

Letter from the Editors: March 2013

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS: MARCH 2013

March 1, 2013 · by Kyle Jantzen · in Letters from the Editors, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

Contemporary Church History Quarterly

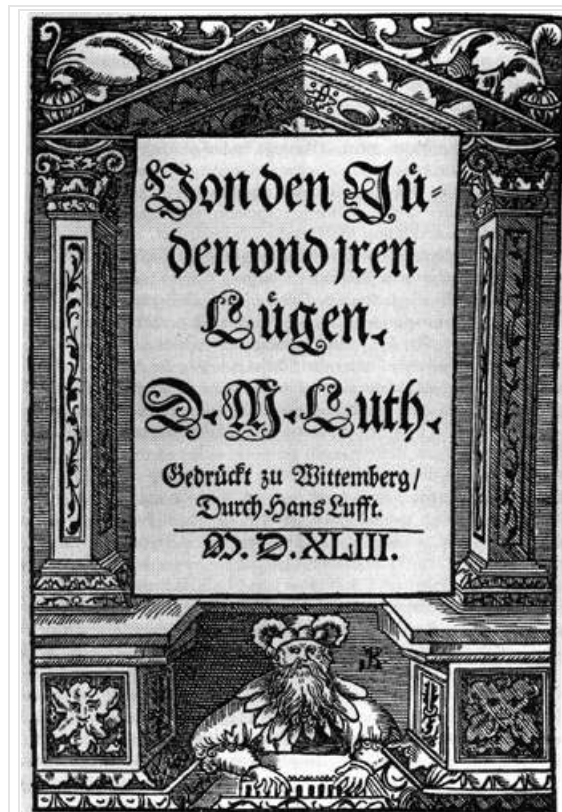
Volume 19, Number 1 (March 2013)

Letter from the Editors: March 2013

Dear Friends,

Once again we are delighted to be able to share with you our newest issue of *Contemporary Church History Quarterly*. Thank you for the kind words you've shared about our new format. We hope it's working well for you and are always glad to receive feedback about the journal. The March 2013 issue offers more that is new, for we are featuring four articles alongside our reviews and notes. Even 80 years after the Nazi seizure of power, Manfred Gailus argues that there is still much work to be done in coming to terms with the complicity of Berlin Protestant clergy in the events of 1933. Lauren Faulkner takes us on a journey to a former POW camp near Chartres, France, where chaplain Franz Stock secretly trained German theological students who had been drafted into the German Wehrmacht, preparing them for priestly ministry in the postwar era. Andrew Chandler considers the eight-year period Cardinal Hinsley's ecclesiastical career, during the time he was Archbishop of Westminster in the crisis years of 1935-1943. And John Conway reflects on the papacy of Benedict XVI and the potential legacies of his rule.

With a bounty of articles to offer, we have fewer reviews than normal. Kyle Jantzen assesses both Christopher Probst's book *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany* (the image of Martin Luther's infamous *On the Jews and Their Lies* is our cover image this issue) and the Internet website "[Evangelischer Widerstand](#)," which is produced by the Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History. John Conway reviews Gerald Hacke, *Die Zeugen Jehovahs im Dritten Reich und in der DDR. Feindbild und Verfolgungspraxis*, along with Sonya Grypma, *China Interrupted. Japanese Internment and the Reshaping of a Canadian Missionary Community*. Several conference reports round out this edition of *Contemporary Church History Quarterly*. We hope you enjoy reading it, and look forward to your responses.



Frontispiece of Martin Luther's 1543 book: On the Jews and Their Lies. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

On behalf of my editorial colleagues,

Kyle Jantzen, Ambrose University College



Review of Christopher J. Probst, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany*

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/review-of-christopher-j-probst-demonizing-the-jews-luther-and-the-protestant-church-in-nazi-germany/>

REVIEW OF CHRISTOPHER J. PROBST, *DEMONIZING THE JEWS: LUTHER AND THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN NAZI GERMANY*

March 1, 2013 · by Kyle Jantzen · in Reviews, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

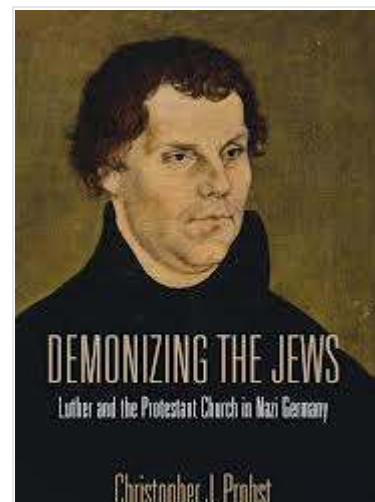
Contemporary Church History Quarterly

Volume 19, Number 1 (March 2013)

Review of Christopher J. Probst, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), xiv + 251 Pp., ISBN 978-0-253-00098-9.

By Kyle Jantzen, Ambrose University College

Christopher Probst has written an insightful analysis of the ways in which Protestant reformer Martin Luther's anti-Jewish writings were used by German Protestants during the Third Reich. Fundamental to Probst's work is his consistent use of Gavin Langmuir's distinction between *non-rational* anti-Judaism (antipathy rooted in theological differences or other symbolic language which stand apart from and not against rational thought) and *irrational* antisemitism (antagonism rooted in factually untrue and slanderous accusations against Jews). In contrast to the idea that pre-modern anti-Jewish thought was generally religious and therefore anti-Judaic while modern anti-Jewish thought is political or racial and therefore antisemitic, Probst sees both anti-Judaic and antisemitic elements in the language of Luther and the twentieth-century German theologians, church leaders, and pastors who invoked him (3-4, 6, 17-19). In light of this, *Demonizing the Jews* is a book about historical continuity.





One of Probst's important contributions is to show how complex and paradoxical antipathy towards Jews could be in Nazi Germany. Indeed, *Demonizing the Jews* begins with two snapshots from the life of Pastor Heinrich Fausel of Heimsheim, Württemberg. First, we learn that in 1934 Fausel gave a public lecture on the "Jewish Problem" in which he recycled Martin Luther's harsh pronouncements against the Jews of his day. Then, we discover that in 1943 Fausel and his wife sheltered a Jewish woman during the Holocaust. What was it about his attitudes towards Jews, Probst wonders, that enabled him to condemn Jews as a "threatening invasion" of a "decadent" people and yet rescue one of them? (1) Was Fausel antisemitic or anti-Judaic?

More importantly, Probst asks what role Luther's writings about Jews and Judaism might have played in the life of Fausel. More broadly, he wonders: "Was the generally anemic response to anti-Jewish Nazi policy on the part of German Protestants due at least in part to the denigration of Jews and Judaism in Luther's writings, to a more general traditional Christian anti-Judaism, or to some other cultural, social, economic, or political factors particular to Germany in the first half of the twentieth century?" (8). Here Probst has identified an important gap in the literature, for he has found no study which has thoroughly analyzed the use of Luther's anti-Judaic and antisemitic writings in Nazi Germany (6). This he sets out to do, employing not the classic texts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Karl Barth, but rather less prominent writings which he argues more completely capture the "conventional views" of German clergy (7, 19-20). No doubt many scholars will assume, with the author, that "surely many Protestants in Hitler's Germany might have read Luther's recommendations and sensed the congruities with the gruesome antisemitic program unfolding around them" (13).

Probst analyzes the history of German Protestant anti-Judaism and antisemitism in six well-organized chapters. An overview of Protestantism in Nazi Germany and a careful examination of Luther's writings about Jews set the stage for his analysis of the twentieth-century appropriation of the sixteenth-century reformer's ideas. Four chapters make up the heart of the work—one devoted to academic theologians from across the church-political spectrum and three devoted to clergy from the Confessing Church, the German Christian Movement, and the non-affiliated "middle"—the largest group within the German Protestant clergy of the Nazi era.

Overall, what Probst finds is that German Christian clergy, theologians, and church leaders "consistently embraced Luther's irrational antisemitic rhetoric as their own, frequently pairing it with idealized portraits of 'Teutonic' or 'German' greatness, anti-Bolshevism, and anti-Enlightenment sentiment" (14). Confessing Church clergy and theologians tended to emphasize "Luther's non-rational anti-Judaic arguments against Jews" but generally remained silent about his antisemitic outbursts and usually tried to distance themselves from the racial antisemitism of the German Christians and the Nazi state. Clergy from the middle of the church-political spectrum drew on both anti-Judaic and antisemitic aspects of Luther's Jewish writings, often sliding into xenophobic stereotypes of Jews, such as the Jew as usurer (14).

In his opening chapter on Protestantism in Nazi Germany, Probst draws on Shulamit Volkov's argument that antisemitism became a "cultural code" in Wilhelmine Germany, deeply embedded in society even during times when political antisemitism waned. He also highlights the importance of the ongoing publication of the Weimar edition of Luther's *Werke*, including volume 53 containing *On the Jews and Their Lies* and *On the Ineffable Name and on the Lineage of Christ*, which was published in 1919. Probst also explains the importance of the "Luther Renaissance," the revival of scholarly interest in Martin Luther which unfolded in the interwar era, noting its openness to nationalistic and antisemitic sentiments (26). As an example of the nationalistic, political, and even racial nature of German theology in the Weimar and Nazi eras, Probst assesses three works of the Erlangen theologian Paul Althaus: "The Voice of the Blood" (1932), *Theology of the Orders* (1934), and *Völker before and after Christ* (1937). What stands out here is the importance Althaus gave to the notion of the racial or blood-bound *Volk* as an elevated community established by God. It is in this context that Luther became important for German Protestants during the interwar era, both as national hero and (less so) as an antisemitic model (37-38).

Many readers will appreciate Probst's careful analysis of Luther's *Judenschriften*. Importantly, *Demonizing the Jews* strives to place Luther and his anti-Judaic and antisemitic rhetoric in proper historical context, noting the prevalence of negative stereotypes of Jews in the later Middle Ages, the frequency of accusations of host desecration leveled against Jews, the extent of anti-Jewish prejudice among church leaders (including reformers like Martin Bucer and Andreas Osiander), and the presence of important anti-Judaic and antisemitic publications, including Anthonius Margaritha's *The Whole Jewish Faith*, in which a converted Jew made numerous provocative charges about his former coreligionists. Probst surveys Luther's writings on Jews from the moderate and somewhat philosemitic *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523) to the sharply anti-Judaic and crudely antisemitic *On the Jews and Their Lies* and *On the Ineffable Name and on the Lineage of Christ* (both 1543), demonstrating both the importance of Luther's theological opposition to Judaism and the extent to which his harsher attacks were "steeped in late medieval anti-Jewish paranoia" (50). While Probst places Luther carefully in his sixteenth-century context and cautions against various simplistic interpretations of Luther's anti-Jewish writings (early vs. late Luther, anger over the absence of Jewish conversions, declining health and increasing upset in old age), he refrains from offering a decisive explanation for Luther's antipathy towards Jews and Judaism (51-58). What is clear is that the Luther's antisemitic social program was ignored for over three hundred years, until it was revived in a completely decontextualized manner by Nazi propagandists and Weimar-era Protestant writers.

Turning his attention to academic theologians from both the Confessing Church and the German Christian Movement in chapter three, Probst again sets his historical discussion carefully in context, briefly explaining the politicization of German universities and academic theology in the Third Reich. Surveying four theologians—Eric Vogelsang of Königsberg University; Wolf Meyer-Erlach of Jena University; Hermann Steinlein, pastor of Ansbach; and Gerhard Schmidt of Nuremberg Seminary—the author finds that "German Christian theologians usually adopted Luther's irrational antisemitic rhetoric as their own, often coupling it with notions that included idealized portraits of 'Teutonic' or 'German' greatness and anti-Enlightenment sentiment" (81). Confessing Church theologians tended to employ Luther's anti-Judaic arguments only but still usually supported the Nazi state's antisemitic program, which mirrored Luther's own antisemitic recommendations. As Probst concludes, "We have seen here that a Confessing Church pastor, a Confessing Church theologian, and two German Christian theologians all agree that Luther was 'correct' to be antisemitic, or at least 'anti-Jewish'" (82).

