

Articles

TALMUDIC FORGERIES A CASE STUDY IN ANTI-JEWISH PROPAGANDA

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THROUGHOUT history, the Talmud has been a main target of the attacks by enemies of Judaism. The recent rise in Nazi-inspired propaganda, accordingly, brought with it a recrudescence of the accusations made against this storehouse of Jewish lore. The falsification of Talmudic texts and the distortion of their teachings are spread with increased vigor throughout the English-speaking world.

The fact that these libels have been exposed repeatedly by the testimony of Jewish as well as Christian scholars has not deterred present day purveyors of these slanders from attempting to portray the Talmud as the fountainhead of an inferior and unethical morality. It may seem incredible to the average person that the Jewish religion, mother of all monotheistic religions of justice and mercy, should need defense against such accusations. But this study is less a defense and refutation than an analysis of the way these propagandists work, and the combination of unscrupulous distortion and crudity which characterizes their attack. It is also an exposure of the real motives for which these attacks are only an opening wedge.

WHAT THE TALMUD IS

The Talmud is a record of opinions and discussions on all phases of law and life culled from the utterances of those outstanding Jewish teachers who functioned in the academies of Palestine and Babylonia during the first five centuries of the

common era. The earliest layer of the Talmud is the *Mishnah*, a product of Palestinian scholarship and written in a clear, lucid Hebrew. The later expository supplement known as the *Gemara* was developed after the sanguinary Judeo-Roman wars of 70, 116 and 135 C. E., when the center of Jewish population was shifting from Palestine to Babylonia. Paralleling the Palestinian *Gemara* there is a Babylonian *Gemara*, produced by the newer academies of Babylonia. Both *Gemaras* were written in the Aramaic vernaculars then current in Babylonia and Palestine.

The vast scope of the work, as well as certain linguistic peculiarities in its Aramaic style make the volumes of the Talmud difficult reading to the average lay person. But none of these are difficulties which patient research and study will not overcome. The Talmud was always included in the traditional curriculum of the elementary Jewish school and, with proper coaching, ten year old children have been able to grasp Talmudic discussions. Anyone who has read the writings of the Church Fathers will find himself at home in the pages of the Talmud. Produced in the same milieu and affected by the same currents of thought, both the Talmud and the Church Fathers show a striking similarity in ideology, type of reasoning and the roles they have played in the respective traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

Translations and special guides, prepared by Christian as well as Jewish scholars will initiate any interested student into an understanding of Talmudic literature. There is a splendid English translation of the *Mishnah*, published in 1933, by Reverend Herbert Danby, Canon of Christ Church and Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, England. There is a German translation of the Babylonian Talmud by Lazarus Goldschmidt. The Palestinian Talmud is available in a French translation by M. Schwab. The Soncino Press in London has recently announced a new translation of the Talmud in English under the very competent editorship of Dr. I. Epstein, and thirty volumes have already been issued.

Among the finest introductions to the literature of the Talmud is *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* by Her-

mann Strack, prominent Protestant theologian and professor at the University of Berlin, and *Talmud and Apocrypha* by the well-known British scholar, the Reverend I. Travers Herford. An accurate and exhaustive survey of the world outlook of Talmudic Judaism is available in the monumental work, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, by the eminent Protestant scholar and Professor of Religion at Harvard University, the late George Foot Moore. A brief digest of the contents of the Talmud, with copious quotations, is available in A. Cohen's *Everyman's Talmud*.

Jewish teachers and Rabbis have always been happy to help any non-Jew in the study of Jewish sources. Indeed, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, in New York has only recently opened an Interdenominational Institute for the very purpose of assisting non-Jews, particularly members of the Christian clergy, who may be interested in the study of any phase of Jewish tradition. The truth about the Talmud and its place in the history of religion will unfold for anyone, Jew and non-Jew alike, who is prepared to make the necessary investment of time and study.

