

USHMM

ROBERT WILLES (UWRF) - Tape 1

I teach theology and will discuss the Holocaust from a Christian point of view.

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Please refer to Lucy ~avidov-ich's book War Against the Jews which is an overview of the extent of the destruction of the Jews mainly in Poland and the Ukraine which the majority of the Jews were located. Also Long Night's Journey Into Day and Fleishner's Auschwitz. Both Christians and Jews probe this event and where to go after this.

Christian tradition contributed to the theory of racial inferiority and survival of the fittest idea of the Nazis. Hitler built on the stereo type of the theological Jew out of Christian tradition.

The Armenian massacre by the Turks, Cambodia. treatment of blacks and native Americans are all signs of evil. During the twentieth century Book of the Dead 100 million people have been killed violently in conflicts and genocide since the turn of the century.

The Holocaust sets it apart/ The role played by technology and bureaucracy and the systematic nature of the killing sets it apart. Also the efficiency, the inclusion of civil servants, professional citizens, doctors, lawyers, dentists, health care workers, ordinary citizens. In Treblinka, the Jewish girls cleaned the camp. Polish girls did the cooking. All the Polish girls survived. They went home in the evening to be with their families. The entrance to the camp was full of flowers and appeared like a normal enterprise. It was a normal business- Evil is particular, not abstract.

In Mein Kampf the Jews were the central evil and had to be eradicated. History, Christian history of anti-Semitism made it possible. The anti-Semitic legacy of the New Testament within Christian theology made a significant contribution to anti-Semitism in Germany for Hitler.

1. The lengthy history of Christianity about anti-Semitism
2. The Enlightenment led to Jewish assimilation. They would be given rights on the condition that they give up their special tradition and become assimilated. Many German Jews considered themselves Germans first and Jews second. Orthodox community continued to be observant but they were the minority. Assimilation did not give them a new status. Assimilated or not, they were considered Jews and not to be trusted.
3. In the Nazi view, all Jews were evil and had to be rooted out from Germany and from the world as well. They were a disease, germs. Hitler had been raised Catholic. He believed in family, paganism.

Christianity did not cause Hitler but Christianity was a factor that fueled anti-Semitism. Christianity led to pogroms, Kristallnacht, but not to a plan of extinction.

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Christians believed that when the Messiah (Jesus) returned, all Jews would be converted. Those who would not be converted would be damned. The image of the Jew in the Middle Ages was the devil, capable of unlimited evil. They were a threat to the Christian community. The charge of blood guilt, also that Jews killed Jesus. They have always been disobedient and have always killed prophets. There was no positive aspect.

Christians replaced the original people of God. They put God to death and Christians took their place in obedience to God. The relationship between Jesus and God is the relationship between God and man.

Why was the Temple destroyed. Because they killed Jesus, decide. Jesus is eternal with God. The Jews were a wandering people after that, Wandering Jew.

Christians prepared the way significantly for the advent of Nazis hatred of Jews and what can be done with this hatred.

Luther called for the elimination of Jewish property, etc. It was not carried out but was enacted by the Nazis. It was a blueprint. Can we get rid of anti-Semitism. Probably Not.

In the Minneapolis Star in 1982 the Jews were blamed for Solidarity. There were 3 1/4 million Jews in Poland, there are today 6000 Jews left, not a single Rabbi. They are blamed. What if there were no Jews at all in Poland. What if there were no Jews in the world. We would have to invent them.

In the U.S. there is the KKK, etc.

At least some of the Christian community are taking the Holocaust seriously. In 1962-65 the Vatican allowed the validity of other religions than Christian faith and deplored anti-Semitism. In 1983 at a meeting of the World Lutheran Federation in Stockholm, rejected anti-Semitism.

ROBERT WILLES Tape2

The Holocaust is a crucial event for the Jewish people
The second crucial event is the establishment of the State
of Israel.

Is the Holocaust a continuation of the tragedy of former
days for the Jews. He quotes Rubinstein as saying the Jews
no longer believe in the God of the covenant after the
Holocaust. He proposes the continuation of the

tradition of Judaism, holidays, Festivals to give individuals an identity even if there is no theology, peoplehood and family. There is no God of the coventant after Auschwitz.

During the Holocaust the Allies knew about it and did not act. It was not until the 70s in America when Jews and Christians focused on the Holocaust. Some Jewish thinkers believe Jews know how to deal with catastrophe. The Holocaust is another sign of what Jews have lived through before.

understand These two tapes are not clear and it is not too easy to everything he says.

convert Jews. JAMES Parker said that Christians should stop trying to They are already with God and there should be no agenda of conversion.

retained Christians should deal with the fact that they are indirectly responsible for the Holocaust because of anti Semitism. They need to reexamine their tradition. For twenty centuries they their own identity Christians need to deal with that theologically.

We There is a negative veiwe of the Jews in the New Testament. have to rethink the probelm created by its own scriptures. Partds of scripture is anti Judaic. Reidentify Jesus as Jewish.

[t was announced that the time was up and the lecture was over and that ~r. Willes would answer questions afterwards.