

Jewish-Christian Relations: Encounters Past and Present

Anti-Semitism in the Twentieth Century

The Roots of Anti-Semitism

- Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904) makes the earliest known use of the term 'anti-Semitism'. Marr regarded Jews as different (biologically) from the Teutonic race. He argued that they were a threat to the rest of the population of Northern Europe.
- The rise of anti-Semitism in France towards the end of the 19th century is also to be noted. French Jews were blamed for the collapse of the Union Générale bank and were accused of distorting French tradition and culture.

The Roots of Anti-Semitism

'L'affaire Dreyfus' (1894-95): a Jewish army captain called Captain Albert Dreyfus was accused of betraying his country to the Germans. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, and only several years later did he gain his freedom.

Emile Zola protested against the way that the Dreyfus was treated (an attack on what Zola regarded as a case of anti-Semitism) but the matter was defended by the Catholic Church in France.

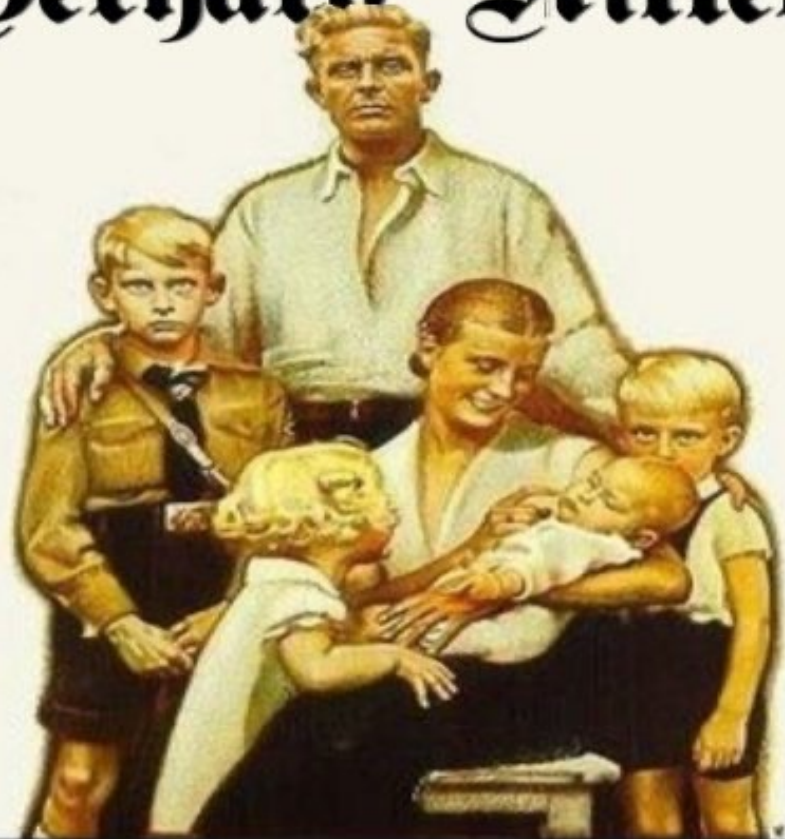


Anti-Semitism among German Protestants

- Anti-Semitic attitudes developed under the influence of Martin Luther and his legacy. Emphasis is placed on promise and fulfilment, law and grace, old and new, judgment and love.
- Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948), editor of *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, joined the National Socialist party (1933).
- 'True Judaism is to be identified with the symbol of the outsider who wanders aimlessly and without home on the face of the earth' (*Die Judenfrage*, 1933).

Gerhard
Kittel, the
Bible and
'the Ideal
Family'

Gerhard Kittel



Die illustrierte
Familien-Bibel für
Die Übermenschen

Anti-Semitism in Russia

- Several anti-Semitic attacks against Jews during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Half of the Jewish population of the time lived in Russia.
- An attempt to retain them in specific areas (1791, the Pale); permission was required in order to be able to move to other areas.
- Pogroms ('destructions') were a regular event (1881, 1903, 1905).