THE TALMUD IN JEWISH TRADITION

Constituting as it does a record of more than five centuries of Jewish cultural creativity, it is only natural that the Talmud should have exerted an enormous influence on the Jewish people. Throughout the Middle Ages when European learning was generally at a low ebb and whatever of it that existed was carried on under ecclesiastical auspices, from which Jews were excluded, the Talmud was the principal subject of Jewish cultural activity. Its metaphors and maxims, its approach to life and its modes of reasoning all became part and parcel of the cultural equipment of the average Jew. But the Talmud as such was never an official code guiding Jewish religious or social behavior. Indeed, Jewish tradition does not recognize any official authoritative codes or catechisms outside of the Bible. Authoritative statements of Jewish behavior were to be formulated by the scholars of every age who were to reckon with traditional precedents as well as prevailing conditions in

reaching their decisions. As one Talmudic teacher puts it, "Every new religious insight that a contemporary seer is destined to announce is as precious as though it had been revealed at Sinai."

The *Shulhan Aruk* of Joseph Caro (1488-1575) became an authoritative religious code for central and Eastern European Jewry simply because, in content as well as form, it recommended itself to prevailing Jewish public opinion. But such distinguished teachers of Judaism as R. Moses Iserles, Solomon Luria, Mordecai Jaffe, Samuel Edels and Yom Tob Lippman Heller did not hesitate to dispute the authority of the *Shulhan Aruk*. Even as late as the eighteenth century, Elijah b. Solomon, the Gaon of Wilno, preferred to ignore the *Shulhan Aruk* and decide cases on the basis of an independent weighing of precedents and circumstances. At the present time most Orthodox Jews continue to respect the authority of the *Shulhan Aruk*. For many other Jews, however, particularly those in the Reform camp—and even some in the Conservative—the prescriptions of this Code no longer carry the old validity.

Father A. H. Dirksen, writing in the *Ecclesiastical Review* (January 1939, page 12) has put it very succinctly: "The Talmud in its entirety . . . is no more binding on Jewry than the varied and unacceptable opinions which may be found scattered throughout the body of early Christian literature are for believing Christians." But the Talmud does represent a monument of Jewish cultural tradition in which Jews will always find inspiration and guidance such as any great literature so rich in human experience must hold out for a people.

WHO ARE THE TALMUD BAITERS?

Most of the slanders upon the Talmud may well be labelled "Made in Germany." The father of the modern calumnies upon the Talmud was John Andreas Eisenmenger (1654-1704). Eisenmenger offered to suppress his work, *Entdecktes Judentum* (Jewry Unmasked), for a consideration of 30,000 florins, but the Jews refused to be blackmailed into paying this sum. The book has been described as a "collection of scan-

dals" by the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliographie*, an official encyclopaedia of German bibliography published by the German Imperial Academy of Science in 1876. "Some passages," the appraisal continues, "are misinterpreted; some distorted; others are insinuations based on one-sided inferences" (Volume V, page 773).

A more spectacular attack upon the Talmud was made by Dr. August Rohling (1839-1931), a Professor of Hebrew Antiquities at Prague. His *Der Talmudjude* (The Talmud Jew) went through 17 editions with a circulation of 200,000 copies in Austria alone. Most of his material was plagiarized from Eisenmenger, but in each new edition Rohling repeated an offer of 1000 Taler "if Judah managed to get a verdict from the German Association of Orientalists that the quotations were fictitious and untrue." The challenge was taken up by Joseph S. Bloch, Rabbi at Florisdorf and later a member of the Austrian Parliament, who offered 3,000 Taler if Rohling could prove that he was able to read a single page of the Talmud chosen at random by Rohling himself. Accusing Rohling of ignorance and perjury, Bloch dared him to bring a libel suit. Because of his professional standing, Rohling could not evade the issue and finally charged Bloch with libel before a Vienna magistrate.

The court was anxious to make a thorough study of the subject and requested the Rector of the University of Vienna, Hofrat Zscholk, and the German Association of Orientalists to appoint two experts. It conceded to Rohling's request that both these experts be "full-blooded" Christians. Professor Theodor Nöldeke of the University of Strassburg and Professor August Wünsche of Dresden, were selected. From time to time additional experts were called in. After two and a half years the report was ready. The trial was to start November 18, 1885, but before the hearings began, Rohling, afraid of an open exposure, withdrew all his charges. The court sentenced him to pay the cost of the trial and, disgraced, he was retired from his university post.

