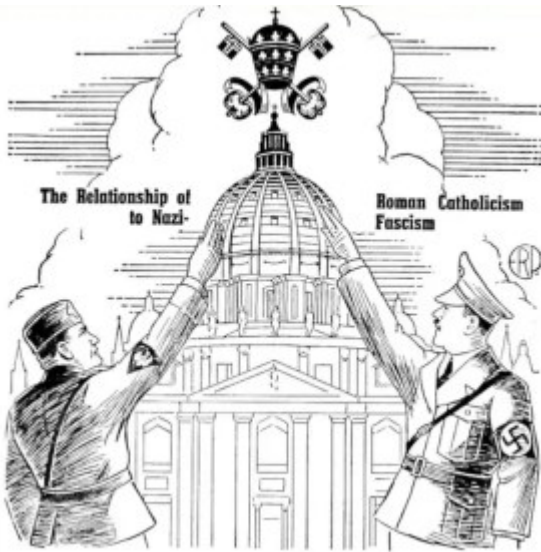


How The Popes Treated The Jews by Leo H. Lehmann



I believe it can be proven historically that the popes of Rome, the Vatican and the Jesuits are the primary sources of antisemitism. True Bible-believing Christians do *not* hate the Jewish people! We should pray for their salvation. People who were raised Jewish do get saved by Christ! I know several of them. But neither should we support Zionism and the Nation of Israel because it is officially antichrist. We should pray for the war between Israel and Hamas to end! Any person who claims to be a Christian and who rejoices every time the Israeli Defense Force bombs and kills innocent Palestinians – some of whom are Christians – is greatly deceived!

This article by former Roman Catholic priest Leo Herbert Lehmann was first published in 1944 by *THE CONVERTED CATHOLIC MAGAZINE* and made available online by The Lutheran Library Publishing Ministry LutheranLibrary.org.

AMERICANS had their first inkling of traditional Catholic anti-Semitism from the diatribes of Father Coughlin (Charles Edward Coughlin (October 25, 1891 – October 27, 1979), commonly known as Father Coughlin, was a Canadian-American Catholic priest based in the United States near Detroit) and other priest-leaders of the 'Christian' Front. They have yet to discover how deep-seated this anti-Jewish feeling has always been in the Catholic church. They have been loath to believe that Coughlin and his followers represent the official attitude of the Catholic church in this matter. But in his pronouncements about the Jews, as in those on other current Catholic topics – the danger of liberalism, the communist menace, the failure of democracy – Father Coughlin's role has been that of the spearhead for the opening of the official attack.

The anti-Jewish preachments of the radio priest from the Shrine of the Little Flower were crude but faithful expressions of his Jesuit supporters. For example, in 1934, shortly after Hitler came to power, all that Coughlin has ever said against the Jews was proclaimed in a treatise read by the Jesuit

Father F. X. Murphy before a gathering of Jesuits in convention at Manresa Island, Connecticut. Needless to say, this treatise could never have been read before such an assembly without official approbation of his Jesuit superiors. It was later published in the Jesuit periodical *The Catholic Mind* of October 22, 1934. The following excerpts from the treatise of this Jesuit historian will suffice:

“What the Jew was in Holy Writ we may justly expect to find him down the ages... fierce and sensual beyond the Aryan.”

And again:

“We may yet hear of a Jewish problem in our own America, and that it may become a genuine one we may conjecture from the different ethical outlook of the Hebrew.”

A short time later another Jesuit professor, the Rev. Lawrence Patterson, refuting Herman Bernstein in a review of his book, *The Truth about the Protocols of Zion*, in the Jesuit magazine *America* of March 23, 1935, says in part:

Mr. Bernstein seems to assume that all anti-Semitic feeling is utterly baseless. Is it? Can he deny that Jews largely direct Communism? Can he fail to show that Jews are influential in Latin Freemasonry? The Jewish question requires frank and charitable ventilation. To deny the existence of a Jewish problem is to become an ostrich. The Hebrew nation (for it is a nation) is never really amalgamated by the people among whom it dwells. The apostate Jew who has renounced the God of Israel and the Code of Sinai is a menace to Christian ideals... Again it cannot be denied that in both high finance and in the Third International, in the press and in the theater and cinema, in education and at the bar, Jews exert a power out of proportion to their numbers.”

Farther back, we have the prayer of St. Francis Xavier, second only to Ignatius Loyola himself in the Jesuit calendar of saints: “O God, put me some place where there are no Jews or Moslems!”