PREMIERS VICTIMES DU POGROME DE PROSKOUROFF,
organisé par l'ataman de Petlioura, Semessenk
le 15 février 1918.



Jewish Pogroms



‘In the Age of the Enlightenment Christian anti-Judaism and its modern offspring, anti-Semitism, not only survived but thrived, gaining popularity both West and East’ (Edward Kessler).

The Road to Auschwitz

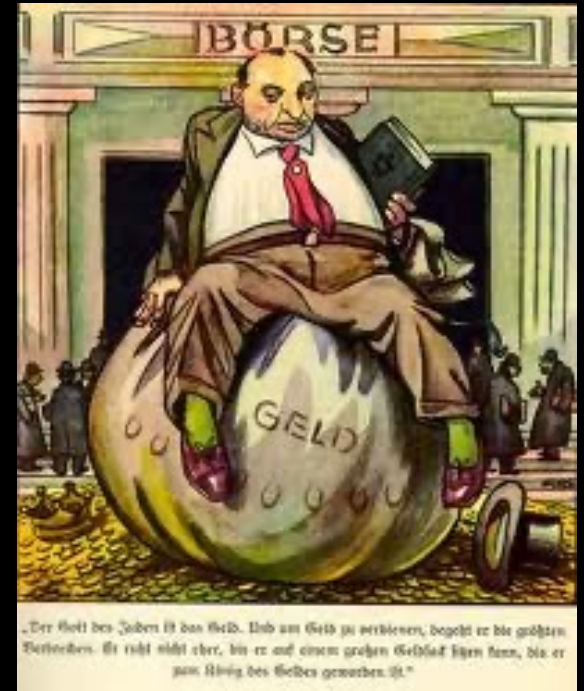
- Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) and the Nazi party sought to annihilate Jews due to hatred towards them as a race not because of their religion.
- Propaganda against the Jews: they were held responsible for the collapse of Germany during the First World War.
- The Fall of the Weimar Republic, it was claimed, was due to Jewish financial corruption.

Nazi Propaganda

- In *Mein Kampf* (1925) Hitler used religious (Christian) language in order to incite hatred against the Jews.
- 'I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator; as I defend myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the word of the Lord' (*Mein Kampf*).



Nazi Propaganda



Nazi Propaganda



Nazi
Propaganda

1933: burning of
Jewish books.

Jewish scholars and
performers were
blacklisted from
carrying out their
professions.



1935: prohibition of all forms of communication between Jews and other people.





1938: all Jews were forced to register their possessions, and all Jewish communities and movements were placed under the control of the secret police (the Gestapo).

9-10 November 1938 –
Kristallnacht ('night of the
broken glass') – when over
300 synagogues, Jewish
homes and businesses
were burnt in German
cities.



The Beginning of World War II

- Poland was captured in 1939, leading to many Jews being dispossessed.
- Enforced hard labour: 'destruction through work'.
- After Hitler went into Russia (1941), Jews were gathered and taken outside towns and villages to be shot and buried.
- October-December 1941: 300,000 Jews were killed
- 1942: 900,000 Jews were murdered.

Nazi Strategy

- January 1942, the Wannsee Conference: transfer of Jews to the camps from every part of Europe – ‘the Final Solution’.
- Targeting of the young and the elderly in the first place.
- Young and healthy people were forced to undertake hard labour.
- Auschwitz could hold 140,000 people and operated five furnaces that were able to kill 10,000 people each day.
- 1.1 million people were killed in Auschwitz.

The Nazi Plot

- Murder of all people of Jewish descent, including those who had converted to Christianity.
- Edith Stein, a Carmelite nun, was murdered in Auschwitz in 1942. She was canonized as a martyr in 1998.
- 90% of the Jewish population of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, and Austria.
- 70% of the Jewish population of Russia, Ukraine, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Norway and Romania.