Another such Talmud "authority" was Aaron Briman, alias Dr. Justus. He was born a Jew and had aspirations for a

career as a Jewish scholar. But when he lost face with the Jewish community for deserting his wife and children, he became a Protestant. Subsequently, he became a Catholic and then a Protestant again, and finally tried to return to Judaism. Toward the end of his career he once again joined the Catholic Church. His principal work, published anonymously, was *Der Judenspiegel* (The Mirror of the Jew), a compilation of a hundred laws taken from the *Shulhan Aruk* and purporting to show the Jewish animosity toward Christians. In a book about the Cabala, which Briman subsequently wrote under his true name, he said that the whole anti-Semitic literature from Eiesenmenger to the *Judenspiegel* (his own work!) had been written by stupid and ignorant men. In 1885 he was sentenced by a Vienna court to a long term in prison and expulsion from Austria for forgery of documents. Professor Franz Delitzsch, the famous Protestant theologian, pronounced the *Judenspiegel* "a concoction of damnable lies." Following his expulsion Briman took up medical studies in Paris. These same forgeries of Justus-Briman were later published by another adventurer, Jacob Ecker, who offered them as his own work under the title *The Hundred Laws of the Jewish Catechism*.

Czarist Russia made its contribution to this gallery of literary swindlers in the person of the notorious Justin Pranaitis, a Catholic clergyman. His monograph, *The Christian in the Jewish Talmud*, was based on the works of Eisenmenger and Rohling. To create the impression of authenticity he cites many passages in the original Hebrew and Aramaic, but they are all lifted from Eisenmenger, errors and misprints included. By identifying as references to Christians and Christianity such epithets in the Talmud as *am ha-aretz* (literally, a peasant, but more generally, an illiterate person), *akum* (pagan or idol worshipper), *apikoros* (epicurean but applied to heretics generally) and *kuthim* (the Samaritans), he "proves" widespread prejudices on the part of the Talmudists toward Christianity.

In spite of his office as a Catholic clergyman, Pranaitis became involved in the course of a checkered career in some

financial scandals. A picture in a frame which he wanted gilded at the workshop of a certain Avanzo in Petersburg was accidentally damaged; whereupon he tried to extort 3,000 rubles from the owner of the shop on the alleged ground that the picture had been painted by the seventeenth century artist, Murillo, and that it was part of the collection of Cardinal Gintovt. Both allegations were later proved false. On another occasion he was charged by the board of a local Catholic welfare society in his home parish at Tashkent with misappropriating the sum of 1,500 rubles.

It was in 1912 during the trial of Beiliss on the ritual murder libel that Pranaitis drew world notoriety upon himself by offering his services as an expert to the prosecution. When confronted by the bulls of Popes Innocent IV and Clement XIV which denounced ritual murder charges against Jews as libels and slander and which called upon Christians to desist from the staging of ritual murder trials, Pranaitis denied the genuineness of the documents. Cardinal Merry del Val, the Papal Secretary of State, examined the originals at the Vatican and certified that they were genuine. Beiliss was, of course, acquitted, but the prosecution remunerated the star "expert" with 500 rubles.

Pranaitis died on January 29, 1917. It took more than a month for the Czarist government to issue the permit for the removal of his body from Petersburg to Tashkent. Objections had to be overcome of local officials in Tashkent where he had left some very bad impressions, who urged an inconspicuous burial in Petersburg.

THE LIE PERSISTS

Refutations of the libels against the Talmud have been stated explicitly enough by Christians as well as Jewish scholars. Joseph S. Bloch has edited the basic records of Rohling's libel suit against him, including the expert testimony of the Christian scholars, Nöldeke and Wünsche, under the title, *Israel and the Nations* (Berlin-Vienna, 1927). A very helpful refutation is also contained in the work of the famous Protestant theologian, Franz Delitzsch, *Was D. Aug. Rohling*

beschworen hat und beschwören will (What D. Aug. Rohling Has Sworn to and Is Prepared to Swear, Leipzig, 1883). *Jüdische Geheimgesetze* (Secret Laws of Judaism, Berlin, 1920) by Hermann Strack presents a competent analysis and exposure of the basic allegations against the Talmud. Among the more recent statements in vindication of the Talmud is the very lucid article by Father A. H. Dirksen, "The Talmud and Anti-Semitism," in the January 1939 issue of the *Ecclesiastical Review*, a publication of the Catholic University of America and the pamphlet, *A Fact About the Jews*, written by the famous Catholic scholar, Joseph N. Moody, and distributed under the auspices of the Trinity League of the Paulist Fathers.