Chapters four through six ask how Confessing Church, German Christian, and non-aligned parish and higher clergy used Luther's anti-Jewish writings in the course of their parish duties or church leadership. Probst returns to the subject of the opening pages of the book, Pastor Heinrich Fausel, who was in fact a member of the Confessing Church. The Heimsheim pastor espoused a relatively apolitical theology, though one marked by the theology of the orders of creation. Like so many of his colleagues from across the Reich, Fausel advocated the close connection between the German *Volk* and the Christian God. The resurrection of Germany "after bad times" (Probst's words, not Fausel's) depends on Christian devotion to God, which Probst describes, perhaps optimistically, as "explicitly scriptural and spiritual—and in no way political." (94) Probst goes on to explain how, in the course of wartime suffering and the destruction of property, Fausel proclaimed the name of Jesus to be the source of forgiveness, healing, and victory. Statements like these, I would argue, *are* in fact much more political than the author suggests, given the context in which they arise.

When Fausel gave a public lecture on the Jewish Question in 1934, he refused to engage with biological notions of Jewishness but limited his discussion to the spiritual realm, where the person of Christ determined the fate of the Church, the peoples of the world, and the Jews. Fausel highlighted Jewish disobedience and stubbornness, using Isaiah 5 and its description of God's vineyard, which Israel neglected to care for. Even as he began to discuss Jews in the New Testament, Fausel explained the "Jewish Question" as a "besetting" problem and described the "terrifying foreign invasion" of Jews since the nineteenth century as a threat Germany had to defend itself from. That said, Fausel affirmed that opposition between Jews and gentiles in the New Testament was only about Christ and not about race. Still, Israel's rejection of Christ was, in Fausel's words, a "*unanimous rejection by an entire Volk, its leaders*

included,” even though (as the pastor explained) Jesus came to earth as part of the Jewish *Volk* (96). When Fausel discussed Luther’s views about Jews, he noted the reformer’s early positivity, but then explained how Luther dissociated himself from Jews and later unleashed his “full wrath” on them (96-97). Fausel noted how Luther saw the Jews as Christ’s enemies, how he recommended that the political authorities undertake severe measures against them, and how he lost hope for their conversion (97).

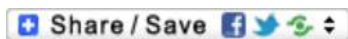
Throughout this section, Probst is careful to note that Fausel drew not only on Luther’s theological (non-rational) anti-Judaic sentiments, but also on his socio-political (irrational) antisemitic recommendations. Indeed, Fausel went on to speak approvingly of the state’s efforts to protect the German *Volk* from the Jews. He opposed Jewish-gentile intermarriage and supported restrictions to the number of Jewish civil servants in Germany. Though his arguments derived primarily from theology (for Probst, non-rational anti-Judaism), the practical outworking of this theology was Fausel’s approval of the distinctly antisemitic social and political measures undertaken by the Nazi state.

Most curiously (again), despite these views, Fausel and his wife later hid and cared for a Jewish woman during the Second World War, an act Probst has no real explanation for, on account of the lack of clear evidence. Rightly, he notes that people often act at variance with their stated beliefs, noting also that Fausel may have had something of a change of heart, given that he later signed the Württemberg Ecclesiastical-Theological Society’s 1946 Declaration on the Jewish Question—a frank confession of collective guilt from Protestants who realized they had been bystanders to the persecution of Jews (97-99, 171-172).

Probst agrees with Wolfgang Gerlach that even Confessing Church clergy did not support protection for Jews in Nazi Germany (113). Though he argues that they focused primarily on the biblical or theological aspects of Luther’s anti-Jewish writings, he adds that they reached “too easily for irrational and/or xenophobic reasoning in their writings and lectures” (116). If this was the case for Confessing Church clergy, Probst demonstrates that German Christian clergy were even more likely to draw on the explicitly antisemitic aspects of Luther’s writings. “The German Christian literature is overwhelmingly laden with strident attacks on Jews based on irrational conceptions about them. They are said to possess ‘fanatical hatred’ and ‘pernicious power.’ They are the ‘scum of mankind.’” Indeed, German Christians used terms like “Jewish Bolshevism” while urging the Nazi state to wage a “defensive struggle” against Jewish “Volk-disintegrating” power. Probst concludes: “Ultimately, many in the German Christian movement believed it was a matter of annihilate or be annihilated.” (142) As might be expected, non-aligned clergy from the Protestant middle landed somewhere between the Confessing Church and German Christian positions—more likely to invoke Luther’s non-rational anti-Judaic arguments against Jews but also more likely to elevate the German *Volk* as an order of creation and generally ready to support National Socialism and to identify Jews with Bolshevism (168-169).

One criticism of *Demonizing the Jews* might be its limited research base. It is to the author’s advantage that he analyzes individual anti-Jewish writings in good depth, but it is somewhat problematic to draw nuanced conclusions about the differences between Confessing Church, German Christian, and non-aligned clergy from such a small sampling of theological writings. That said, nothing I have seen in the parish archives of church districts from diverse regions of Nazi Germany would contradict Probst’s findings.

In the end, it is easy to agree with Probst’s conclusion that the anti-Judaic and antisemitic writings and lectures of German Protestant clergy “reinforced the cultural antisemitism and anti-Judaism of many Protestants in Nazi Germany” (172). Most importantly, however, by applying Langmuir’s more sophisticated definitions of anti-Judaism and antisemitism—both sentiments existed in the writings of Martin Luther and in those of his twentieth-century followers in Nazi Germany—Probst has demonstrated how deeply the continuities of anti-Jewish sentiment stretch from Nazi Germany back through the centuries to Luther and beyond. Surely there can be little question that Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism contributed significantly to the dehumanization of the Jews, fueling the ideological fire that became the Holocaust.



Tags: Christopher Probst, Demonizing the Jews, Kyle Jantzen, Luther Renaissance, Martin Luther, Nazi Germany

Review of Gerald Hacke, *Die Zeugen Jehovahs im Dritten Reich und in der DDR*

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/review-of-gerald-hacke-die-zeugen-jehovahs-im-dritten-reich-und-in-der-ddr/>

REVIEW OF GERALD HACKE, DIE ZEUGEN JEHOVAHS IM DRITTEN REICH UND IN DER DDR

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Review of Gerald Hacke, *Die Zeugen Jehovahs im Dritten Reich und in der DDR. Feindbild und Verfolgungspraxis*. Schriften des Hannah-Arendt-Instituts für Totalitarismusforschung, 41 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 457 Pp., ISBN 9783525369173.

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia

For sixty years, from 1930 to 1990, the Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany were almost continuously persecuted by state agencies, first by the Nazis and subsequently in East Germany by the Communist regime. According to one source, this small sect of 20-25,000 followers suffered a higher proportion of some form of persecution than any of the other churches. Their harassment, suppression, and even execution at the hands of the Nazi government has already been excellently described by Detlef Garbe, whose book *Between Resistance and Martyrdom. Jehovah's Witnesses in the Third Reich* was published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 2008. (The original German version was published in 1993.) But nothing in English on their persecution in the German Democratic Republic has yet appeared. We can therefore be grateful to Gerald Hacke for this comparative study, published by the prestigious Hannah Arendt Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism in Dresden.



Hacke's account deals less with the fate of the individual Witnesses and more with a comparison of the methods by which both totalitarian regimes sought to deal with this small group of opponents. He shows how both regimes saw the Witnesses' refusal to declare their loyalty to the state, and their equal determination not to accept any form of military conscription or service, as a deliberate political challenge. From the beginning, in both Nazi Germany and Communist East Germany, severely repressive measures were taken to ban the Witnesses' publications, to persecute open propagation of their faith, and to confiscate their properties. Refusal of military service led to the arrest and imprisonment of most of the male leaders. Many were then transferred to concentration camps without any chance of release, unless they were prepared entirely to renounce their beliefs. Few accepted such a capitulation. But the continued struggle of the Witnesses to practice their beliefs even in prison or underground was regarded as a direct blow to the state's authority which had to be savagely repressed.

Hacke provides a full description of the similarity of the measures deployed against the Witnesses, first by the Gestapo and SD, and then by the Communists' Ministry of State Security, the Stasi. He shows that the tactics of repression, though not necessarily copied the one from the other, took similar forms because of the similar conviction in both regimes that the Witnesses' divisive beliefs and practices constituted a serious ideological danger.

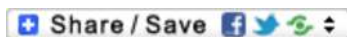
Such a comparative approach is open to criticism. For one thing, stressing the continuities and similarities may lead to overlooking the fact that the Nazi persecutions were both more radical and more racial, and led to mass exterminations of unwanted people on an unprecedented scale. Hence such comparisons, or a stress on the undoubted iniquities of the East German regime, might lead to a kind of apologia for the Nazi crimes. On the other hand, emphasizing the uniqueness of the Nazi persecutions, as in the Holocaust, might make it seem as though the East German Communists were less resolute or malicious towards the Witnesses. But this would be a misjudgment. In both cases, the Jehovah's Witnesses, with their 'petit bourgeois' milieu, their messianic message, their readiness to make ultimate sacrifices, and their solidarity with one another, were regarded as a political threat. Both regimes were hell-bent on gaining unchecked control on the population, and mobilizing support for the new society they sought to create. Furthermore, the refusal of the Witnesses to conform was seen as part of a sinister world-wide conspiracy, rooted in America, but evident in the back streets of German towns.

By placing the Witnesses in a global conspiratorial context, and by refusing to accept their religious professions as anything more than skilfully mounted prevarications, the persecutors of both regimes overestimated the Witnesses' significance. But even when the Witnesses' behaviour contradicted the persecutors' preconceptions, these prejudices were not abandoned. Throughout these sixty years, the German repressive agencies continued to regard the Witnesses as politically dangerous extremists.

Their alleged subversive activities became a fixed dogma of the security police forces, placing the Witnesses in a global context where Germany's enemies were striving to undermine the ruling party's consensus. Hence unrelenting vigilance was called for. The Witnesses' refusal to collaborate was easily translated as irredeemable fanaticism from which the public had to be protected. In the hands of the Stasi, this persecution mania often lost touch with reality—and not just for the Witnesses.

In the final years, the danger that open persecution would have unfortunate repercussions abroad and damage East Germany's image led the Communist rulers to concentrate on measures designed to undermine the sect from within by infiltrating carefully-placed informers or Stasi agents. But, just like the Gestapo zealots, they were never prepared to admit that the whole campaign was a mistake, or based on false presuppositions. In fact, neither the brutal attempts to compel submission to the state's demands nor the more subtle pressure to undermine the Witnesses' group solidarity ever grasped the reality of the Witnesses' religious motivations. At the same time, the resolute resistance of this sect against what they rightly perceived as bigoted persecution was itself fortified by their eschatological anticipation of the world's malevolence. When faced with this seeming endless coercion, the Witnesses displayed a

commendable capacity for endurance and faithfulness, which enabled them to outlast their oppressors and to survive the dire effects of political victimization.



Tags: Gerald Hacke, Jehovah's Witnesses, Nazi Germany, Zeugen Jehovahs im Dritten Reich

Review of the Internet website "Evangelischer Widerstand"

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/review-of-the-internet-website-evangelischer-widerstand/>

REVIEW OF THE INTERNET WEBSITE "EVANGELISCHER WIDERSTAND"

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Review of the Internet website "Evangelischer Widerstand," <http://evangelischer-widerstand.de>.

By Kyle Jantzen, Ambrose University College

The interactive website "Evangelischer Widerstand" (www.evangelischer-widerstand.de) is a powerful presentation of the Protestant Christian resistance to Hitler in both German and English. Automatically detecting my country of origin, the English website loaded a moving audio-visual introduction: "Imagine that your desperate exhortations go unheard. Would you nevertheless repeatedly call for solidarity with persecuted individuals?" The answer to this question is a short narration about Elisabeth Schmitz, a Berlin high

school teacher who appealed to Confessing Church leaders to help Jews, wrote an important memorandum on the topic, aided persecuted Jews, and quit her teaching position in protest against the National Socialist system. Three similarly worded questions follow, on the subjects of refusing to endorse the Nazi regime, rejecting the values of the Nazi legal system, and voicing anti-war convictions during the Second World War. In turn, these questions are answered with biographical snippets about Otto and Gertrud Mörke, a pastoral couple; Martin Gauger, a Confessing Church lawyer; and Johannes Schröder, a Confessing Church military chaplain



who became an anti-war activist. Bridging to the motto, “Resistance!? Protestant Christians under the Nazi Regime,” the splash page dissolves to reveal an attractive map of the Third Reich covered in icons of men and women.

