



8th Rabbi Brandt Lecture

30.11.2014 | Eva Schulz-Jander

ICCJ's German member organization, Deutscher Koordinierungsrat (DKR), held its 8th Rabbi Brandt Lecture this year in Munich on the 10th of November.

The DKR Board offered its Jewish President, Rabbi Henry Brandt, an annual lecture, The Rabbi Brandt Lecture, on the occasion of his 80th birthday. Renowned scholars from theology, politics, and culture have spoken at these lectures addressing topics of the day from a Christian-Jewish perspective. The Munich lecture was the 8th and it was held in the Jewish Community Center of Munich. The center's president Charlotte Knobloch welcomed the large audience, expressing her admiration for Rabbi Brandt and the keynote speaker, His Eminence Cardinal Reinhard Marx. Dr. Abi Pitum, as a member of the Jewish Community and of the DKR board, also spoke warm words of welcome.

Cardinal Marx chose to speak about "The Revolutionary Message of the Bible". He began by recalling "Reichspogromnacht" pointing out that this was the beginning of the Nazi's attack on religion, so to speak the opposite of the biblical message.

He spoke of the new relationship between God, World and Man that was brought into the world by the Hebrew Bible (esp. the Book of Genesis), a relationship that was revolutionary, constituting a radical break with the surrounding religions. Man, every man and woman, was made in His image. He continued to develop this thought by showing that the experience of Exodus the liberation from slavery into freedom, is an experience showing that the world does not have to remain as it is, but can change and must change. This brought him to, what he called, the "New Thinking of Sinai", meaning that with the Law came the idea that no man shall rule over others. The Law determines what is right or wrong. Thus slavery is not a misfortune but an injustice before God. And only when the symbiotic relationship between divine and political power is broken, there can be true freedom. An idea that took almost 2000 years to be realized and then only in some parts of the world.

The Cardinal also spoke of the Prophets as being the first social critics, implying that to believe in God means to be critical of political power.

He concluded by saying that it was a theological decision to begin the Bible with Adam and not Abraham, thus making the biblical message a universal one, emphasizing that all human beings are made in God's Image, which all means that the Bill of Rights is already stated in the Bible. It is now up to us, Christians and Jews, to carry this message into the world and to get involved in the betterment of world.

In his words of thanks Rabbi Brandt expressed his deep gratitude for having this lecture in Munich, the city where he was born and from where his family was expelled so many years ago. To him it was a kind of homecoming all the more so on the 10th of November, 76 years and one day after "Reichspogromnacht."

The music by Vladimir Gaba, violin, and Viacheslav Dorokhov, piano gave the lecture a very festive atmosphere.

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