Anyone who compares the alleged statements of the Talmud with the actual Talmudic texts will notice at once the lies and the falsifications. Indeed Thaddeus Zaderecki, a Polish Catholic scholar, who began his researches in the Talmud under the inspiration of anti-Semitic libels, became so moved on learning the truth that he is today a staunch fighter in behalf of Jews and particularly of the Talmud. The ambition that started him was "to advance the cause of unmasking the Talmud." The work which he finally produced, *The Talmud in the Crucible of the Centuries* (available in the original Polish and in a German translation by Minna Safier, Vienna, 1937), is a brilliant appreciation of the moral values in Talmudic literature and a refutation of the libels against it, particularly those of Rohling and Pranaitis.

For the most part, however, the attacks against the Talmud persist. They continue to emanate particularly from Nazi Germany and from Nazi inspired sources in other countries. An anonymous pamphlet, *Thus Speaks the Talmud*, with evidence from "Jewish Rabbi Scriptures" was recently distributed in large quantities in the United States. It openly acknowledges as its authorities the "experts" Eisenmenger, Rohling and Ecker! *Why are the Jews Persecuted for Their Religion?*, another anonymous leaflet following the same pattern, has also been used extensively in present anti-Semitic propaganda in this country. The quality of the "scholarship"

which went into producing it may be judged from the fact that it identifies *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) as "the Jewish New Year" and fixes its date on the seventeenth of September! In spite of their repudiation by many competent scholars, including noted Catholic theologians, these slanders against the Talmud are repeated almost verbatim in an article published in the issue of December 12, 1938, of Father Coughlin's publication, *Social Justice*.

THE TECHNIQUE OF FALSIFICATION

The technique of falsification employed by these literary charlatans is everywhere the same. They bridge the gulf between fact and fiction and with complete callousness manipulate their material to produce the perfect slander. The latest layer of Talmudic literature was composed at the close of the fifth century, and yet most of these "authorities" quote "Talmudic" references from the *Shulhan Aruk*, a sixteenth century work, the *Yalkut Hadash*, a seventeenth century work, and the *Midrash Talpiot* of the early eighteenth century! Father Coughlin's *Social Justice*, on the other hand, speaks of the Talmud as though it had existed in the "days of Moses"!

Some of the most fantastic charges are made without references to corroborating evidence. The slanderers have tried to create an air of mystery about the Talmud and to give the impression that its contents remain the secret possession of the initiated few and that non-Jews cannot have access to it. One of these scurrilous pamphlets makes the statement that "A Dr. Pinner was poisoned by the Jews when he began to translate the Talmud." Ephraim Moses Pinner published a German translation of *Berakot*, the first tractate of the Talmud, in 1842 with the approbation of some of the most distinguished German rabbis of his day. He died in 1880 at the age of eighty. We have already seen that Christian scholars like Danby, Strack, Moore, Herford, Zaderecki, as well as a host of others have mastered the Talmudic literature and are regarded among the outstanding authorities in the field. Years of study and research have, moreover, moved these Christian scholars

to acclaim the Talmud as a great religious classic with an important message for all mankind.

The Talmud baiters occasionally support their assertions with elaborate quotations. It is not always easy to trace these quotations to their sources. The titles of the works cited are often so grossly misspelled that it is difficult to recognize them. *Yalkut* is cited as "Jektut;" *Yad* as "Jak;" *Nedarim* as "Nadarine." Occasionally, the titles as cited appear altogether fictitious, such as "Gad, Shas.," "Rabbi Ismael," "Rabbi Chambar," et al., "Tract Mechilla." Frequently, the works quoted are the well known but no volume, page, chapter or verse is indicated, such as a general reference to "Szaoloth-Utszabot, the Book of Jore Dia 17." *Shaalot Utshubot* simply means "responsa" and it applies to the correspondence of the rabbis on religious questions. The New York Public Library lists in its catalogue hundreds of such volumes of responsa.