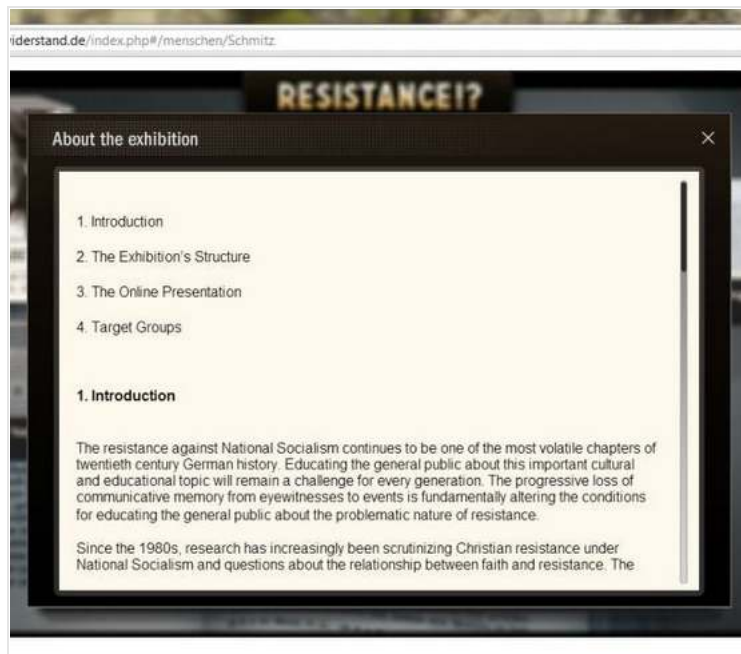


This is the website

developed over the past couple of years by the Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte (Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History) in Munich, under the leadership of Dr. Claudia Lepp, along with Drs. Siegfried Hermle, Harry Oelke, and a host of other notable German scholars. It is sponsored by the Evangelical Church in Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, and the Köber Foundation of Hamburg, and supported by a long list of academics, Protestant notables, archives, memorial sites, and other institutions. It contains information on no less than three dozen (as of March 2013) individual or group resisters, along with a timeline, a series of fundamental questions, photos, documents and audio clips. It is a rich and growing set of resources, tied to a substantial bibliography of German-language publications on the topics of resistance and the German churches under Hitler. (Hopefully, over time, the bibliography will grow to include many of the important English-language studies on the German churches in the Nazi era.)

There is much to commend about “Evangelischer Widerstand.” The Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History is entirely correct in its awareness of the need to tell the story of the German churches under Hitler in new ways to new generations. This website is far more likely to reach young German Protestants than any of the excellent histories which continue to be written by scholars in Germany, Britain, North America, and elsewhere. The compelling questions posed in the introduction to the website raise fundamental moral questions and anticipate a website that presents meaningful stories of unambiguous Christian resistance to Nazism.

The inclusion of photographs, documents, and audio clips adds to the interest, and the decision to tell the story of Christian resistance largely through bite-sized biographies of famous (and not so famous) Germans is surely the most engaging approach available. Included are the expected personalities like Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Niemöller, Württemberg Protestant Bishop Theophil Wurm, and the Kreisau Circle, along with Catholic Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen and Anglican Bishop George Bell, to provide some international and ecumenical flavour. But there are also lesser known Christians: attorney Hans Buttersack, vicar and teacher Ina Gschlössl, teacher Georg Maus, and vicar Katharina Staritz. The witness of their lives and opposition to Nazism within the ecclesiastical realm demonstrate that there were indeed members of an “other Germany” who did not bow to Hitler or abandon persecuted Jews.



In the “About the exhibition” section of the site, Claudia Lepp and her colleagues explain their historical assumptions and methodology. They argue that the resistance against National Socialism “continues to be one of the most volatile chapters of twentieth century German history,” express their concern about “the progressive loss of communicative memory from eyewitnesses to events,” and note “the problematic nature of resistance.” Delving into the historiography of the German churches under Nazism, they identify a shift during the 1980s away from a focus on the Confessing Church and towards four new issues: 1) the role of resistance in the everyday life of Christian congregations and the question of who was motivated by their Christian faith to aid the victims of persecution; 2) the significance of “less noted” groups like the Religious Socialists, liberal Christians, Christians in the National Committee for Free

Germany, conscientious objectors and those who deserted on account of their Christian faith; 3) the personal faith of resistance members and its relationship to their ethical and political thinking; and 4) the proper historical presentation of resistance “detached from forms of heroization.”

In response to these questions, the Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History hopes their online academic exhibition will cover “the entire range of Protestants’ resistance under the Nazi regime, including its manifestations and ambivalences.” Here the scholars behind the exhibition focus on “Christian resistance,” which they define as “resistance engendered by the Bible and bound by traditional fundamental Christian values.” And they identify several forms of resistance,

from partial discontent to disobedience and protest up through coup attempts, resistance in the narrower sense of the word. At issue was defending the Church’s right of existence and the authenticity of the Christian message from the threat of ideological dictatorship as well as defending the rule of law and human dignity in an unjust regime.

The rationale closes with the claim that “the exhibition clearly establishes that resistance motivated by Christian faith was invariably the exception among the wide range of options for Christian and ecclesiastical action in the Nazi era.”

Except that it doesn’t. Visitors to the “Evangelischer Widerstand” website are unlikely to leave with the impression that Christian resistance was the exception in the Third Reich. I have quoted extensively from “About the exhibition” because it explains two basic flaws that run right through the website: the definition of resistance and the assumption of resistance.

Concerning the definition of resistance, nowhere does the site actually define the term. This is baffling, given that historians have been debating the definition of resistance intensively since the 1970s, employing or critiquing terms like *resistance*, *opposition*, *non-conformity*, *dissent*, *protest*, or *immunity*. Throughout the English website, however, *resistance* is employed almost universally; *opposition* is used a handful of times, but *non-conformity* and *dissent* are absent. There is one article on “Everyday Protest” in which discusses “minor forms of social disobedience,” but also uses both the words “resisted” and “protest and assertion,” avoiding clarity on the issue. On the German site, *Widerstand* is used throughout, with *Opposition*, *Resistenz*, and *Verweigerung* showing up occasionally, though they are never defined. The German article equivalent to the “Everyday Protest” article is even more confusing, for the article

itself is called “Verweigerung im Alltag,” but includes the words “widersetzten sich,” “sozialen Ungehorsams,” and “Nichtteilnahme.”

The result of the near-universal employment of *Resistance* and *Widerstand* is to suggest that every church protest against some specific Nazi policy or particular encroachment into the ecclesiastical realm was akin to a principled opposition to National Socialism as a movement or to a forcible attempt to overthrow the Hitler regime. The professional historical scholarship on the German churches in the Third Reich abandoned this simplistic interpretive approach decades ago. There’s no good reason why the Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History, filled with excellent scholars, should employ such an outdated interpretive concept of resistance today.

The second weakness of the website is the assumption of resistance. The treatment of individuals and topics runs from heroic resistance to compromised resistance, but never to indifference, compromise, or collaboration, which were in fact the normative responses of Christians in Nazi Germany. For instance, in the “Fundamental Questions” section of the site, the introduction begins with a window called “Action at the Margins,” which states that “Resistance in totalitarian regimes means action at the margins: The divide between (un-)lawfulness and justice, between courage and foolhardiness, between reasons of state and conscience. Christians’ resistance against National Socialism is no exception here.” The introduction moves on to discuss “Christian Resistance” within the context of a totalitarian Nazi regime, “Action in Obscurity.” Another window on “Fundamental Questions” briefly mentions that the questions of resistance are not merely about “black and white or good and evil.” After that, however, there follow several more windows on motivations for resistance, Christian and Church resistance, and denominational and ecumenical resistance.

Further along, a “Contradictions” area notes how Christian faith could also “crush the potential for resistance.” Yet even here the authors of the text do not consider indifference, compromise, or collaboration. They only note that resisters grappled with the command of Romans 13 to obey political authorities and debated “the ethical justifiability of tyrannicide.” The text continues: “This ambivalence is reflected in many biographies, even ones where faith initially made supporters of the NSDAP out of individuals who later turned their backs on National Socialism and became its opponents.” So ambivalence is present, but generally appears to have been overcome in the lives of Christian resisters. Other parts of the “Fundamental Questions” section treat issues such as Christian ethics, defense of others, consideration of consequences, gender-specific resistance, and contrasts between clergy and laity. But the net result is still a site devoted only to resistance, and not to a consideration of the wider range of responses to Nazism among Protestants—or Catholics, for that matter.

A
similar



analysis could be made of the timeline. Here the web historians offer up three streams of articles—on the “Regime,” on “Majority Protestantism,” and on “Christian Resistance.” There are entries about Hitler’s misleading pro-Christian statements, the German Christian Faith Movement, and other aspects of the history of Protestant collaboration with the Hitler state. Still, in the crucial 1933-1934 section, the 19 articles devoted to aspects of Christian Resistance are almost double the 10 entries given over to the compromised majority Protestants, once more creating the impression that Christian Resistance was, in fact, the most obvious Christian response to the Nazi dictatorship.

One might protest that the aim of “Evangelischer Widerstand” is just that—to highlight Protestant resistance. Fair enough, but when the stated goal of the Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History is to “appeal to users with different educational backgrounds and interests and of different ages” (i.e. to engage a younger, web-surfing generation) for the purpose of “educating the general public about the problematic nature of resistance,” such an unbalanced telling of the story creates a false impression on uninitiated viewers of the website. Coupled with the misleading use of the term *resistance* for all forms of ecclesiastical opposition, “Evangelischer Widerstand” as a flawed educational resource.



Because of these two weaknesses in the website’s approach to presenting the history of the German churches in the Third Reich, “Evangelischer Widerstand” works best when it tells the stories of the heroic, deeply-principled Christians who acted decisively against the regime and its policies. Elisabeth Schmitz is a good example. Just as Manfred Gailus has recently argued in his fine history *Mir aber zerriss es das Herz. Der stille Widerstand der Elisabeth Schmitz* (Göttingen:

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), Elisabeth Schmitz was

a remarkable figure. A member of the “World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches” from 1928 on, she conscientiously taught religion, history, and German to high school students but refused to join the National Socialist Teachers’ Association. Instead, she joined the Confessing Church, soon criticizing its spokesmen for their disparaging comments about Jews and challenging its leaders to intervene on behalf of “non-Aryan” Germans. This protest culminated in her 1935 memorandum “On the Situation of German Non-Aryans,” described by the website as “arguably the most explicit protest within the Confessing Church against the persecution of Jews.” Schmitz wrote that the German Church was “inescapably entangled in this collective culpability” and could hardly expect forgiveness when “it forsakes its members in their desperate straits day for day, stands by and watches the flouting of all of God’s commandments, does not even venture to confess the public sin, but instead—remains silent?” Alongside this work within the Confessing Church, Schmitz courageously quit her teaching position in 1938. Applying for early retirement, she informed the Berlin school board that, “I have become increasingly doubtful whether I can teach my purely ideological subjects—religion, history, German—as the Nazi state expects and demands of me,” adding that, “this constant moral conflict has become unbearable.” She spent the rest of the war years aiding persecuted Jews, returning to the classroom once again after the Hitler regime had been swept away.

“Evangelischer Widerstand” is less effective in more complex situations, as in the case of the journal *Junge Kirche* (*Young Church*). Ralf Retter’s thorough study of the Confessing Church periodical, published as *Zwischen Protest und Propaganda: Die Zeitschrift “Junge Kirche” im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Allitera Verlag, 2009), argues that the journal was engaged in *Resistenz* (non-conformity) though not *Widerstand* (opposition) between 1933 and 1936. During this time, it opposed the German Christian takeover of the church governments, promoted the Barmen Confession, opposed both the introduction of the Aryan Paragraph in the churches and the

abandonment of the Old Testament, affirmed the traditional historical narratives defending the long-standing presence of Christianity in Germany, supported the emergent ecumenical movement, and even criticized Nazi interference in the realm of the church. However, Retter also details the ways in which *Junge Kirche* abandoned the more radical Dahlemite branch of the Confessing Church after 1936, and how by 1939, its pro-Nazi editorial tendencies were growing clearer and clearer. When *Junge Kirche* linked its embrace of Hitler's war aims with its mission to foster piety and provide spiritual encouragement among German Protestants during the Second World War, its editors turned it into a stabilizing presence in the Third Reich—quite the opposite of a force for resistance.

