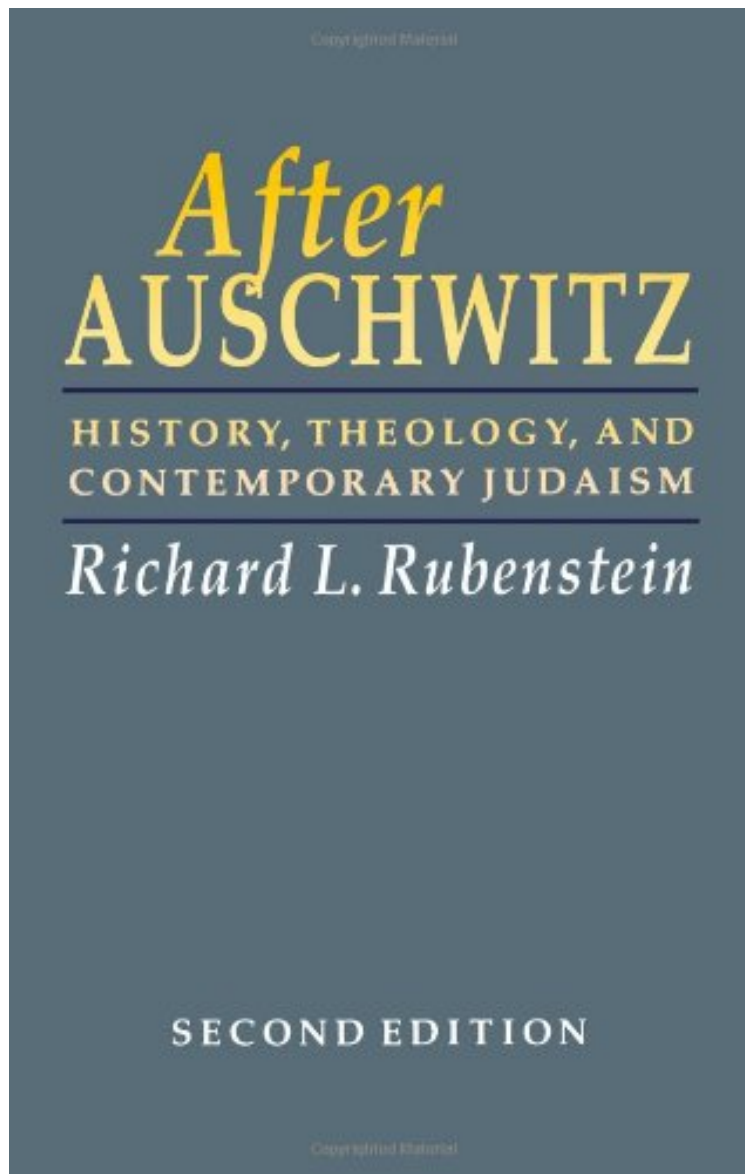


[Download] After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism (Johns Hopkins Jewish Studies)

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Richard L. Rubenstein

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Richard L. Rubenstein : After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism (Johns Hopkins Jewish Studies)

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism* (Johns Hopkins Jewish Studies):