It is when the citations are specific and drawn from genuine sources that comparisons become possible. It is then that the falsification unfolds in all its brazenness. Repeatedly, for example, *Libbre David* 37 is cited as the source for the statement: "If a Jew be called upon to explain any part of the Rabbinic books, he ought to give only a false explanation. Whoever will violate this order shall be put to death." There is no such Hebrew word as *Libbre*. What is obviously meant is *Dibre David*. It is interesting that the corruption *Libbre David* follows the misprint of the German original (a pamphlet quoted by Bloch, *Israel and the Nations*, page 4). Several books by the name of *Dibre David* were published, the earliest in 1671 and some as late as the nineteenth century. Strack (*Geheimgesetze*, page 6) took the trouble to search all books by that name and pronounced the text a complete and unadulterated forgery. No such passage or any passage expressing such sentiments is to be found in any of these books.

Another charge also supported with the formidable evidence of direct "quotation" is that the Talmud holds non-Jews in contempt, and encourages Jews to abuse them. "A gentile girl who is three years old can be violated," one Talmud baiter

quotes from *Abodah Zarah* 37a. What the passage does say is the very opposite. It applies the customary modesties expected between Jewish boys and Jewish girls to the mixed relationships of Jewish boys and non-Jewish girls; it declares that these modesties must be observed after the girl passes her third birthday. To explain the importance of these modesties at so early an age the Talmud adds the comment that after her third birthday the girl might be subject to intimacies of a sexual character. It is this explanatory comment which the baiters of the Talmud have torn out of its context and distorted into an alleged sanction for immorality.

Maimonides is quoted as the author of a statement, "A man is permitted to abuse a woman in her state of unbelief." The "quotation" is apparently based on a statement by Maimonides in *Yad ha-Hazaka*, "Laws of Kings and Their Wars," 8:2, but its meaning is grossly misinterpreted. Maimonides deals with a condition of war and his concern is with counteracting one of the universal abuses of soldiery—the reckless appropriation of the captive women. In the spirit of Deuteronomy, 21:10-15, he requires that one who in the frenzy of war has abused a captive woman must bring her into his home and make her an offer of marriage. The distortion of the Maimonides text goes back to Rohling (*Talmudjude*, page 74). Nöldeke and Wünsche, in their expert report on the Bloch-Rohling libel suit, branded it as "a strong piece of brazenness" (cited by Bloch, *Israel and the Nations*, page 289).

A fantastic forgery is committed against a statement in the *Shulhan Aruk*, *Orah Hayim*, Paragraph 539. As these falsifiers quote it, the passage reads: "At the time of the *Chalhamoed* the transaction of any kind of business is forbidden. But it is permitted to cheat a goy, because cheating of goyim at any time pleases the Lord." The correct text states, of course, nothing of the kind. It deals with the observance of the intermediate days of a festival (*hol ha-moed*) and specifies, among other things, that "one may collect debts, certainly if it be from non-Jews, on these days of *hol ha-moed*," and "one may make commercial loans to non-Jews even where the would-be borrowers are new accounts." The passage, in other words,

suspends certain restrictions upon commerce on a Jewish festival where the second party to a transaction is a non-Jew. Forgery has distorted this statement into a vile slander against Jewish ethics.

Perhaps the boldest of these falsifications was perpetrated against a statement by Joseph Caro in the *Shulhan Aruk*, *Hoshen Mishpat*, Paragraph 348. The entire section is devoted to a warning against theft. Without the several footnotes and other commentators' clauses the statement reads: "It is forbidden by the Torah to steal even a small amount. It is forbidden to steal in jest, or with the intent of repaying even double the amount later on. It is all one whether one steals the property of a Jew or a Gentile, of an adult or a child." Out of thin air these falsifiers have fabricated something altogether different. The paragraph, as they quote it, is forged to read: "All property of other nations belongs to the Jewish nation, which, consequently, is entitled to seize upon it without any scruples. An orthodox Jew is not bound to observe principles of morality towards peoples of other tribes. . ." The use of the term "orthodox" is revealing. In the sixteenth century when the *Shulhan Aruk* was written this term was still unknown among Jews. It is used at the present time in contradistinction to another group in Jewry, the Reform or Liberal group. The Reform or Liberal movement, which led to the use of both terms, did not develop till the middle of the nineteenth century!