In contrast to Retter's nuanced portrayal, the online article "The Magazine 'Junge Kirche'" (part of the "Christian Resistance" stream) explains how the church press "played a crucial role in communication and the exchange of information within church opposition." It explains how *Junge Kirche* served as a "forum for opinions within the Confessing Church" and a source of information about wider German church life. It describes, quite rightly, how Nazi censorship limited the journal's ability to report on church news and how the editors circumvented regulations by quoting Nazi or German Christian press reports, publishing the journal under a separate "Verlag Junge Kirche" in order to protect the real publisher, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. However, the decline of the journal as a forum for protest is greatly minimized, while there is no mention of its support for aspects of Nazism. The online text reads as follows:

Pressure on the editorial staff of the "Junge Kirche" to conform increased steadily, especially after the Nazi government changed its church policy in 1935. The balancing act between conformity and self-assertion grew more and more challenging.

Government regulations had become so drastic by 1938 that the still remaining independent church press no longer had any latitude to report independently. The Reich Chamber of the Press eventually ordered the discontinuation of all religiously motivated magazines in the summer of 1941 on account of the war.

In the end, then, the website "Evangelischer Widerstand" is a bold and innovative attempt to present the history of Christian resistance to a new generation. It holds great potential to become the leading online educational site for the history of German Protestantism under Hitler. For that very reason, it is incumbent upon the editors from the Protestant Working Group for Contemporary Church History to define and contextualize their use of "Christian Resistance." Doing so would make their dynamic website into the premier Internet source of information about all aspects of the history of German Protestantism in the Third Reich—from the heroic to the disgraceful.



Tags: Elisabeth Schmitz, Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte, Evangelischer Widerstand, German Resistance, Junge Kirche, Kyle Jantzen, Manfred Gailus, Ralf Retter

Review of Sonya Grypma, *China Interrupted. Japanese Internment and the Reshaping of a Canadian Missionary Community*

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/review-of-sonya-grypma-china-interrupted-japanese-internment-and-the-reshaping-of-a-canadian-missionary-community/>

REVIEW OF SONYA GRYPMA, *CHINA INTERRUPTED. JAPANESE INTERNMENT AND THE RESHAPING OF A CANADIAN MISSIONARY COMMUNITY*

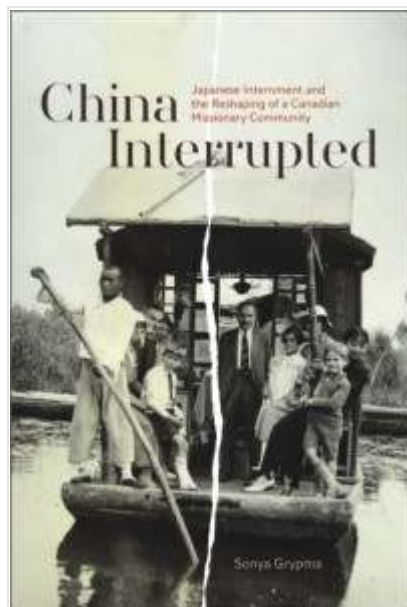
March 1, 2013 · by John S. Conway · in Reviews, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

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Review of Sonya Grypma, *China Interrupted. Japanese Internment and the Reshaping of a Canadian Missionary Community* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), xvi + 305 Pp., ISBN 9781554586451.

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia



It is surely regrettable that the considerable contributions made by the Canadian churches to the early twentieth century missionary endeavours are now largely forgotten, or in some cases deplored as an example of “imperialist cultural aggression.” In fact, a hundred years ago, in proportion to their size and resources, the churches of Canada sponsored more missionaries at home and abroad than any other nation. The young men and women who volunteered their services were responding to the popular call for “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” China was the preferred destination, and indeed became the flagship of European and North American missionary expansionism.

This proved to be a short-lived endeavour, spanning only from 1890 to 1950. It was both rewarding and life-threatening. In 1900 the Boxer Rebellion forced many missionaries to flee from their postings. In 1926 a similar political turmoil led to a widespread, if temporary, evacuation. But the most serious challenge came after the Japanese had occupied much of eastern China. When war broke out in December 1941, all those missionaries, like other British, Canadian, American and Dutch civilians, who had chosen to remain at their posts, were interned for the duration of hostilities.

Sonya Grypma is a professor of nursing in British Columbia, and her interest was drawn to a small coterie of half a dozen Canadian missionary nurses who were interned for nearly four years in exceedingly horrendous and degrading conditions. Her account is based on the surprising amount of survivors’ personal and written records which she has blended into a convincing narrative and commentary. Though necessarily focusing on these interned nurses and their partners, she seeks to place their experiences in the wider context of mission history. She regrets that the closure of the North China Mission as a result of the civil war and communist take-over in 1949 triggered a silencing of the historical record and only helped to keep the tragedy of internment from Canadian public attention. This silence was deepened by the fact that no Japanese apology or reparation was offered to these interned civilians. Grypma’s study is therefore a most welcome corrective and one which throws light on this small but significant episode in Canadian Church history.

Her account is also notable in that she carefully avoids the kind of hagiographic treatment so often found in missionary histories.

Instead, she adopts a warmly sensitive but critical evaluation of the sufferings endured, particularly by the women internees. She rightly notes that the majority of these Canadian nurses were “mishkids”, that is, they were the children of missionaries who had gone out to China a generation before. These women had been born and brought up in China, but returned to Canada for their professional training. Their decision to return to China in the late 1930s was their response to the call for nurses, so urgently needed throughout China, in the same spirit that had inspired their parents. Nursing was a chance to return to the land of their birth. Also, Grypma surmises, they hoped to find amongst the eligible bachelors in the mission field a refined and dedicated partner. Indeed many did.

The younger missionaries were impatient with the pietistic approach of their parents. They believed that practical service was as effective a witness as preaching. They were also more sensitive than their elders to the consequences of western imperialist exploitation of China. At the same time they enjoyed living comfortably in the mission compounds. They were not free from the paternalistic mentality of doing good to their charges, with whom they did not much socialize. Even though the missionary cohort was upheld by its sense of compassion for the poor and sick, until internment they had had no direct experiences of the humiliations and poverty of China’s millions.

When the war broke out in Europe in 1939, China seemed relatively calm. In 1940 when Godfrey and Betty Gale were married near the missionaries’ seaside resort, life seemed very pleasant. But in 1941 the situation in Asia grew much tenser. The consular offices urged women and children to be repatriated before it was too late. Betty Gale, now expecting a baby, was undecided. She packed her trunks, but then unpacked them again. To stay meant increased risk; to depart guaranteed loneliness. Her colleague Florence Liddell decided to take her two children back to Canada, but could not tell when she and Eric, the Olympic champion runner, would be reunited. In fact, they never were. Eric died of a brain tumour in February 1945, still in captivity. But Betty determined that she would stay and support Godfrey, in the hope that their marriage would be enhanced even in such terrible times. It was a choice she never regretted—at least in public. Instead she claimed that the years of internment had provided a test of their character and perseverance. It was a difficult but invaluable opportunity to understand God’s purposes for their lives.

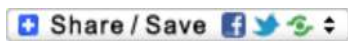
The first few months after Pearl Harbor saw the missionaries confined to their quarters, though they were still able to have the services of a Chinese cook. But in September 1942, when they were moved to Shanghai, their expectations that they would be repatriated were dashed, even though Betty’s missionary father was one of the lucky ones. They had to recognize that an internment camp was as much of a mission field as anywhere else, though their forbearance was sorely tried when they were placed along with hundreds of the snobbish and wealthy Shanghai internees, who made no secret of their hostility and even contempt for missionaries. They had difficulty shaking the perception that they were bizarre creatures eager to evangelize. Conditions were stark; the dirty and contaminated buildings were infested with insects. While Godfrey was called on to treat patients, Betty sought ways to escape some of the more repulsive aspects of camp life by busying herself with care of their daughter. She was even able to take up some nursing duties.

Their final two years were spent in even more pernicious conditions in the bomb-damaged, rat-infested warehouse of Pudong Camp across the river from Shanghai’s Bund. As the Japanese prospects for victory faded, so conditions for their prisoners only grew worse. By 1945, bombing raids on Shanghai were an incessant danger. But even more ominous was the shortage of food, as was the effect on their health of the complete lack of privacy. The facilities were sparse, dirty and cold. In this camp, the internee population was more crude, aggressive and at times violent. As camp physician, Godfrey was in constant demand. But even his strength was sorely weakened by an attack of tuberculosis, which was to take many years to heal. The lethal negligence of the Japanese authorities undoubtedly contributed to the deaths of thousands throughout the internment camp system.

Despite all, Betty Gale sought to make the camp “a happy place” for the children. She brought to the task the resources of the Christian

tradition for seeing suffering as a redemptive experience. By such means she resisted victimization and defeat. And after liberation she never engaged in recrimination. Her faith enabled her to come to terms with the meaning of the disasters she and her colleagues had endured.

Grypma's account of the harrowing experiences of these missionary nurses adds further details to the magnificently comprehensive study by Greg Leck, *Captives of Empire: The Japanese Internment of Allied Civilians in China, 1941-1945* (Bangor, PA: Shandy Press, 2006). Her achievement is both to bring alive the personal dimensions of these families, as well as to analyze the wider setting of their China years. China, for them, was a place where committed Christians went to live out their faith in tangible ways. In the 1940s the internment camps became social laboratories for testing the Christian principles of kindness and long-suffering under the most trying conditions. The interruption of this dedicated service was a deplorable and cruel disaster. And it was equally regrettable that, for these missionaries, the opportunity to return to complete their years of service never occurred again. But we can be grateful to Sonya Grypma that she has so capably laid out for us the record of these young Canadians' service overseas, and had broken through the veil of silence which has for so many years prevented their story from being better known.



Tags: China Interrupted, missionaries, Sonya Grypma

Crosses and Swastikas

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CROSSES AND SWASTIKAS

March 1, 2013 · by Manfred Gailus · in Articles, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

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Crosses and Swastikas

By Manfred Gailus, Technische Universität Berlin

The following article was written to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power. It was published in Der Tagesspiegel on February 2, 2013. The original can be viewed at <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/kreuze-und-hakenkreuze/7722926.html>. Translation from German by John S. Conway.

Nazi flags on the altars, Nazi songs in the pews, Nazi greetings at the church doors—this was the scene in “German Christian” churches in 1933. Eighty years later, the Church is still shying away from facing up to this fateful and heretical perversion.

Many churchmen were only too glad to see a “national Saviour” rise to power. They encouraged and applauded this belief, wherever it

might lead. This was not just a handful of misguided bigots, but churchmen of all shades, men of faith and pillars of the Church.

One of them was Pastor Bruno Marquardt, pastor in the Friedenau parish of Berlin. For him, 1933 was the “year of greatness” when Adolf Hitler came to power and changed the country into a dictatorship. For him, it was a year when Germany regained its lost heroic qualities. Instead of being discriminated against as a downtrodden nation, Germany was once again able to hold its head high. “The proud heroism of these men—from the Führer to the least SA-man—who have campaigned for the soul of the people during the years of degradation and shame, who have committed every ounce of their life and blood for a new Germany, this proud heroism has finally won in the ‘victory for faith.’” Despite all the malignancy and devilry of the years before 1933, so the Pastor thought, “this new national revival has shown that the German soul has not been broken, but is now embarking on a new intensification of faith.”

Many other pastors thought the same during the exciting events during this “turning point of history.” And so naturally did a great many of their parishioners. In Berlin, the nation’s capital, the Protestant churches were overwhelmed by a newly established movement, calling itself “The Faith Movement of German Christians.” For instance, four days after Hitler came to power, a special service of celebration and thanksgiving was held in the packed church of St Mary, one of Berlin’s most historic sanctuaries in the city centre. Pastor Joachim Hossenfelder of Christ Church, Kreuzberg, the leader of these “German Christians,” preached on 1 Corinthians 15: 57: “Thanks be to God, who has given us this victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” He praised President Hindenburg for choosing the best possible person to lead the country and its new government. Hossenfelder even went so far as to characterize the new Chancellor, who was by birth a Roman Catholic, as “one of a kind, forged from purity, piety, energy and strength of character—our Adolf Hitler.”

