second coming of Christ—the only nation or people for whom such a promise has been made. Hence we answer the charge that anti-Semitism derives from an untrue

characterization of the Jewish religion by denying that any such anti-Semitism has resulted or can result from such doctrine. The burden of proof that it is otherwise lies on the historian who makes the charge. He must show in each case that this ground alone is responsible for the outbreak of the movement of violence. It may be added that if such be the case, he must similarly prove the point in the case of persecution by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Romans and the Moslems, for each and all of these held Judaism to be an unorthodox religion. The opposition, then, between Judaism and Christianity has not been and is not the cause of anti-Semitism as defined in this paper.

Up to now I have mentioned only the restrictions which the Catholic Church through papal and conciliar legislation imposed upon the Jews directly of itself, or indirectly through local rulers. There has been no discussion of the persecutions and the massacres which occurred with saddening frequency during the Middle Ages. This treatment has been postponed to this portion of the paper that a true picture of the Church's relationship with the Jews might first be presented. With that true picture must now be conjoined a survey of the political history of the period. This postponement is, I think, valid also because the official policy of the Church has been older and more constant and because the Church preceded the rise of all the States of that and later periods. The Church contributed much to the political and social development of the European Middle Ages. But her influence was not constantly the same, nor was it equal in contiguous geographical regions at a given time. This gradual political evolution, the conflicts between king, nobles, cities, Church and people, the external conflict with the rising and later threatening Islamic Empire, all formed an ever changing background against which the story of the medieval Jew must



be studied. Within the limits of this paper only broad generalizations can be made; even the status of Jews in any given national history cannot be discussed because of lack of space.

With the development of feudal Europe we are familiar. The gradual evolution of strong national government exercising sway over a definite geographical area in which no other political autonomy was tolerated took centuries. During this process the kings made such alliances with one or more of the social and political groups with whom they could, in order that they might increase their power. At times these alliances were unwise in formation and destructive in result. Dependent in large measure upon the aid the Jews gave to this process was their treatment dictated. If the King needed money, the Jews were protected by royal power as long as they could furnish an income to the treasury or they were expelled because confiscation or forced sale would be of greater benefit. If the King felt that national unity could better be attained by religious unity, then the Jews were asked to accept baptism wholeheartedly or leave. Thus the Jews were banished from various cities in Germany in the 15th century, expelled from England in 1290, from France, finally, in 1394, from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1493. In these political movements the Church had no hand. Popes did refuse to approve some measures of expulsion; no Pope asked or demanded such forthright measures. However, Popes, ranking Churchmen and local clergy asked that the restrictions which were an inheritance of the days of the Roman Empire be enforced; from time to time they added new ones to meet changing conditions. That such requests were not always granted is evident from re-enacted legislation and from later demands. That such restrictions were effective in preserving order and avoiding expulsions is evident from the experience of the Eastern Empire and of

the Papal States.

## WIDESPREAD PERSECUTION AND MASS VIOLENCE

That the Jews suffered much apart from these royal extortions and expulsions is only too well known. Widespread persecutions and local instances of mass violence are the matter of sad record. These violences and massacres are traceable to the following causes: usury which had strangled local economic life and hatred aroused by fanaticism or calumnious accusations. Vehement opposition to strangling usury was directed against the Jews and their religious associates as usurers. Religious opposition sometimes was present and just as often absent. The fanaticism and the calumnious accusations are more difficult to understand and explain. These have occurred when governments have been strong and likewise when they have been weak, when the Church had a tremendous influence over the lives of men and when that influence was at low ebb. The only common note is the presence of tension, be it local, national or international. That tension once existing, the accusations against the living Jews as "Christ-killers" at the time of the First Crusade, as murderers of children or desecrators of the consecrated hosts for ritual purposes after 1171, and as poisoners of the wells to rid the world of Christianity at the time of the Black Death, spread like wild fire and Jews were massacred by the thousands. Despite repeated and thunderous denials of the truth of these calumnious statements they could be aroused again by fanatics in time of tension. For this no satisfactory explanation has yet been offered nor can one be now given. Why people accept as true calumnies long since disproved, currently evident as ridiculous, and even when the

object of the calumny has been absent for hundreds of years is still inexplicable psychologically. One historical fact must be kept clearly in mind. No such widespread massacres of the Jews occurred in the medieval Papal States, assign what reason you will. I think we may safely conclude that the Papal restrictions, based on rational premises and charitably but firmly enforced were the best guarantee to the Jew of immunity from violence and from degrading persecution and expulsion.

This series of repressions, persecutions and massacres of the Jews during the medieval period is frequently contrasted with the treatment accorded them by the Islamic Empire. The absence of such violence, the excellent treatment of the Jew in many parts of that Empire and the development of a high degree of Jewish culture, particularly in Spain, are frequently cited as evidence of a more favorable solution of the Jewish problem. This evidence is usually presented as indicative of the lack of charity in the Church and the Christian society which supposedly is based upon the law of love proclaimed by Christ and as likewise indicative of the administrative genius of the Moslems. Such restrictions as appear in the history are treated as temporary aberrations from a noble tradition. This is not in accord with historical fact.