There are many other "quotations" of a similar character with which these slanderers operate, but they are all cut of the same cloth. They are all produced in the same school of literary piracy and falsification. The Reverend Herbert Danby, in commenting on an attack upon the Talmud by Alfred Rosenberg, the theoretician of Nazi neo-paganism, has, in effect, passed judgment on all literature of the same type. Writing in the introduction to publication 54 of the series "Friends of Europe," he points out that the "quotations" cited are all "chosen in a spirit of malice and malignity. We pass over the type of mentality which finds it proper to approach an ancient document solely with the object of ferreting out

absurdities and fatuities or details which offend against present-day fashions of reticence. The same process can be applied with equal effect to any other ancient literature, oriental or classical; but it is a process which is not admirable and is more characteristic of prurient and misguided adolescence than of objective scholarship. What may not, however, be passed over is the contented ignorance or irresponsible malice which—as happens in many of these extracts—presents passages in such a manner that their intended damaging effect depends on (a) being misunderstood in themselves, (b) being given a false sense owing to separation from their content, or, (c) being wrongly quoted.”

THE TALMUD AND NON-JEWS

An analysis of each of the quotations cited by the Talmud baiters is beyond the scope of our discussion. A more complete examination of these “quotations” will be found in any of the several larger works we have referred to. It may, however, be well to examine the thesis which all these “quotations” are used to establish—that the Talmud teaches Jews a profound animosity toward non-Jews.

It is inevitable that so encyclopedic a work as the Talmud should include varying ethical levels. The ethical quality of a literature will of necessity vary with the differences in the temperament, the personal experiences, and the historic background of the individuals creating it. In the course of the centuries during which the Talmud developed, Jews and non-Jews lived as separate social communities with varying and often conflicting economic and political interests. It was during this period that the Jews suffered the greatest national disaster in their career as a people—the destruction of the Temple and the loss of self-government. The bitterness of group conflict generally tends to be reflected in the culture of the period. As to this, our own experience during the World War amply testifies; who does not know of the state of mind created in our own country during the War against all German cultural values? It is not surprising, therefore, that occasionally teachers of the Talmud express themselves critically

about some of their non-Jewish contemporaries. Certain Talmudists, for example, disturbed by the sight of pagans misinterpreting and misusing information about the Torah which they had learned at Jewish hands objected to imparting Torah to pagans, unless, of course, such study was to be a possible stepping stone to a renunciation of paganism (R. Asi and R. Johanan in *Hagigah* 13a and *Sanhedrin* 59a). There is an affinity between the reasoning of these men and the recent statement by Professor T. W. Bridgman of the Department of Physics at Harvard University that he had closed his laboratory to scientists from totalitarian countries and would not discuss any phase of his scientific work with them.

But such views never became the official Jewish attitude. The preponderant attitude of the Talmud represents a triumph for the spirit of universalism. R. Meir, one of the most revered of the sages of the Talmud, declared a non-Jew who studies and practices the principles of the Torah to be worthy of the esteem due to a High Priest in Israel (*Baba Kama* 38a and *Aboda Zara* 3a). The same thought is expressed more poetically in the Midrash *Mekilta* on Exodus 19:2. "The Torah was originally revealed in the desert, a no man's land, and not in the Land of Israel," to suggest that its teachings were meant for all mankind and that everyone was welcome to make them their own!

Once a non-Jew practiced the seven Noahite commandments (the minimum elements of universal morality such as abstention from murder, rape, theft, etc.), he enjoyed, even without technical affiliation with the synagogue, practically all the benefits held out by the Jewish community to its own members. He was to be given a share in the land of Palestine. He was to enjoy all the benefits of Jewish social welfare legislation, including the right to poor relief. According to an older Jewish law he was even accorded the right of burial in a Jewish cemetery. He was declared eligible to share in the bliss of the life of the world to come. At the same time he was guaranteed the freedom to pursue the interests of his indigenous culture. As one rabbi puts it, "Heaven and earth I call to witness, be he Jew or non-Jew, according to the work

of every human being doth the Holy Spirit rest upon him" (*Yalkut* on Judges 4:1). It is expressions such as these, unequalled in so many instances even by the ethical standards of our own day, which make the Talmud a milestone, not only in the history of Judaism but in the history of religion generally.