Only a few days later, on 5 February, the “German Christians” were given permission to hold a funeral service in the Berlin Cathedral. This was to say farewell to a murdered SA-leader Hans-Eberhard Maikowski, one of the notorious gang of SA rowdies in the Berlin back streets. Together with a policeman, he had been shot during a SA demonstration on 30 January in Charlottenburg. For this funeral requiem not only did Adolf Hitler himself appear, but also Marshal Hermann Goering, numerous SA and SS leaders, as well as the Crown Prince of the exiled Hohenzollern family, and many German Christian pastors in full ceremonial vestments. Once again Pastor Hossenfelder preached. He spoke of the “great grey army” in the beyond who were, “maintaining a watchful guard in heaven.” Standing by the coffin placed in front of the altar, he proclaimed: “You were one of the best. Your coffin is draped with the swastika flag, and in the first row sits our supreme leader, Adolf Hitler. So to say goodbye, we sing the beloved old military song: ‘When the seed is so fine, then the harvest will be abundant and golden.’”

In the course of the year 1933, hardly any of Berlin’s Protestant churches remained free from such Memorial, Thanksgiving or Jubilee celebrations. There were indeed plenty of opportunities. In March, Remembrance Services were held for the fallen, in April the Führer’s birthday was celebrated, on 2 July, special Thanksgiving services were organized for the “National Revival,” in October Harvest Festivals were turned into celebrations of “Blood and Earth,” and in November the same themes were noted to mark Martin Luther’s 450th birthday. The spill-over from such ceremonies was all too frequently reflected in the Sunday worship services.

In the short week between the Nazi-organized boycott of Jewish shops on 1 April and the passage of the new law banning Jews from the civil service on 7 April, the “German Christians” held their first national assembly in the Prussian House of Lords. Pastor Siegfried Nobiling of Friedenau gave the key-note address on the topic of “Church Leadership,” and pleaded for the creation of a new generation of theologians who would be fully committed to the values of “family, clan, race and nation.” Anyone who did not recognize these categories as God’s holy creation should not be admitted to the ordained clergy ranks. No “Jew or part-Jew” should be allowed to hold the honorable office of pastor or leader in the congregation. Pastor Karl Themel of the Luisenstadt Parish called for the “annihilation of the atheist movement.” All Christians should welcome the clean-up measures taken by the state. And he saw the “German Christian”

parishes as “healthy cells in the sick body of the German people.”

These sentiments were to be long-lasting. Even though the “German Christian Movement” fell apart into separate rival factions after 1936-7 and disappeared almost without trace after 1945, yet the Berlin Churches in the post-war world, despite all the damage they had suffered, and the years they had been caught up in a Cold War situation, still now decades later have shown little willingness to come to terms with this Nazi legacy.

It was only very late, namely in the era when Wolfgang Huber was Bishop, that the process of re-examining the past began. But even now, in most recent times, one frequently meets the sentiment in church circles: “Enough is enough!” So, for example, the now richly established Theological Faculty at the Humboldt University in the twenty years since the overthrow of the Communist regime has done almost nothing to deal with the record of the Berlin churches’ Nazi past, or with its own appalling theologies of that era. It is also notable that the Berlin Protestant Academy, one of the notable public affairs institutions, does not include any such topic as the performance of Berlin churches during the Nazi period in its 2013 programme. One would think that 80 years after 1933 would be a highly suitable time to take stock, and particularly to ask: how could the Christian churches have been so blind, or allowed such blatant Nazi propaganda to be proclaimed from their pulpits?

In 1933 the churches were often fuller than ever before. The services often became spectacular ceremonies. For example, on the occasion of Hitler’s birthday on 20 April, one local Nazi Party group and two SA formations marched to the Stephen Church in the Wedding district. Pastor Walter Aner preached on 1 John 5:4: “His is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” At the end of the service, many of the congregation were deeply stirred when prayers of remembrance were made for those who “following in the ranks of the Führer had died for the rebirth of our nation and people,” while in the background the organ quietly played Nazi “hymns.” In this parish no fewer than 17 of the Church Elders, all four pastors, and most of the church officials, the parish nurses and care-givers, all joined the “German Christian Movement.”

The question has to be asked: was this astonishing perversion shared by all Protestants in 1933? The answer is: not all, but very many. On 23 July, new elections were decreed for the representative church bodies which had been dissolved by command of the fanatical Nazi Commissar August Jäger. Only two lists of candidates were put up, one for the “German Christians” and one for the “Gospel and Church” party. This latter group was made up of the various rather weak and dubious opposition elements. In Berlin it was particularly notable that a large number of parishes (43%) adopted a unity list, whereby the “German Christians” were assured of between 75 and 100% of the available places. The result was that about half of the parishes were taken by storm by the “German Christians” without any struggle at all. In those 75 parishes where elections were held, the “German Christians” achieved on average two thirds of the votes. This electoral triumph was due to the fact that many of the pastors and church members clearly supported such a result, and because the opposing forces were appallingly weak.

At the beginning of September, as a result of these elections, a new Synod for the Prussian Church was convened, usually called the “brown synod” because of the dominance of Nazi Party members. Because of their two-thirds majority, the “German Christians” enacted their desired plan to exclude “non-Aryan Christians” from holding clerical offices.

It was only at this point that the church opposition which had been so lacking in foresight became alarmed. A few days later a core group led by Pastor Martin Niemöller, Gerhard Jacobi and Martin Albertz founded the Pastors Emergency League to mobilize support for those pastors who wanted to unite in opposition against the perverted plans of the “German Christians.”

A few months later, the “German Christians” planned to hold a giant rally in the Berlin Sports Palace. It was to include a mass march

which would be both a demonstration of their strength and a victory parade. On the evening of 13 November, the Sports Palace was filled to the roof with over 20,000 participants. A large number of prominent “German Christian” pastors from all over Berlin took their places on the platform. The main speaker was Reinhold Krause, who called on the Church to undertake the “completion of the German Reformation in the Third Reich.” In this new “German Church” the same rules for life should apply as in the new state, namely “heroic piety” and “nationally-appropriate Christianity.” Most important of all was to get rid of all un-German aspects in the worship services, such as the use of the Old Testament with its “Jewish morality.” So too St Paul’s deplorable theology of scapegoats and inferiority complexes must be removed. What was needed was to preach a manly picture of Jesus which would be in line with the concepts of National Socialism. When he had finished the speaker received numerous rounds of applause from the thrilled audience. But at the same time this speech aroused considerable irritation among some of the “German Christians,” and even some resignations, which could only be of help to swell the ranks of the still incipient church opposition.

By the end of 1933 the “German Christians” had conquered a significant portion of the Berlin churches, but not all. Indeed there soon developed a fierce competition between the opposing factions which led to Berlin’s churches being caught in a deadly fight for supremacy. This “Church Struggle” was to continue to dominate the church scene for years. At first the Berlin “German Christian” pastors were in the majority, since more than 40% of the parish pastors belonged in this group (at least temporarily). A good 20% of all Berlin pastors joined the Nazi Party. It would have been more except that the Party refused to take any more applications from clergy in order to prevent denominational divisions within its ranks.

In those parishes where the “German Christians” held sway, new forms of liturgies soon appeared. First, the service began with a parade of Nazi flags entering the church, followed by the dedication of these flags on the altar, and the singing of the Nazis’ anthem, the Horst Wessel Song. In their sermons, these “German Christian” pastors painted a picture of the “heroic figure of Jesus” as a model for today’s Christians. Anything Jewish or seemingly Jewish had to be eliminated from the church or the worship services. Hence the words “Zion” or “Hosanna” were to be cut out and not again heard in German churches. Parish educational activities were expressly encouraged to organize indoctrination sessions at which these new ideas for a synthesis between National Socialism and Christianity could be propagated. Such special topics as “Luther and the Jews,” “The Struggle for the German Soul” or “Christianity and the Nordic Faith” were widely promoted. So too portraits of Hitler or other Nazi symbols were given prominent places in the church rooms, and the Hitler greeting was appended to all correspondence without fail.

If one looks at the total record of the Protestant Church in Berlin, or indeed for the whole of Germany, during the Nazi era, one has to paint a very dark picture. Of course there were a few bright spots. The Berlin parish of Dahlem where Martin Niemöller officiated was one of them; or one could mention the young Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was unable to find any parish in Berlin to serve; or there was the formidable Superintendent in Spandau, Martin Albertz, whose remarkably consistent Christian witness needs to be remembered; or the still largely unrecognized historian Elisabeth Schmitz who wrote a very courageous memorandum against the persecution of the Jews in 1935-6; and surely there were many other individuals of like mind.

The Nazi era left a legacy which will not go away, and which the Church today still has to reckon with. Even now, 80 years later, much remains to be done on this historical building project.



Tags: Berlin, German Christians, Kreuze und Hakenkreuze, Manfred Gailus, Nazi seizure of power

Franz Stock and the “Barbed-Wire Seminary” at Le Coudray, France

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/franz-stock-and-the-barbed-wire-seminary-at-le-coudray-france/>

FRANZ STOCK AND THE “BARBED-WIRE SEMINARY” AT LE COUDRAY, FRANCE

March 1, 2013 · by Lauren N. Faulkner · in Articles, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

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Franz Stock and the “Barbed-Wire Seminary” at Le Coudray, France*

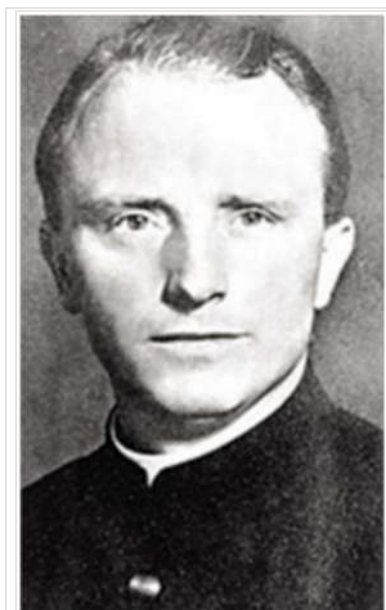
By Lauren N. Faulkner, University of Notre Dame

“Abbé Franz Stock – that is no name, it is a program!”^[1]

Franz Stock died alone in a Parisian hospital in February 1948, not yet forty-four years old. Born in Neheim (now part of the city of Arnsberg) in Rhineland-Westphalia in 1904, he had spent most of his adult life in France, working as a priest, a prison chaplain and, beginning in 1945, the director of a “barbed-wire seminary” in a French POW camp for German soldiers wanting to become priests. He was an ardent Catholic and a devout Francophile. His story, in particular his contributions to Franco-German rapprochement after 1945, remains relatively separate from mainstream historiography, with only one recently-published account in English.^[2] Those who know of him on both sides of the Franco-German border insist that no complete account of postwar rapprochement, and the laying of the groundwork for the European Union itself, can be proffered without acknowledging Stock’s vital role. Who exactly was this priest, then?

Boniface Hanley’s 2010 biography is more hagiographic than academic, but it contains a helpful account of Stock’s family life and spiritual influences, and Stock’s significance as a German in France during the Nazi occupation and the first few years of the post-occupation period. Hanley conducted interviews with individuals who had known Stock personally, or did extensive research on him; his book is the culmination of several decades of work. Stock

was the oldest of nine children born to a working-class couple, and he knew by the time he was twelve years old that he wanted to become a priest. He attended the seminary at Paderborn and joined the Quickborn (Catholic youth) movement, with which he was first able to visit France during the summer of 1926, for an international peace conference held at Bierville. He was deeply influenced by the example of Marc Sangnier, a militant French Catholic pacifist who was in favor of progressive reform for the Church, who had organized the conference. As a result of this love affair with France, Stock applied to spend three semesters at the *Institut Catholique*



Franz Stock. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

in Paris; he was the first German to be admitted since the Middle Ages. It was during this impressionable stage of his life, Hanley writes, that Stock became determined to dedicate his life Franco-German reconciliation, a devotion all the more extraordinary for the reality Stock faced when he gave himself over to it: this was arguably the most intensely hostile period of the two countries in their centuries-long history of rivalry, enmity, and bloodshed.