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Professor Rubenstein was most fascinating challenging
By Paul D. Harvill
Professor Rubenstein was my most fascinating and challenging professor at FSU during the 1970s. His range of intellectual inquiry makes him a "Renaissance" man. He has written numerous provocative and important books. This 1992 edition includes contemporaneous information and revisions to his views when the book was originally published in 1967. This book is likely his best and most challenging for Jews and Christians in particular. 48 of 49 people found the following review helpful. Frightening--and therefore a must-read.
By A Customer
In this (much) revised edition of the original *After Auschwitz*, Rubenstein provides not only some of the theological and social implications of the legacy of the Holocaust, but also looks to the future of Jewish theology. Most memorable--and certainly one of the best ways to approach reading this book is to use this as a starting point--is Rubenstein's radical reconsideration of covenant. In this, Rubenstein's revised work still stands among the Death-of-God theologians of the mid- and late-sixties (Altizer, etc.) in its rejection of "that" God who either could not or would not, but certainly did not save the victims of the Holocaust. And while his more-or-less continued rejection of the status of the Nazi's mass-murdered victims as martyrs is questionable and certainly uncomfortable, this is entirely in keeping with the theological position of the work. Also keeping with his theological position as it has developed is Rubenstein's suggestion that Jews will either assimilate or reaffirm traditional perspectives on covenant--if only because no other theological resources exist in the classical Jewish texts. Still chilling--and a must-read for anyone interested in post-trauma theologies--is the chapter discussing Rubenstein's meeting with Dean Gruber. My only problem with the book has little to do with the quality thought or consistency--it is an astounding combination of methodological rigor and very profound theological reflection. I do think, though, that the continued emphasis on process theology and the yet-unrejected Death-of-God thought as it is reflected in Rubenstein's personal theological statements (particularly the extended discussion of the Ground-of-being) is not sufficient for a religious community. However, Rubenstein admits as much, and it is unfair to disparage him for his obviously very well thought out opinions. Excellent and, for individuals who believe or do not believe, a necessary work for comprehending the implications of the Holocaust.
3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Traditional Christian Teachings About Jews. 1939-1941 Hypocrisy. Planned Extermination of Slavs. Many Different Topics
By Jan Peczkis
This work has depth, but is a curious mixture of theology, philosophy, psychology, history, etc. (My review is based on the original 1966 edition.) I focus on a few items. Author Richard L. Rubenstein described his believed death of God as not so much a statement about God as a statement about our relationship to God. (p. 151). He redefined God in a mystical and existential sense, as a Holy Nothingness. (p. 154, 205, 264). Rubenstein rejected God's existence after he came to the realization that His existence would mean that the Holocaust was God's will. (p. 46). For an alternate Jewish viewpoint, please click on Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust, and read the Peczkis review. Rubenstein touches on Jewish conduct during the 1939-1941 German-Soviet alliance (that included the conquest and dismemberment of Poland). He comments, (quote) I can never forget the way in which Communists of Jewish origin insisted that Hitler's war was of no concern to them until the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. (p. 151). THE DEMONIZATION OF THE JEWS Rubenstein recognizes that Christian teachings about Jews were very different from later Nazi teachings about Jews, and that Nazism itself was virulently anti-Christian. (pp. 2-3). However, he insists that the demonization of Jews in Christian thinking was "imported" by the Nazis into their radically exterminatory thinking (p. 3), and that Christian demonization of Jews was an "indispensable ingredient" in the Nazi demonization of the Jews. (p. 21). There are a number of flaws in Rubenstein's thinking, not the least of which is the genetic fallacy. Precedence does not equal causation. Were the Nazis, many of whom were intellectuals, so uncreative that they had to import previously existing modes of thinking into their own? In addition, Rubenstein's thinking tacitly assumes that the demonization of Jews can ultimately arise from only one source--religiously-based Christian teachings. Thus, according to Rubenstein, in order to demonize Jews, one must rely on Christian modes of demonization of Jews, even if one is non-Christian or anti-Christian. In actuality, Jews historically were demonized for many reasons, notably their role in the economic structure of European societies. Moreover, religious-based demonizations became more and more unimportant with the emergence of the modern secular state. In addition, unlike the measurement of ingredients in a cake, there is no way of determining if Christian demonization of Jews was a significant ingredient in Nazi ideology. Thus, even assuming that Christian demonization of Jews was in fact a significant ingredient, there is no way of determining if it was an essential ingredient or nonessential ingredient in Nazi ideology. Pointedly, the experiences of the handicapped and the Gypsies (Sinti and Roma) prove that the Nazis were perfectly capable of conceiving and implementing an exterminationist strategy against identifiable groups that lacked any significant history of demonization by Christian theology. In addition to all this, Christian thinking about Jews had not been all demonization. Far from it. For instance, the much-condemned Christian prayers for the salvation of Jews implied a caring for the fate of the Jews, an affirmation of their worth as human beings, and a belief in their rehabilitation before God. Thus, upon close examination, it turns out that Rubenstein's thinking, although relatively polished and relatively non-accusatory in tone,

is animated by the usual anti-Christian bias. Finally, the blame-Christianity approach sidesteps the main cause of Nazi anti-Semitism. It was the souring of Jewish-German relations during the Weimar Republic. Please click on, and read my detailed review, of *Unfinished Victory*. **JEWES AND CHRISTIANS: MUTUAL NEGATION** Although Rubenstein emphasizes Christian condemnations of Judaism, and attempts to link them to Nazism, he admits that Jews also demonized Christians. Thus, he writes, (quote) For a Jew who holds firmly to the doctrine of the election of Israel and the Torah as the sole content of God's revelation to mankind, the Christian insistence upon the decisive character of the Christ-event in human history must be at best error and at worse blasphemy. (unquote). (p. 75). Considering the ferocity with which religious Jews dealt with blasphemy, this takes on further significance. **PLANNED NAZI EXTERMINATION OF SLAVS** Author Richard L. Rubenstein departs from the usual Judeocentric mode of thinking as he acknowledges the following, (quote) The aim of creating a world in which God is dead (or, more precisely, in which the Judaeo-Christian God is NEGATED [emphasis his]) was at the heart of the Nazi program...Had the Nazis won, their death machines would have been self-perpetuating. The demise of the last Jew would have been followed by the acceleration of an enlarged extermination campaign against the Russians, Poles, and other Slavs...There is no more reason to doubt Hitler's promise to find greater LEBENSRAUM by exterminating Slavs than his promise to exterminate the Jews. (unquote). (p. 35).

In this revised and expanded edition, Richard Rubenstein returns to old questions and addresses new issues with the same passion and spirit that characterized his original work.

"All of the essays in this edition are passionate and provocative and some are brilliant. As the summation of decades of burningly honest inquiry into some of the most fundamental issues in modern history, this work will remain one of the seminal books of this generation." (Australian Jewish Times)