Catholic anti-Semitism, however, goes farther back than the Jesuits. It is part of the Catholic church's doctrine of the outlawry of all unbelievers, and is most evident in the anti-Jewish decrees of the popes and enactments of Catholic church councils during the four centuries from 1200 to 1600 – after which it was carried forward by the Jesuits as the guardians of the universal Catholic mind. It is true that occasional popes restrained Christian outrages against the Jews, but the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council and of the Council of Basle, of Popes Innocent III, Innocent IV, Eugenius IV, Gregory IX, Pius V and Paul IV, compelled Jews to live apart in ghettos, to pay extortionate taxes, to wear an odious badge (the green hat or cape), forbade them to live in the same house or eat or trade with Christians, to practice medicine, to pursue high finance, to acquire real estate, to testify in the courts against Christians, and banished them at times, in whole or in part, from the Papal States. The exact replicas of these papal enactments can be

seen in Hitler's Nuremberg Laws, so closely copied and applied by Mussolini in Italy, by Franco in Spain, by Msgr. Tiso in Slovakia, and later rigorously enforced in all Catholic countries in Europe, including 'Christianized' France under its clerico-fascist Petain-Laval regime.

The similarity between these anti-Semitic papal decrees and those enforced all over Europe by Nazi-Fascism can be seen from the following translations of some of the anti-papal decrees of the popes from 1200 to 1600:

Pope Innocent III decreed as follows:¹²

"As Cain was a wanderer and an outcast, not to be killed by anyone but marked with a sign of fear on his forehead, so the Jews... against whom the voice of the blood of Christ cries out... although they are not to be killed, must always be dispersed as wanderers upon the face of the earth."

"Although Christian piety tolerates the Jews... whose own fault commits them to perpetual slavery... and allows them to continue with us (even though the Moors will not tolerate them), they must not be allowed to remain ungrateful to us in such a way as to repay us with contumely for favors and contempt for our familiarity. They are admitted to our familiarity only through our mercy; but they are to us as dangerous as the insect in the apple, as the serpent in the breast... Since, therefore, they have already begun to gnaw like the rat, and to stink like the serpent, it is to our shame that the fire in our breast which is being eaten into by them, does not consume them... As they are reprobate slaves of the Lord, in whose death they evilly conspired (at least by the effect of the deed), let them acknowledge themselves as slaves of those whom the death of Christ has made free."

Under this same Pope Innocent III, the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, which was one of the most important ecumenical councils of the Catholic church, officially decreed Canons Nos. 67-70 setting forth the Roman Catholic attitude towards the Jews:³

The first of these Canons is financial, containing protective measures for Christians against the rapacity of Jews as usurers.

The second decrees that all Jews be distinguished for all time from Christians by color of dress and distinctive badge.

The third forbids Jews to have Christians as nurses, tutors and domestic servants, and forbids Christians to cohabit with Jews and Jewesses. Legal marriage with them was impossible.

The fourth forbids the acceptance of legal testimony of Jews against Christians, and orders preference for the testimony of a Christian against a Jew. An order is also added that all in authority in church and state must watch continually lest converted and baptized Jews continue to practice the rites of their former faith.

A few years later, Pope Innocent III reiterated and confirmed these edicts of the Lateran Council as follows:⁴

“To The King Of France That He Must Crush The Insolence Of The Jews Residing In His Kingdom:

“Although it be not displeasing to the Lord, but rather acceptable to him, that the Jewish Dispersion should live and serve under Christian princes... they greatly err in the sight of God’s Divine Majesty who prefer the offspring of the crucifiers to those who are the heirs of Christ...

It has come to our knowledge that in the Kingdom of France Jews have so much liberty that, under a species of usury, by which they not only extort interest, but interest from interest, they obtain control of the goods of the churches and the possessions of Christians...

Furthermore, although it was decreed in the Lateran Council that Jews be not permitted to have Christian servants in their homes, either as tutors for their children or as domestic servants, or for any reason whatever, they still persist in having Christians as servants and nurses, with whom they commit abominations of a kind which it rather becomes you to punish than us to explain.

And again, although the same Council laid it down that the testimony of Christians against Jews is to be admitted, even when the former use Jewish witnesses against Christians, and decreed that, in a case of this kind, anyone who would prefer Jews before Christians is to be condemned as anathema, yet up to the present time, things are so carried on in the Kingdom of France that the testimony of Christians against Jews is not believed, whereas Jews are admitted as witnesses against Christians. And at times, when they to whom Jews have loaned money with usury produce Christian witnesses about the fact of payment, the deed which the Christian debtor through negligence indiscreetly left with them is believed rather than the witnesses whom they bring forward.

On Good Friday also, contrary to the law of old, they walk through the streets and public squares, and meeting Christians who, according to custom, are going to adore the Crucifix, they deride them and strive to prevent them from this duty of adoration. We warn and exhort Your Serene Majesty in the Lord (adding the remission of your sins) that you force the Jews from their presumption... and see to it that due punishment be meted out to all such blasphemers, and that an easy pardon be not given to delinquents.”