Stock was ordained a priest in 1932, and two years later was appointed to run the Boniface Mission, Paris' German Catholic center, in the Latin Quarter of the French capital. However, it is between the 1940 fall of France to Nazi Germany and the final months of 1947 that Stock's life would find its fullest meaning. His arrival back in Germany upon the outbreak of the Second World War was only temporary; he applied for and received permission to return to Paris in June 1940. Eventually he procured from the German ambassador to Vichy France a pass allowing him to visit imprisoned Frenchmen and women, to give them pastoral care. Subsequently he was given the title of auxiliary Wehrmacht chaplain, with the honorary rank of Major, and assigned to tend the souls in the prisons of Fresnes, La Santé and Cherche-Midi, all of the Wehrmacht prisons in the greater Paris area (used to hold German soldiers charged with breaches of discipline), and La Pitié Hospital. He also retained his position as director of the Boniface Mission. With the exception of two relatively brief periods when he had junior chaplains assisting him, Stock was the sole provider of pastoral care for three of France's largest prisons, a hospital, a myriad of smaller prisons, and his own church. As part of his pastoral duties, he accompanied hundreds of prisoners, mostly members of the French Résistance, to their execution site at the infamous Mont Valérien between 1940 and 1944.^[3] During the occupation of France, he also served as a clandestine intermediary between the prisoners and their families, and often was the only link through which they could communicate with each other.



The religious figures involved in getting the "barbed wire seminary" off the ground. From left to right: Georges Le Meur; Wilhelm Delbeck, Stock's main assistant at the seminary; Jean Rodhain (?); Angelo Roncalli, Vatican nuncio to France; Franz Stock. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

This remarkable individual, and his equally remarkable life, are remembered less for the inestimable services he performed as a chaplain during the Occupation, and more for the responsibility he took on at the end of the war, when he was already physically and emotionally fatigued. In the winter of 1944/45, after France had been liberated from Axis control, Abbé Jean Rodhain, French chaplain-general in charge of all German and Axis POWs, took note of the presence of young prisoners in various POW camps across the country who had been studying in seminaries before being conscripted into the Wehrmacht. Together with his assistant Georges Le Meur, another priest who had been active in the Résistance, Rodhain received permission from the military authorities to organize a temporary seminary in one camp and began to search for volunteer attendees from among the POW population. They did so in the interests of revitalizing

the Catholic Church in Germany, in the hopes that the Church would play a role in the reconstruction – and re-Christianization – of Germany after the fall of Nazism. Rodhain and Le Meur did not hesitate to choose a German priest to head the seminary. It was Le Meur who nominated Stock for the position. Stock was himself a POW at a camp near Cherbourg; despite his physical illness, he readily assented to his new position.

What began as an experiment with a few seminarians near the POW camp at Orléans became by Christmas 1945 an impressive, smoothly-running operation at Le Coudray, on the outskirts of Chartres, with more than 380 enrolled seminarians. The seminary was moved after encountering increasingly severe problems with the other German POWs at Orléans. The camp's military commander and supporter of the seminary project, Laurent Gourut, was transferred to Le Coudray and arranged for the seminary to go with him. In addition to the seminarians, the project also involved forty lay brothers (also culled from the German POW population in France) who

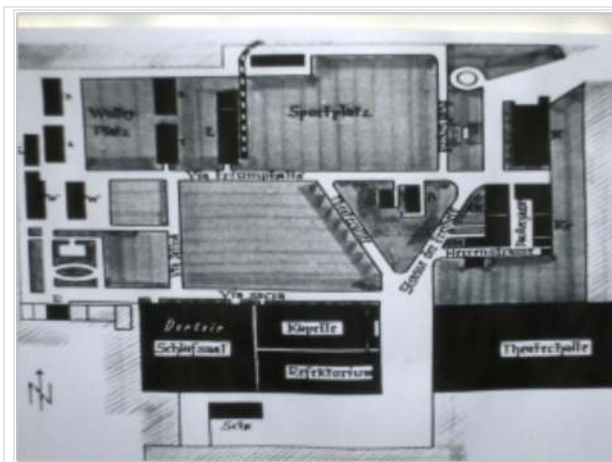
served as cooks and cleaners, Chartres' bishop, Monsignor Thomas Harscouet, who knew of and approved of what was going on, and the Vatican's nuncio in France, Angelo Roncalli, who gave his blessing to the camp in person. In 1946, Stock added several volunteer faculty members from the University of Freiburg, who came of their own free will – and became POWs as a result – to teach courses on moral theology, pastoral theology, canon law, scripture, and others. In the two years that the “barbed wire seminary” (French: *séminaire de barbelés*; German: *Stacheldrahtseminar*) existed, more than 1,000 Germans benefitted from its courses, and more than 600 of these went on to be ordained priests.[4]



The refectory of the “barbed wire seminary.” Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

the outskirts of their city.

The camp's remaining seminarian internees were liberated on 1 May 1947, shortly after they had completed their final examinations. Le Coudray was shut down in December of that year. During the summer, Stock returned to Paris, a paroled POW whose could not even obtain an identity card that would have allowed him to leave Paris for short periods of time. He began to reorganize the Boniface Mission in the Latin Quarter and helped whoever came to his door, which included both French and German priests but mostly former German POWs (now called “free workers”) unable or unwilling to make the journey back to a devastated Germany.[5] On 22 February 1948, he collapsed and was hospitalized, diagnosed with pulmonary edema. He died two days later. Because of his POW status, he was not permitted a public funeral, nor was his family allowed to make the journey from Neheim to attend. Still, some one hundred people appeared for the private service that his friends had organized. Those who attended included Abbé Rodhain, Angelo Roncalli as nuncio, the auxiliary bishop of Paris, and government ministers Michelet and Francisque Gay. He was buried in a simple grave marked only with an unpainted wooden cross in Paris's large Thiais cemetery.[6]



Plan of Block 1, the “barbed wire seminary” at Le Coudray. The main barrack, housing the dormitory, refectory, and chapel, is at the bottom. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

What is even

more astonishing was the secrecy that remained relatively intact around the entire affair: few ministers in the de Gaulle provisional government knew of the seminary (excepting Michelet and Boisseau, director-general of prisoners of war in France) because Rodhain and Le Meur feared the reaction of the communists if they learned of what was going on. The majority of the French ecclesiastical hierarchy who knew of the seminary did not approve, but kept silent about its existence. And finally, the inhabitants of Chartres did not know much, either of the seminary or of the camp itself. Consumed with the business of surviving in the post-war chaos, few interested themselves in the detested German POWs languishing indefinitely behind barbed wire on



Taking in the air outside the barracks. Franz Stock is the priest seated in the middle of the picture. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.



One side of the original gate to the camp, Depot #501, Le Coudray, France. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

Today the camp at Le Coudray still stands, but is much diminished. Originally occupying thirty-two hectares and known as POW Depot #501, today the camp is just under eight hectares (the size of the original camp, first opened in 1912). The Franz Stock Committee, in its French and German manifestations, *Les Amis de Franz Stock* and *Franz-Stock-Komitee*, is dedicated to preserving the site, renamed the Franz Stock European Meeting Center (*Centre Européen de Rencontre Franz Stock*; *Europäische Begegnungsstätte Frankz Stock*). It is composed of a single preserved barrack, which housed the main building of the seminary and its chapel, and the land immediately around it. The rest of the site and the half-dozen or so remaining barracks are owned by various local collectivities. The military has not been associated with the site since 2001.

Much of the association's successes have come only in the last two decades. In March 1998, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany visited Chartres and the former POW camp to honor Stock on the fiftieth anniversary of his death. It was only in June 2005 that the association succeeded in securing the buildings as historical monuments. In February 2008, French President Nicolas Sarkozy marked the sixtieth anniversary of Stock's death

with a ceremony at Mont Valérien, where he had accompanied so many Résistance prisoners to be executed; the plaza in front of the memorial set up there had been renamed after Stock in 1990. In November 2009, the process of beatification was opened for Stock in his birthplace in Neheim, and is currently ongoing.^[7]

Source: Lauren N. Faulkner; used with permission.

Most of the exhibitions about Franz Stock and the seminary are set up in the barrack that once served as the refectory, sleeping hall, and chapel. Since it is unheated, one gets a sense if one visits in late January of how brutally cold the seminarians' lives must have been in the winters of 1945/46 and 1946/47, and also of how intimate, since dozens of men would have been crowded against each other. The chapel has received the most concerted restoration efforts thus far; Stock's murals on the wall behind the altar have been repainted recently, and some of the original Stations of the Cross, also painted by Stock, have been returned. It is still used for masses on special occasions, and the site receives a healthy dose of visitors annually, mostly schoolchildren of various ages from France, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, but also Catholics who have heard of Stock.



The interior of the seminary chapel today, complete with Stock's original (restored) murals. Saint Michael slaying the dragon on the left, Saint Boniface on the right. Both are patron saints of Germany. Source: Lauren N. Faulkner; used with permission.

It is difficult to argue convincingly that Stock had a direct impact on postwar Franco-German rapprochement; there is no evidence that draws a straight line from him to de Gaulle and Adenauer in 1963, and during his lifetime there was no interest in French political circles to extend to Germans the hand of friendship. But this misses the true impact of Stock's life and work. He was a quiet, behind-the-scenes worker, proving by his own example rather than through force of words that French and Germans could co-exist peacefully, even amicably. This devotion produced a trickle-down effect, demonstrating to the French families who suffered the execution of loved ones during the occupation that not all Germans were evil, and to the German POWs in French camps after the war, many of



Stock's own paintings of The Stations of the Cross graced the seminary chapel. Station 12, the death of Christ on the cross. Source: H. Briand and Les Amis de Franz Stock; used with permission.

whom went on to become priests in post-war Germany, that not all Frenchmen were focused on revenge against Germany. It is more than seventy years now since France and Germany were at war with each other. Stock may have been out of step with his time, as a German who loved the French and wished to live among them, but this failed to daunt him. It is time that his life and his influence were introduced to a wider audience.

* The author would like to thank Monsieur Hubert Briand, of Les Amis de Franz Stock, for his time and patience in introducing



Stock's shrine and grave at St. Jean-Baptiste Rechèvres Church, in Chartres. The inscription on the headstone reads:
To Franz Stock
Priest of the diocese of Paderborn
1904-1948
Chaplain of the prisons of Fresnes
La Santé and Cherche-Midi
1940-1944
The families of the French prisoners and executed are appreciative
The inscription on the ground reads on the left:
Rector of the German parish of Paris 1934-1944; on the right: Superior of the barbed-wire seminary of Chartres 1945-1947
Source: Lauren N. Faulkner; used with permission.

the camp and answering all manner of questions about Franz Stock, German POW seminarians, and Chartres, and for his permission to use several camp photos.

[1] Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, at a private funeral service after Stock's death, 28 February 1948. At the time he was nuncio to France.

[2] This report is based on Boniface Hanley, *The Last Human Face: Franz Stock: A Priest in Hitler's Army* (self-published, 2010), and on the author's visit to Chartres in January 2013. This was a preliminary research trip to gather information for a future book-length project on the barbed-wire seminary at Le Coudray and the French treatment of German POWs between 1945 and 1948.

[3] Mont Valérien is a small rise in Suresnes, a western suburb of Paris. Before the Nazi occupation of France, it had part of the city's fortifications. The Nazis used it almost exclusively as an execution site. More than 1,000 Frenchmen were executed there between 1940 and 1944 (French law, which the occupiers observed in this instance, prohibited the execution of women by firing squad, so there were no women victims). Stock's wartime diary, which he used to record his daily ministrations for the condemned prisoners, and which Hanley indicates he kept quite faithfully, mentions 863 of these victims, the majority by name.

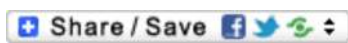
[4] The author is still researching information about what kinds of courses were offered, by whom they were taught, how long they were, and of what the examinations consisted. All information at the time of writing indicates that the exams were recognized in Germany, and presumably the Vatican, because the seminarians did not have to repeat these courses after their release.

