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### **THE ANTISEMITISM AS A FALSE SCIENCE. ŞAMA SALZBERGER VS. NICOLAE PAULESCU (Summary)**

*Keywords:* academic and religious antisemitism, nationalism, Jewish responses, Talmud, student movements.

The idea of this study came with the discovery of an obscure book, belonging to an unknown author, which is the best ever written reply to the infamous antisemitic work of Nicolae C. Paulescu, professor of physiology from the Medical University in Bucureşti. The name of the author and the book: Şama Salzberger, *Truths about the Talmud and Judaism (Adevăruri despre Talmud și Judaism)*. Not many things are known about Şama Salzberger. His whole life, Salzberger remained a small salesman in Botoşani. But aside from the small business which provided for his family, Salzberger hid a great passion for books; behind the modest salesman there was a learned scholar. Salzberger's book was published in two editions in the inter-war period, in 1923 and 1938. The two years were of a symbolic importance for the subject Salzberger wrote about, as they were key moments in the development of antisemitism as a mass political movement in Romania between the two World Wars. According to his own confessions, the Talmudist from Botoşani wrote the book before the First World War and hesitated to publish it, thinking, for a while, that the changes after the Great War would change the situation of the Jews and the debates of a religious nature would become irrelevant. He soon discovered that, "to the contrary, the religious attacks multiplied" and decided to publish the book to show that anti-Semites "did not use honourable weapons in their fight against Judaism seeing as they mainly use lies and slander whereof their readers cannot verify the accuracy". In his preface to the second edition, written in October 1938, Salzberger wrote that "the events of these recent times have showed me that my work is still very relevant". Unlike another important antisemite, professor A. C. Cuza from Iaşi, who got most of his „proof" against the Jews from social sciences, Nicolae C. Paulescu had as his main argument the critique of the Talmud. The Physiology professor turned philosopher joined a long

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intellectual tradition which found in the Talmud justification of the persecution of the Jews. The essence of this tradition, which had medieval roots, explained the idea that the criticisable aspects of Judaism had their origins in the Talmud's laws; this made the Jews, all Jews, whether they knew the Talmud or not, into a direct threat for Christians, giving them a justification for crime and domination. In fact, the criticism was based on lies and wrong interpretations, things taken out of context and the ignorance of the Jewish traditions. The number of anti-Semitic books about the Talmud soared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, throughout the world and Romanian adepts of this way of thinking also appeared. Nicolae Paulescu was one of them. In this review of Paulescu's books, Salzberger was guided by an important Talmudic prescription: "know what to answer". *Adevăruri despre Talmud* shows proof of a very careful knowledge of the Jewish religious texts, a good knowledge of the historical contexts and an admirably well balanced interpretation. By going back to the original texts and having the advantage of a cultural intimacy, Salzberger could reveal lies in Paulescu's writings, completed the paragraphs of the sentences taken out of context, clarified what today would be called the situation of the discourse – the complete context in which a statement was made.