In general the Moslems despised the Jew for his religion and that in accord with the fundamental book of Mohammedanism, the Koran, which stated that the Jews were infidels. Mohammed himself, at first friendly with the Jews whom he wished to win to his new faith, persecuted them when they turned from him in disgust because of the over-emphasis on sexual delights both in this life and the next. When he joined the sword to his religion, he quickly overcame two Jewish-Arabian tribes and exterminated a third. The second Caliph, Omar I, banished all Jews from holy Arabia and drew up the

"Covenant of Omar," which imposed restrictions upon Jews throughout the entire Islamic world. By this the Jews were excluded from administrative and judicial offices and otherwise politically discriminated against. Socially they were given an inferior status and forced to wear distinguishing marks upon their clothing that they might easily be distinguished from their Moslem and Christian neighbors. Their religious freedom was sharply restricted since they were not allowed to build new houses of worship nor restore those in ruins, and since they were required to sing in subdued tones in their synagogues and only to pray silently for the dead. These restrictions were not universally enforced at all times nor even with the same severity throughout the Empire at a given time. The distinction of clothing, the social inferiority and some species of religious intolerance were insisted upon in the African and Asiatic portions of the Islamic Empire at all times, not too occasionally in a stringent manner. Widespread persecution, especially under the Fatimide Caliph, Hakim, and under the Almohades, reached the point of choice between conversion and enforced emigration. This is certainly not favorable treatment!

This undoubtedly may come as a sharp surprise to many who have made the treatment of the Jews in Islamic Spain the norm for the Jewish status in the entire Islamic Empire. In Spain, there were factors of peculiar historical significance. The Moslems maintained their European stronghold in Spain against constantly increasing pressure from the northern Christian kingdoms. The Jews under Moslem domination were accorded a favored status to preserve administrative and national integrity against this ever present threat which at length drove the Moors from Western Europe. That this treatment was accidental, dependent upon local circumstances and utterly opposed to the Moslem

tradition is indicated by the absence of such a constantly high degree of Jewish culture in other parts of the Empire either during the medieval period or after the conquest of Moorish Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella. Jewish freedom in Spain was an historical phenomenon—born of political necessity and maintained against a contrary tradition; when that political necessity was absent, the status of the Jews under the Moslems continued as or reverted to that of social, political and religious inferiority.

## LONG CONTINUED PERSECUTION

We have seen that the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Romans, the Moslems and the European Christians have persecuted in one form or another the Jews in the period prior to 1500 A. D. All these peoples considered the Jewish religion unorthodox. Restrictions on the full exercise of the Jewish religion eventually occurred under all these nations for administrative reasons. Violence occurred when the Jews revolted against the existing power, when the desire for national unity sought to exclude those who were aliens because of their alienness, when political avarice saw in Jewish moneys or properties an opportunity for personal gain and when fanaticism or calumnious accusations focused popular discontent upon the Jew. No people have been the object of such long continued persecution or the object of such vile calumnies who have remained so steadfast. We decry the lack of administrative foresight which sought to exclude the Jews merely because of their alienness. We leave to the unerring judgment of God those fanatics and the perpetrators of malicious calumnies. We deeply regret that such unfortunate incidents, written in so much innocent blood, have taken place. But from them we can draw valuable lessons that the future may not be stained by such disgraces.

We recall, too, that the Papal States have been free in the period under discussion from such violence. Therefrom I think we may justly conclude that at least a partial solution of the problem was there attained.

On that basis, then, one of the most important contributions which can be made by this conference is the elimination once and for all in the mind of each one here that the Catholic Church is responsible for modern anti-Semitism. It has been shown to be a false statement historically. Sociologically it is dangerous, and religiously it is suicidal, for it asks that one of two things logically be done: either eliminate Catholics because their Church is considered to be the precipitating factor of this social evil or eliminate the question of the Messianic mission from controversy. Either course of action but accentuates the very tension whence anti-Semitism springs. Far from settling the problem it will only end in subordinating all religion to sociological, naturalistic and rationalistic norms, which means the end of Judaism or else its endurance of a new and violent persecution.

## GOOD WILL MOVES MOUNTAINS

Many have in good faith accused the Catholic Church of causing and fomenting, perhaps unconsciously, the evil of anti-Semitism. Let those who have done so be now assured that they have been misled by opponents of organized religion. Many made the same accusation in bad faith, seeking violence to attain a mass movement against religion. Such men wish but to subordinate the things of God to the norms of men, to make of a generation human guinea pigs for the germination of their preconceived notions born of hatreds and jealousies. To point accusing fingers at definite individuals will serve no purpose. It is enough that we recognize

these movements for what they really are.

"That they may be one, as Thou, Father in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us," Christ prayed in His beautiful testament of love on the night before His death. That prayer has been the guiding spirit of the Church through the ages, is the ideal of every priest, bishop and Pope of the Catholic Church. With that prayer in my heart has this talk been prepared, written and delivered. Blunt statements have been made, perhaps in blunt fashion, not to offend, but to arouse people to the reality of the problem and to the importance of correct thinking in seeking a solution. To ignore the problem would be to consign it to misdirected and unwatched festering. To dismiss it with the words "love thy neighbor," would be failure to meet a challenge. The charges and accusations, the aims and intentions must be brought into the open. Neither side has anything to fear from the truth. Mistakes there have been on both sides. Let the authors of those mistakes be left to the judgment of the God of love, Who will searchingly ask the reason for such lack of charity. Recognizing and admitting the mistakes, we can better avoid them in the future. Good will can move mountains. Good will born of true knowledge and zeal for cure can solve this problem. Under God, through God, with God, can God-fearing, God-loving men come to mutual love and agreement.

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