[5] It is not clear how long after the war the Boniface Mission in Paris remained open for Germans, or how it was funded. Today there

is a small plaque on the wall of the building at 21-23 Rue Lhomond identifying it as the former home of Franz Stock. It appears now to be a private residence.

[6] After a concerted effort led by former barbed-wire seminarians, Stock's remains were exhumed and transferred in June 1963 to a small shrine built for the purpose in the new St Jean-Baptiste church, just outside the city of Chartres, in Rechèvres. Six months earlier, Charles de Gaulle of France and Konrad Adenauer of West Germany had signed the Treaty of Élysée, more commonly known as the Friendship Treaty. It formally ended centuries of hostility between the two countries. Stock's tomb at Rechèvres draws many visitors, but his empty grave at Thiais is still honored with a plaque, and often with flowers.

[7] Neheim is also home to the Franz Stock Museum in the Fresekenhof, a former aristocratic dwelling dating to the fourteenth century, which contains a permanent exhibition dedicated to Stock's life and works. Documentation about Franz Stock is also housed at the National Archives in College Park, Md., and a more limited amount in Germany, at the National Military Archives in Freiburg im Breisgau and the Catholic Military Bishop's Office in Berlin. The author has yet to see Stock's diary, which she believes is in Neheim.



Tags: barbed-wire seminary, Franz Stock, Lauren N. Faulkner, Le Coudray

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CATHOLICISM, DICTATORSHIP AND THE WORLD AT WAR: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CARDINAL HINSLEY, 1935-1943

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Catholicism, Dictatorship and the World at War: The Significance of Cardinal Hinsley, 1935-1943

By Andrew Chandler, University of Chichester

This month brings the seventieth anniversary of the death of Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster. Hinsley's time at the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England coincided with the appeasement of continental dictators, the final tumbling of all of Europe into war, the crisis of those critical months of 1940 when France fell and Britain faced catastrophe, the relentless expansion of the

conflict across the face the world and then the turning of the tide against the Axis powers and the growing confidence of victory. It was the intensity with which Hinsley identified with the colossal dramas of his times that made him a national – and international – figure.

To any scholar of the relationship of religion and politics Hinsley presents an obvious interest. Yet this man who became archbishop of Westminster for eight tumultuous years has not attracted as much attention as he might have. Within a year of his death there was something like an ‘official’ biography by John Heenan, one of his students in Rome who would one day follow his master to that high office. This is very much a work of a particular kind and its judgments show the author to be working within the various confinements of his day and interest. There is a good drenching of piety, an emphasis on laudable qualities, and some firm avoidances. But Heenan knew the force of what his subject had established. In beginning with the weighty funeral which Church and State accorded to Hinsley in March 1943, he shows a Roman Catholic Church that had truly arrived as a dimension of national life. For this was a great occasion and a vast congregation. The Government, he exults, was not merely represented. It actually came, altogether. Even so, the wait for a second biography would be a long one. James Hagerty’s admirable 2008 study, *Cardinal Hinsley: Priest and Patriot*, provided a more dispassionate analysis, and often a more extensive one.

Hinsley has attracted only sporadic attention from scholars. Adrian Hastings paid a warm tribute in his lively *History of English Christianity, 1920-1985* (London, 1986) while Thomas Moloney placed Hinsley firmly in the framework of solid diplomacy, in *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican: The Role of Cardinal Hinsley 1935-1943* (in 1985). Moloney’s often elegant book leaves the historian of international politics much in his debt, for he clearly did a good deal of honest toil in the archives and, in so doing, widened and developed our picture. There is now a valuable overview by Michael Gaine in the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. To extend the range of this will not be quite straightforward because, as Heenan found in 1944, there is not very much to go on. Hinsley was not a man who thought of filing papers and meeting the requirements of future historians. He did not bother to preserve his correspondence once a matter was settled. Heenan suspected that he would not even have expected a biography. He was private, modest and utterly given to the present moment. But he was observed sympathetically by a few who were prepared to commit something of the man to paper. The Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, recorded a significant tribute in the pages of *Blackfriars* in May 1943. This friendship of a Cardinal and an Anglican bishop is suggestive. Later that great insider, David Mathew, wrote wisely and sensitively of Hinsley in the later editions of his striking study, *Catholicism in England: The Portrait of a Minority: its Culture and Tradition* (third edition, 1955).

The verdict that the great weight of Hinsley’s long life came to rest in those late, crucial years, between 1935 and 1943, is irresistible, although in his biography of 2008 James Hagerty does well to retrieve the earlier years and readjust at least some of our perspectives. In fact, this was really rather an odd career, much of it committed to one modest institution, the *Venerabile* in Rome and then to a long, roving brief as Apostolic Delegate in Africa. There was not a great deal in all this to make any historian of great affairs sit up sharply and take note. But, crucially, Hinsley was enough of an insider in Rome to be in the way of something splendid if it happened to occur. In 1935, when he was 69 years old, it certainly did.

The leadership of the English Roman Catholic community had for over thirty years rested in the hands of capable Cardinal Bourne. But the impression left by those decades is something dour, brittle, dry and introverted. This was a Catholic community still not quite at home in national society; one often defined by a deeply regional character, a particular sociology (Irish, working class, aristocratic and rather little in between), a rather petulant striving for legitimation and a bristling grievance that the Establishment still refused to acknowledge its existence at State occasions. Nor was it was not a community always at peace with itself. The English bishops were notoriously querulous – and Rome knew about it. In 1935 many English Catholics may have been baffled by the appointment as Archbishop of Westminster of a man so little known in his home country. But Pius XI knew his man and would have no other. When Hinsley himself had recovered from the shock he quite simply took on a new lease of life. This sudden emergence from the

background at such a doom-laden hour had something of the Churchillian epic about it. Hinsley must have wondered if the whole of his life had been merely a preparation for this moment.

Hinsley looked like a safe pair of hands. He was devoted to the Papacy. He had done nothing disconcerting. He was amiable and had friends in high places. Moreover, he was theologically a conservative who had no time for Modernism. None of this indicated any bracing, liberalising attitudes or obvious liabilities. Yet there were quiet hints of something bolder. His sympathies were too deeply rooted in the conditions of the poor to accept too readily the blandishments of the Right. When a politician had visited the *Venerabile* and amiably told the ordinands that on their return to England it would be their duty to vote Conservative Hinsley brusquely ended the occasion. The Church was not his whole world: he was perfectly capable at ecclesiastical affairs but they did not excite him. He was stirred by the spectacle of oppression and he hated to see righteousness persecuted. Wherever the Church was threatened his ears pricked up and he was all attention and involvement. Yet we still know too little of what he made of Italian Fascism when he lived in Rome itself. Mathew thought he did not really understand Italians altogether. Heenan simply observed that when the Mussolini regime sought to redesign the centre of Rome and gobble up at least part of the *Venerabile* Hinsley did his best to thwart the plan. He would, not doubt, have done the same if a comparable civic engineering project had been dreamed up by any other power.

The personal traits of an archbishop are bound to be eulogized, but Hinsley's characteristics were suggestive. Mathew thought that he simply lacked pride or vanity. He lived as simply as he could; he needed, and relished, the company of all sorts and conditions of people; as a friend he was found to be kindly, loyal, paternal. He listened well. It seems that Hinsley was quite at home with Chapel as well as Church people. Mathew thought Hinsley 'never thought in denominational terms'. He did not much care for great churches – and Westminster Cathedral is something strenuous in these terms – but grumbled about mere 'bricks and mortar' and sought active apostolic work. Instead he was happiest in settings that were modest or quietly domestic. He sought never to waste time; some found him always in a hurry to use well what was left to him. He worked like a Trojan and prayed constantly. When George Bell stayed with him in his home in Hare Street he found 'the next morning I felt a richer man, richer spiritually as well as richer in wisdom'. He could be stern but was more often found to be compassionate. He was uninterested in splendour and pageantry. When he left a note for his executors it was found to request no pomp at his funeral but only a low Mass, 'no profusion of candles', 'the least expense possible', a burial 'wherever most convenient'. None of this, of course, he got.

Hinsley was devoted to the Papacy and this must have been at least one reason why Pius IX put him in Westminster. But he was not over-fascinated by church affairs and the perspectives that he brought to the job were generous ones. Hinsley disavowed purely clerical company and his view of the Roman Catholic Church was by conviction a laicizing one. He looked for things of substance, in whatever form they arose, not the mere presentation of clerical appearances. Hastings observed, 'No archiepiscopate was effectively less ultramontane or clericalist.' Hinsley was ardent in his support for Catholic Action. The *Tablet* had long ago been incarcerated by a defensive clerical caste; now he promptly turned it over to the laity and watched it prosper under Douglas Woodruff. He enjoyed G.K. Chesterton, looked up to Christopher Dawson and Arnold Toynbee and fostered the work of the young Barbara Ward. He would have liked Ronald Knox to be a bishop.

Above all, Hinsley brought something of the world to Westminster – but the world was just about to shout its demands at the politicians in Parliament and the diplomats in Whitehall anyway. He lost no time in pinning his colours to the shaky mast of the League of Nations but this brought no strong reassurance. His arrival had coincided with the hour of its most severe test. When Mussolini attacked Abyssinia in October 1935 Hinsley faced a fundamental challenge. What should he now say? If British opinion was indignant should he join the chorus and show the loyalty of the Church? If he stood firmly by the Pope he must know that the neutrality of the Vatican was incomprehensible to the critics of dictators and aggressors. The Archbishop of Canterbury was powerful against the invasion; a senior Anglican bishop like Henson of Durham was positively incandescent. To make matters worse for Hinsley

he was caught up in a clumsy, botched attempt at intervention in Britain by the Vatican itself. For his part he had no illusions about Abyssinia, whatever his calculations. This was an act of aggression and, as Hagerty shows, he was ready to say so publicly. There was a letter to the *Times*. And then there was a sermon in Golders Green.

‘Indignation’, Hinsley declared at Golders Green, ‘knows no bounds when we see that Africa, that ill-used continent of practically unarmed people, is made the focus and playground of scientific slaughter.’ But what could the Pope actually do?

He is a helpless old man with a small police force to guard himself, to guard the priceless art and archaeological treasures of the Vatican, and to protect his diminutive state which ensures his due independence in the exercise of his universal right and duty to teach and guide his followers of all races. Can he denounce or coerce a neighbouring power – a power armed with absolute control of everything and with every modern instrument of force? He could excommunicate and place under interdict! Yes! And thus make war with his neighbour inevitable, besides upsetting the peace and consciences of the great mass of Italians with the result of a fierce anti-clerical outbreak. Spiritual penalties are for the correction of those who are knowingly guilty. And spiritual penalties for a world daily more godless are of little avail.

The Pope was not an arbitrator. He was explicitly excluded from any such role by the secret London pact of 1915. Only if both sides of a dispute invited him to judge them could he do so.

Parts of the British press made much of this characterisation of the Pope. Pius XI himself was not flattered. But what really caused the ecclesiastics in Rome to fidget nervously was Hinsley’s condemnation of the ideology which launched this invasion. Fascism, he had pronounced, deified Caesar, showed tyranny, made ‘the individual a pawn on the chessboard of absolutism’. This also alienated a significant number of English Catholics, bishops among them, who openly favoured the Duce. There was talk of bringing the Archbishop of Westminster to heel – and Hinsley did indeed fall silent, for a time. When he turned to Heenan for advice in writing speeches he was seen to be shaken by the controversy. But in retrospect the sermon at Golders Green sounds like the stray, opening shot in a far longer war.