In 1244, Pope Innocent IV ordered the burning of Jewish books. He exhorted the King of France as follows:⁵

“Our dear son, the Chancellor of Paris, and the Doctors, before the clergy and people, publicly burned by fire the aforesaid books (‘The

Talmud') with all their appendices. We beg and beseech Your Celestial Majesty in the Lord Jesus, that, having begun laudably and piously to prosecute those who perpetuate these detestable excesses, that you continue with due severity. And that you command throughout your whole kingdom that the aforesaid books with all their glossaries, already condemned by the Doctors, be committed to the flames. Firmly prohibiting Jews from having Christians as servants and nurses...

Pope Gregory IX sent the following to the archbishops of Germany: ⁶

"The Jews, who are admitted to our acquaintance only through our mercy, should never forget their yoke of perpetual slavery, which they bear through their own fault. In the Council of Toledo it was decreed that Jews of both sexes should be distinguished from others for all time by their mode of dress. We therefore command each and every one of you to see that all the excesses of the Jews are completely repressed, lest they should presume to raise their necks from the yoke of servitude in contumely of the Redeemer; forbidding them to discuss in any way concerning their faith or rites with Christians, in this matter calling to your aid the help of the civil power, and inflicting upon Christians who offer opposition due ecclesiastical punishment..."

Pope Eugenius IV, in 1442, issued the following decree:⁷

"We decree and order that from now on, and for all time, Christians shall not eat or drink with Jews, nor admit them to feasts, nor cohabit with them, nor bathe with them.

Christians shall not allow Jews to hold civil honors over Christians, or to exercise public offices in the state.

Jews cannot be merchants, tax collectors or agents in the buying and selling of the produce and goods of Christians, nor their procurators, computers or lawyers in matrimonial matters, nor obstetricians; nor can they have association or partnership with Christians. No Christian may leave or bequeath anything in his last will and testament to Jews or their congregations.

Jews are prohibited from erecting new synagogues. They are obliged to pay annually a tenth part of their goods and holdings. Against them Christians may testify, but the testimony of Jews against Christians in no case is of any worth.

All Jews, of whatever sex and age, must everywhere wear the distinct dress and known marks by which they can be easily distinguished from Christians. They may not live among Christians, but must reside in a certain street, outside of which they may not, under any pretext have houses..."

Pope Paul IV, in 1555, reiterated the above restrictions against the Jews and

added some new ones. He ordered Jews to pay an annual amount for every synagogue, "even those that have been demolished," and decreed further that,⁸

"Jews may only engage in the work of street-sweepers and rag-pickers, and may not be produce merchants nor trade in things necessary for human use."

This Pope Pius IV permitted Jews to possess immovable property up to the value of 1,500 gold ducats. His successor, Pius V, however, in 1567, revoked this small concession, and ordered Jews to sell all their properties to Christians. Two years later, in modern Hitleresque manner, he ordered all Jews expelled from the States of the Church:

"By authority of these present letters, We order that each and every Jew of both sexes in Our Temporal Dominions, and in all the cities, lands, places and baronies subject to them, shall depart completely out of the confines thereof within the space of three months after this decree shall have been made public."

The penalties against Jews who should disobey this order were as follows:⁹

"They shall be despoiled of all their goods and prosecuted according to the due process of law. They shall become bondsmen of the Roman Church, and shall be subjected to perpetual servitude. And the said Church shall claim the same right over them as other dominions over their slaves and bondsmen."

Liberal Catholic apologists in America endeavor to save the reputation of their church by pointing to certain popes who tried to protect the Jews from excessive persecution by Christian princes. They lay the blame for anti-Semitism in the past on the undeveloped condition of society and trade rivalry. They overlook the fact, however, that the cause of all anti-Semitism springs from the denial of equal rights and citizenship to Jews in pre-Reformation Christianity. To this can be traced the condition of Jews today in Europe. But this denial was dogmatized into Christian society by the popes, and is part of the universal Catholic church dogma of the outlawry of all unbelievers. It was revived in France immediately after the collapse of democracy there in June 1940, and was put into effect by the decrees of the 'Christian' Petain-Laval regime on October ¹⁸.

In reply to an article of mine on Catholic anti-Semitism in The Social Frontier of November, 1938, Emmanuel Chapman, professor at Fordham University, makes a well-meaning but futile attempt to defend his church in this matter.¹⁰ He says that even the popes who issued anti-Semitic decrees exerted every effort to prevent Christians from killing Jews and forcing them to become Christians. "The enforcement (sic) of the Church's policy with regard to the Jew", he says, "depended upon the secular power, as the Jews were not under the Church's government and only the state could rule over them."¹¹ Here again is the admission that Jews were outlaws from Christian society. In other words, it was the duty of the popes to issue the decrees that Jews, for all time, must remain the slaves of Christians ("whom the death of Christ – in which the Jews evilly conspired at least by the effect

of the deed – made free”), and it was the duty of the secular power to see to it that the Jews, without being actually killed, should never attain equal rights with Christians. Hitler and Mussolini carried out this relentless policy against the Jews in all countries within the orbit of the Rome-Berlin Axis. After ruthlessly demolishing the egalitarian structure of democratic countries, they immediately reimposed the hierarchical, authoritarian state, which is in keeping with the Vatican’s political ideology, in which the Jew as an unbeliever has no legal status.

