

History of Anti-Semitism
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Unit #5 - Lies, Disputes, and Expulsions

1. Jews as possessed by the Devil
 - a. Blood Libel
 - b. Desecration of the Host
 - c. Poisoning Christians
2. Disputes and Polemics
 - a. Paris Dispute
 - b. Barcelona Dispute
3. 13th & 14th Century Expulsions
 - a. France
 - b. England

Reading #1

“Becoming aware that the boy had been treated with unusual cruelty, the forester now began to suspect from the manner of his treatment, that it was no Christian but in very truth a Jew who had ventured to slaughter an innocent child of this kind with such horrible barbarity.”

Reading #2

The Jews laid their blood-stained hands upon the innocent victim, and having lifted him from the ground and having fastened him upon the cross, they vied with one another in their efforts to make an end of him...In doing these things they were adding pang to pang and wound to wound, and yet were not able to satisfy their heartless cruelty and their inborn hatred of the Christian's name, lo! After these many and great tortures they inflicted a frightful wound in his left side, reaching even to his heart, and as thought to make an end of all they extinguished his mortal life so far as it was in their power. And since many streams of blood were running down from all parts of his body, then, to stop the blood and to wash and close the wounds, they poured boiling water over him.

Reading #3

It is clear that it was not indicated in the Old Testament or in the New that Jews lust for the drinking of human blood. Rather, precisely, the opposite, they guard against the intake of all blood, as we find expressly in the biblical book of Genesis, in the laws given by Moses and in the Jewish decrees, of the Talmud. We can surely assume that for those to whom even the blood of permitted animals is forbidden, the desire for human blood cannot exist....Moreover, they would not expose to danger their substance and persons for that which they might have freely taken from animals. By this sentence of the princes, we pronounce the Jews of the aforesaid place and the rest of the Jews of Germany completely absolved of this imputed crime....

Reading #4

Since it happens occasionally that some Christians lose their Christian children, the Jews are accused by their enemies of secretly carrying off and killing these same Christian children and making sacrifices of the heart and blood of these very children. It happens, too, that the parents of these children or some other Christian enemies of these Jews secretly hide these very children in order that they may be able to injure these Jews, and in order that they may be able to extort from them a certain amount of money by redeeming them from their straits...

And most falsely do these Christian claims that the Jews have secretly and furtively carried away these children and killed them, and that the Jews offer sacrifice from the heart and blood of these children, since their law in this matter precisely and expressly forbids Jews to sacrifice, eat, or drink the blood, or to eat the flesh of animals having claws. This has been demonstrated many times at our courts by Jews converted to the Christian faith: nevertheless very many Jews are often seized and detained unjustly because of this.

We decree, therefore, that Christians need not be obeyed against Jews in a case or situation of this type, and we order that Jews seized under such a silly pretext be freed from imprisonment, and that they shall not be arrested henceforth on such a miserable pretext, unless – which we do not believe – they be caught in the commission of the crime. We decree that no Christian shall stir up anything new against them, but that they should be maintained in that status and position in which they were in the time of our predecessors, from antiquity till now.

Reading #5

*She pinned a napkin o'er his face
And pinned it with gold pin
Then called for a vessel of gold
To catch his heart blood in,
In, in,
To catch his heart blood in.*

Reading #6

"This accusation is the solitary case in which the general acceptance of an idea about ourselves does not make us doubt whether all the world can be wrong, and we right, because it is based on an absolute lie."

Reading #7

In some provinces a difference in dress distinguishes the Jews or Muslims from the Christians, but in certain others such a confusion has grown up that they cannot be distinguished by any difference. Thus it happens at times that through error Christians have relations with the women of Jews or Muslims, and Jews and Muslims with Christian women. Therefore, that they may not, under pretext of error of this sort, excuse themselves in the future for the excesses of such prohibited intercourse, we decree that such Jews and Muslims of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress.

Moreover, during the last three days before Easter and especially on Good Friday, Jews shall not go forth in public at all, for the reason that some of them on these very days, as we hear, do not blush to go forth better dressed and are not afraid to mock the Christians who maintain the memory of the most holy Passion by wearing signs of mourning.

This, however, we forbid most severely, that any one should presume at all to break forth in insult to the Redeemer. And since we ought not to ignore any insult to Him who blotted out our disgraceful deeds, we command that such impudent fellows be checked by the secular princes by imposing on them proper punishment so that they shall not at all presume to blaspheme Him who was crucified for us.

Reading #8

“If what is said about the Jews of France and of the other lands is true, no punishment would be sufficiently worthy of their crime. For they, so we have heard, are not content with the Old Law which God gave to Moses in writing: they even ignore it completely, and affirm that God gave another Law which is called ‘Talmud’, that is ‘teaching,’ handed down to Moses orally. Falsely they allege that it was implanted within their minds and, unwritten, was there preserved until certain men, whom they call ‘sages’ and ‘scribes’, who fearing that this Law may be lost from the minds of men through forgetfulness, reduced it to writing, and the volume of this by far exceeds the text of the Bible. In this is contained matter so abusive and so unspeakable that it arouses shame in those who mention it and horror in those who hear it.

Wherefore, since this is said to be most important reason why the Jews remain obstinate in their perfidy, we earnestly urge and warn your Royal Serenity that on the first Saturday of the Lent to come, in the morning, while the Jews are gathered in the synagogues, you, by our authority, shall seize all the books belonging to the Jews of your Kingdom, those subject to your authority as well as those subject to the authority of your vassals, the nobles of the said Kingdom; and you shall have these books held in custody of our dear sons, the Dominican and Franciscan Friars.”

