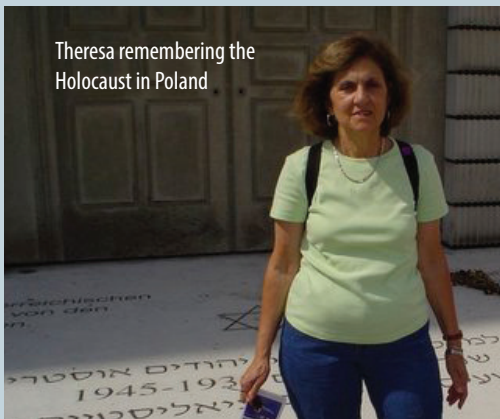


Theresa remembering the Holocaust in Poland



In his seminal book *THE ANGUISH OF THE JEWS: Twenty-three Centuries of Antisemitism* by Edward H. Flannery (a revised edition was published by Paulist Press in 1985), Flannery notes that even in the Greco-Roman world which predated the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth there were anti-Jewish realities in the Mediterranean world based on culture and politics.

And while Jesus, his apostles, disciples and the early Church were thoroughly Jewish and seen as a sect of Judaism, once Christianity began to spread to gentiles across the Roman world a new kind of theological anti-Semitism sprang up. This stand against the Jews began as early as the 2nd century AD by people like Marcion who claimed that the God of the Jews, Yahweh, was not the Father of the Lord Jesus! He said that those who worshipped the Old Testament God (i.e. Jews) were idol worshippers.

By the 4th century, following the early Councils of the Church which defined the basic doctrines of the Christian faith in documents like the Nicene Creed, the Jews were defined successively as “a perpetually perverse people, despised by God” (Hilary of Poitiers) and the synagogue a “harlot” (St Ephraim). St. Gregory of Nyssa (AD 331-96) described the Jews as “slayers of the Lord . . .

Anti-Semitism: Old and New

by Dr. Theresa Newell

advocates of the devil . . . congregation of demons . . . haters of goodness.” Thus began the charge against Jews as “Christ-killers” which led to countless Jewish deaths across the centuries. St. John Chrysostom, in a series of sermons preached in Antioch in the fall of AD 386 during Jewish High Holy Days, accused the Jews “of their rapine, their cupidity . . . inveterate murderers, destroyers, men possessed by the devil.”

Christian Europe banned Jews from owning land, practicing certain trades, or having a land of their own. Among the first Jewish ghettos was the one formed in 1515 on an island near Venice, Italy.

And today –

The current rise in anti-Semitism has its roots in both historical anti-Semitism and the post-Holocaust creation of the state of Israel.

Jonathan Sacks, in a recent op-ed article in *The Wall Street Journal* (October 4-5, 2014, C3), stated: “In the Middle Ages, [anti-Semitism] was religious. In 19th-century Europe, it was science . . . based on the so called ‘scientific study of race’ and social Darwinism . . . In the era since World War II, the great authority has been the Enlightenment ideal of human rights.” Sacks noted that it was at the U.N. Conference against Racism in 2001 that Israel was accused of the cardinal sins against human rights: racism, apartheid, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and attempted genocide.

The Holocaust of Nazism was followed by a universal cry of NEVER AGAIN. But anti-Semitism has again raised its head with even more virulence and universality. In a recent poll, 29% of European Jews said they consid-

ered leaving their countries due to anti-Semitic acts. The countries with the highest percentage thinking of leaving were Belgium (40%), France (46%), and Hungary (48%). France has the largest population of Jews in Europe, about 400,000. Muslims make up 7.5% of France’s population, the largest in a European country. Recently in France, synagogue goers were surrounded by a mob shouting anti-Jewish slogans.



Treblinka ashes in Poland on the CMJ Holocaust Remembrance tour.
Image by Theresa Newell

But this is not just a European problem. On October 7 newspapers in the US reported that “Swastikas were found painted on the exterior of a historically Jewish fraternity house at Emory University in metro Atlanta.”

And there is the rise of Islamic Jihadists racing across the Middle East killing all who do not subscribe to their brand of Islam whether they be Christian, Behai, Yazidis or even Muslims with whom they disagree.

Is it 1938 again? Are we seeing a rise in a movement of hatred toward the Jewish people that is deeper and larger even than Hitler’s “Final Solution”? Will I stand with the Jewish people in their time of need that is fast approaching? Will I pray and work to share the love of the Jewish Messiah with them at this critical point in history? Will I pray “for the peace of Jerusalem”? Today is a day of decision for each believer in the Jewish Messiah Jesus on this critical issue of our day.

Theresa visited this Warsaw Ghetto in Poland