Again, much is made of the late Pope Pius XI’s generic statement (in September, 1938, in an address to some Belgium pilgrims) that “spiritually, we are all Semites”. That was the time when Mussolini began to issue his anti-Semitic regulations. But about that same time, the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, published a summary of the traditional attitude of the Catholic church towards the Jews. After explaining that many popes issued “protective” ordinances to prevent the slaughter of Jews, it went on to say:¹²

“But – in order to set things straight – by this it was not intended that Jews should be allowed to abuse the hospitality of Christian countries. Along with these protective ordinances, there existed restrictive and precautionary decrees with regard to them. The civil power was in accord with the Church in this, since, as Delassus says, ‘they both had the same interest in preventing the nations from being invaded by the Jewish element, and thereby losing control of society.’ And if Christians were forbidden to force Jews to embrace the Catholic religion, to disturb their synagogues, their Sabbath and their festivals, the Jews, on the other hand, were forbidden to hold public office, civil or military, and this prohibition extended even to the children of converted Jews. The precautionary decrees concerned the professions, education and business positions.”

This accurately expresses the fixed policy of Catholicism towards the Jews up till our time. There were many popes who were not anti-Semitic in the sense that they issued “protective” ordinances to curb hatred and violence against the Jews; they decreed that Christians should not deny to Jews what was “permitted” them by law. These protective ordinances usually incorporated the principle laid down by Pope Gregory I (590-604) as follows:¹³

“Just as it should not be permitted the Jews to presume to do in their synagogues anything other than what is permitted them by law, so with regard to those things which have been conceded them, they should suffer no injury.”

The Catholic laity in America, with the exception of the lunatic fringe, go even farther than the most liberal popes in their attitude towards the Jews; in keeping with the principles of our egalitarian democracy, they believe that Jews have equal rights with Christians. For merely to oppose violence against them and to insist that they should suffer no injury in those things which have been “conceded” them, would be little improvement on the Nazi-fascist attitude.

It must be admitted that Jews, as a whole, are an obstacle to the functioning of society as Nazi-Fascism and political Catholicism would have it. Whether by race or religion, Jews resist regimentation of all kinds. They are more at home in Protestant, democratic countries – where alone they are unmolested and guaranteed equal rights with Christians. Dr. E. Boyd Barrett, who was a Jesuit priest for twenty years before he left the church, has the following to say about the Jews:¹⁴

“The Catholic church has never succeeded in converting the Jewish intellect. Intellectual independence, or, as the Catholic church would call it, intellectual arrogance and obstinacy, is too dear to the Jew and too much a part of his nature to forsake. The Jew has often been robbed of civil liberty, but never of his freedom of thought; while the Catholic, especially the Jesuit, can easily surrender his will and judgment and submit his mind to belief in ‘unbelievable’ dogmas and rest happy and content in such mental slavery, the Jew could never do so.”

Herein may be found the answer to the whole anti-Semitic problem. Since both Nazi-Fascism and Jesuit Catholicism are sworn enemies of religious, intellectual and political freedom, the Jew must be either subjugated or banished if their plan for society is to become a reality. Since he cannot be subjugated, he must be banished so that the slavery of clerico-fascism may continue.

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1. In Migne, Patrologia, CCXV, p. 1291.↵
 2. Ibid. p. 694.↵
 3. Cf. Binnius, Concilia Generalia, Vol. II, Tom. 3, p. 695.↵
 4. In Migne, op. cit., CCXV, p. 501.↵
 5. Bull. Rom. Pont. Vol. IV, p. 509.↵
 6. Idem, Vol. III, p. 497.↵
 7. Idem, Vol. V, p. 67.↵
 8. Idem, Vol. VI, p. 499.↵
 9. Idem, Vol. VII, p. 741.↵
 10. in The Social Frontier, Jan. 1939.↵
 11. The same alibi is used with regard to the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition; the Church decreed the outlawry of heretics, the civil power executed the decrees.↵
 12. The above was reprinted in all Italian newspapers; cf. Il Messaggero of Rome, Aug. 17, 1938; La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno of Bari, Aug. 18, 1938; Corriere della Sera and others. No mention of it was made in the press of the United States.↵
 13. Quoted by Emmanuel Chapman from Monumenta Germaniae Historiae, Vol. VIII, Reg. Greg. I, No. 25.↵
 14. Cf. Rome Stoops to Conquer, by E. Boyd Barret, p. 176.↵