TALMUD BAITING AS A POLITICAL WEAPON

An analysis of the motives which drive men to commit forgeries such as have been committed against the texts of the Talmud would no doubt make a fascinating chapter in human intrigue and psychopathology. It is clear from the character of these forgeries, their scope, and their link to German sources that at least the inspiration for their present widespread distribution is purely political. The Nazi-inspired leaflet, *Why are Jews Persecuted for their Religion*, actually explains that the Talmudic "quotations" which it cites were "used by the German government to convict the Jews of sabotage!" It is part of a campaign to rationalize the barbarism unleashed by the Nazis against Jewry. Walter Fasolt, a current Nazi commentator on the Talmud, unblushingly admits this in the introduction to his recent *Die Grundlagen des Talmud* (The Basic Principles of the Talmud, Breslau, 1935), "In issuing this work our purpose is purely political . . . As a political tract it is necessarily one-sided. It therefore deals with Talmudic law only at the point where it may prove helpful in illuminating the attitude of Germany to Jewry."

It is interesting to note that most of these Talmud baiters are also the violent enemies of Christianity. Rohling, one of the pillars of the "science" of Talmud falsification was a fanatical anti-Protestant. In his *Der Antichrist und das Ende der Welt* (The Anti-Christ and The End of the World, St. Louis, 1875, pages 58, 59, 61), he bluntly declared: "Wherever Protestantism gains a foothold it causes a spiritual vacuity, a decline in . . . morality. A Protestant . . . is a monstrosity . . . Vandalism and Protestantism are identical concepts."

The more recent Talmud baiters show a particular bitterness toward the Catholic Church. Thus a recent article by Dr. Johannes Pohl, "Der Talmud" in the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* (March 1939, pages 226-237), after repeating the usual performance against the Talmud, continues with a violent attack against the Catholic Church. "One can only compare all this," he writes, "to the system of the Roman Catholic Church which, in true Talmudic spirit, seeks to regulate the lives of its adherents through an eternal counting, calculating and balancing . . . Exactly like the Talmud so does the Catholic Church reduce the principles of the ethical life to an endless series of questions which the average Catholic cannot decide himself but must seek the guidance of the priest, as the Jew must seek the guidance of one of the 2,500 Talmud rabbis or some contemporary rabbi . . . The Jesuits also concentrate their speculations on the intimacies of sex life . . ." The editor of this periodical, and one of the prime movers in the campaign against Judaism, is Alfred Rosenberg, the arch-enemy of Christianity, and one of the prophets of the neo-paganism of Nazi Germany today. His *Myth of the Twentieth Century* and other neo-pagan works have been placed on the *Catholic Index*.

The notorious Benjamin Franklin forgery, included for good measure in one of the diatribes against the Talmud, also shows a distinct anti-Catholic bias. It introduces Franklin's alleged attack on the Jews with these words: "There is a greater menace to these United States than the strictly Roman . . ." The "strictly Roman" is, of course, an attack on the Roman Catholics. Franklin was as free from bias against Catholics as he was free from any bias against Jews. The entire "document" has been exposed by Charles A. Beard and others as a Nazi fabrication. While concentrating its attack against Jews, it thus also adds a thrust at the Nazi "scapegoat number 2"—the Catholic Church.

Nazi hostility does not of course differentiate between Catholicism and Protestantism. As Herr Rosenberg himself bluntly puts it: "The supreme value of both the Roman and the Protestant churches represents a negative Christian atti-

tude . . . They stand in the way of the vital power of the Nordic race and they give way . . . This is the significance of our present religious conflict" (quoted by William Teeling in *Crisis for Christianity*, London, 1939, page 195).

The calumny upon the Talmud today comes as a challenge not to the Jew alone. It is a phase of the attack on our institutions by a hostile power that would seize the citadel of our democracy by undermining the groundwork on which it rests—religion. The challenge goes out to all who love the traditional American civilization—above all to the churches and synagogues, the custodians of its spiritual values. The American people will have to act to repel this invasion and defend their homes and their freedom from the insidious force of religious intolerance that would break them down.