Abyssinia was a cause of much heart-searching amongst British Catholics and Protestants alike. The Spanish Civil War presented dilemmas no less painful. Heenan the careful biographer buried this quietly; Moloney and Hagerty offer sustained reflections. Hinsley, they find, had to find a credible place between that position held by many English Catholics, who trembled at the growth of communism and cheered for Franco, and a vigorous left-leaning public opinion which deplored fascism and the forces of reaction. Above all, he was horrified by the onslaught against the Church in Spain and knew a good deal about it. He let it be known that he thought the Nationalist cause a crusade. But beyond this he was decidedly circumspect, maintaining a purposeful neutrality, refusing to indulge those who lauded Franco or accept the criticisms of those who deplored the Right and raged at any evidence of complicity. Meanwhile, he turned his attentions to the plight of refugee children. When Franco was victorious Hinsley received a signed photograph, a gift arranged by an English admirer. ‘I look upon you as the great defender of true Spain, the country of Catholic principles where social justice and charity will be applied for the common good under a firm peace-loving government.’ For all this, Moloney insists that Hinsley was ‘no third order Falangist’. In 1942 he would take up the cause of persecuted Spanish protestants too. It was often heard that to condemn Communists involved a support for Fascists. Although he had favoured Franco, Hinsley was determined not to accept that anti-communism revealed any shade of Fascism. He viewed both as enemies. His task now was to show that Catholicism voiced the cause of liberty and the maintenance of the common good.

At home Hinsley the Archbishop appeared rudely caught between the campaigns of conflicting parties. Some parts of the Catholic press was likely to shout any embarrassment when it came to foreign affairs. Abroad, the troubled consistencies of Vatican policy had

made life no easier for him. But when he looked at Germany Hinsley was far more the critic. He was ready to follow the lead given by *Mit brennender Sorge* in March 1937. That September he published a protesting letter in the *Times*. Hinsley himself had been present when on Christmas Eve in 1937 Pope Pius XI said to a gathering of cardinals. 'We know that there is in Germany a grievous persecution, and more, that there has rarely been a persecution more serious, so painful, and so disastrous in its widespread effects. This is a persecution in which neither the exercise of force, not the pressure of threats, not the subterfuges of cunning and artifice have been spared.' By December 1938 he was taking to the platform at the Albert Hall to protest against the persecution of the Jews where he deplored that Nero was 'a model of justice compared to the Führer of the German Reich'. He approved thoroughly of Chamberlain and applauded him as a peace-maker. But he did not want Hitler accommodated at the price of justice. In a private meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang (with whom he had much in common and in whom he found a growing friendship) he agreed that no colonies could be returned to a government which persecuted other races. But unlike Lang he could have nothing to do with the idea that to rein Hitler in a new diplomatic understanding with the Soviet Union might be deemed necessary. There were other public speeches, no less vigorous and confrontational. National opinion was thickening against appeasement and now the archbishop of Westminster was positively stirring the pot.

After the painful ambiguities and compromises of the age of appeasement, the coming of war brought some vital clarifications. Hinsley set to work with a will, making public speeches and BBC broadcasts which were unequivocal in their denunciations of the enemy and rich in their confidence in British justice. And Hinsley certainly was patriotic. He had grown up with patriotism; he must have taken on something of the patriotic yearning of the long-term ex-patriate; he had admired British colonial administration in Africa; he viewed national institutions with great loyalty. Now a robust patriotism in high office in the circumstance of 1935-43 was a high virtue, indeed a basic necessity. Hinsley was realistic enough to know that it was patriotism which in no small measure stood between Hitler and Whitehall. 'I'm glad we're alone', he remarked to Churchill after the fall of France. When Churchill asked 'Why?' Hinsley replied, 'Englishmen fight best when they have got their backs to the wall.' There is more than a sense of rejoicing at the coming of superbly heroic moment in all this. But if Hinsley's patriotism is firmly acknowledged there is at least a danger that it confines him to a national landscape and merely exposes him to suspicions of another kind; that he was a prelate too close to the governing powers (even if they happened, on that occasion, to be right and just). But Hinsley does present a bigger argument than this and he does belong to a wider picture.

Heenan observed that Hinsley was a convinced democrat who preferred to live among the poor. The age of the dictators stirred deeply his affinity with the heroic and the just cause. Mathew found that Hinsley positively thirsted after justice and was 'a great hater of oppression'. There remains something visceral in this palpable hatred of tyranny, a restless determination to stand against it, an abiding compassion for its victims. When an English edition was prepared of the reports documenting the German occupation of Poland sent by Cardinal Hlond to Rome it was Hinsley who contributed the foreword. In his last years Mathew thought that the new book which affected him most deeply was Professor Binchy's *Church and State in Fascist Italy*. Mathew recognized that 'the quality that most appealed to the Cardinal was reckless and self-sacrificing moral goodness, and it was this that led to his always deepening affection for the Bishop of Chichester'. Bell was convinced that the churches must sink their differences over doctrines and questions of order and unite urgently against against the new foe of totalitarianism. Hinsley promptly agreed. For a while, at least, there was the ecumenical excitement of the 'Sword of the Spirit' movement and a glimmer of authentic ecumenical progress in wartime. When, at a meeting of the movement in May 1941, Bell whispered to Hinsley that perhaps Protestants and Catholics might say together the Lord's Prayer, Hinsley was ready to lead it – a quiet revolution, no doubt, but an authentic one, even so. His bishops disagreed with most of this and yet they never squabbled with him. It was enough, after 1943, to pretend that it had never happened. Without Hinsley the Sword of the Spirit had nowhere to go and it was soon only the pious memory of a few stranded progressives.

Hinsley in wartime took his place in a national consensus against Nazism and Fascism. In no way did he see himself as an individualist

or a prophet. He was equally adamant that his views found their place within the body of Catholic thought, as history and international life revealed it, not on the margin. In a broadcast of 10 December 1939 Hinsley justified his own conviction that Britain's cause was just by asserting, 'I have before my mind the lessons of history and also the great traditional body of doctrine which sets forth for the moral guidance of mankind principles which are above both national and racial interests. These principles are clearly stated in the great pastoral letters of the Popes from Leo XIII to the present pontiff' It was Benedict XV who had issued the 'peace note' of 1917, affirming the 'supremacy of right over might, and also for a real and agreed peace between combatants whether victors or vanquished.'

Bell found Hinsley eager for the regeneration of Europe. What had made Europe great in civilization? It was Christianity. And it was Christianity which had formed a reverence for the individual, a belief in the family and, out of this, the very nation which had created Europe. In March 1940 he found much of significance in the anniversary of St Gregory the Great, a Pope who inherited a civilization in chaos and ruins and yet claimed a vision of Christendom. Now in the Soviet Union 'the individual and his conscience, and therefore God and His supreme rights, are to be "liquidated,"' not even with a nod to any theory at all, whereas in Nazi Germany the same effect was sought in the name of Race, 'of the physical blood which courses pure, according to the Myth, in the veins of Aryans alone, and, among Aryans, of Germans only.' If a society rejected God this was the kind of thing that might be expected. 'Rome only has been the source of full civilization, that is, the perfect harmonious relating of individual to Society, of State with Church, of time with eternity.'

This was what Moscow and Berlin sought to destroy, in Poland and in Finland. With such powers as these there could be no compromise. He viewed the 'martyrdom' of Poland with 'deep indignation': it was his duty to 'protest aloud' against such persecution of Catholic and Orthodox Christians as he had against such persecution in Germany itself. 'Liberty must be our goal, liberty which is not now possible in Russia and in Germany. The thirty-seven million Catholics living under the Government of the Reich are constantly in my thoughts. They, and the members of the Evangelical Confessional Church, have been among the principal victims of the Nazi regime.'

Hinsley insisted that in all of this he stood by the Popes, not against them. First there was *Mit brennender Sorge* in 1937, then the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*. Both of these were the work of Pius XI. To them Pius XII had added *Summi Pontificatus* and the Five Peace Points of Christmas 1939. When it was asserted that other Catholics spoken in contradiction of his views he simply denied it. He could turn to *Mit brennender Sorge* again. He could look at the letter issued by the German bishops at Fulda in August 1938. 'I am', he maintained, 'in good company when I denounce the principles and methods of Nazism in its tramp through Europe.' What Hinsley took from *Summi Pontificatus* was the defence of the 'sacred rights' of the family against 'the aggression of the State and against the doctrines of immoral propaganda'. He was clear that it was the place of the Catholic Church to stand firmly against this fundamental enemy and he knew that he occupied a significant place within an international argument, one that concerned the credibility of the whole Church. When he heard that Nazi propaganda in Germany and in the Netherlands had complained that he had merely converted the words of two popes to the service of the cause of Britain he was more than ready to confute them.

Hinsley had been as much a denouncer of the Soviet Union as Nazi Germany. As James Hagerty acknowledges, the new alignment of powers after Barbarossa 'seriously compromised' him and he made no easy accommodation. Indeed, he would not conform to the new official line if he could possibly help it. He sought to distinguish between the Russian people and their state, insisting that all expressions of support were for the former and not the latter. On this he came to rely rather heavily. How he would have managed if he had lived to see the end of the war is difficult to judge. Heenan found that Hinsley 'loved the Jewish race'. When he heard that he was scored by Nazi propaganda as a 'friend of the Jewish people' he was evidently proud of the title. He was ready to join the new Council of Christians and Jews with Archbishop Temple and the Chief Rabbi, J.H. Hertz. His final public statement was produced when he was dying, on 1 March 1943, not for a British audience but for the World Jewish Congress in New York: 'In unison with the voice of indignant protest that cries aloud from all human hearts and in accord with the declarations of the Church, I denounce with utmost

vigour the persecution of the Jews by the Nazi oppressors ... Words are weak and cold; deeds and speedy deeds are needed to put a stop to this brutal campaign for the extermination of a whole race’

The historian may turn again to Hinsley with many questions. What remains clear is that Hinsley played a vivid part in the international encounter between Catholicism and totalitarianism, that he sought to show the two as implacable enemies and that he sought to claim an alignment between the Church and democracy and liberty. Within this he struggled as much as most to find a lasting consistency, not least in juggling his responsibilities to Vatican policy, national diplomacy and domestic opinion. Arguably, he would have wished to be remembered as an archbishop who stood resolutely against tyranny and persecution, for it was in this landscape in which he truly found himself. He did much to deserve this. Those who seek to condemn the Church at large for its acquiescence in the evils of dictatorship during the Second World War still have something in him to reckon with. Insofar as he drew justification from the words and interventions of the Papacy he might, too, shed at least some light on the value of that much disputed record.



Tags: Andrew Chandler, England, Hinsley, Roman Catholic

Editorial: Pope Benedict XVI: The Humble servant of the Lord, or God’s Policeman?

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EDITORIAL: POPE BENEDICT XVI: THE HUMBLE SERVANT OF THE LORD, OR GOD’S POLICEMAN?

March 1, 2013 · by John S. Conway · in Articles, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

Contemporary Church History Quarterly

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Editorial: Pope Benedict XVI: The Humble servant of the Lord, or God's Policeman?

By John S. Conway, University of British Columbia

The sudden and totally unexpected announcement on Monday 10 February that Pope Benedict XVI was intending to retire caught everyone by surprise. It has caused a flurry of speculation ever since. But this breach with the past, as the first Pope to resign the Chair of St Peter for six hundred years, prompts us to examine the career of this pontiff over the past eight years, and to assess his place in the wider history of the Papacy.

Joseph Ratzinger was born in 1927 in a staunchly Catholic family in a small town in rural Bavaria. This was a part of Germany which had endured much persecution during the period of Bismarck's Kulturkampf, when Catholic life had been safeguarded and fostered by a very active flourishing of pilgrimages, worship at shrines, way-side crucifixes and votif-churches. These had formed a valued defence against the onslaughts of anti-Catholic forces, and were to prove to be of value again when the same persecution was resumed under the Nazis. The Ratzinger family took a reserved attitude towards Hitler's rise to power in 1933, which later became more hostile when radical Nazis began to encroach on Catholic life and impose restrictions on Catholic organizations. For instance, in 1939, all Catholic youth organizations were banned and all young Germans were obliged to join the Hitler Youth movement, though it seems that Josef managed to evade attending many of the sessions. However, in 1943, when he was still only 15, he was conscripted to serve in the Airforce Auxiliary, which involved guard duty around endangered factories near Munich. In the following year he was obliged to join the Reich Labour Force, but in a non-combatant role.

Shortly after his eighteenth birthday in April 1945, the Third Reich was overthrown, and he became a prisoner held by the American occupation troops for some three months. It was then that he, like many other Germans, first learnt of the atrocities committed by the Nazis in the concentration camps. This led to a lifelong sense of shame at what misdeeds had been carried out in Germany's name. From then on, he recognized the need for repentance and atonement, particularly for the sufferings of the victims of the Holocaust.

In January 1946 he and his older brother George were allowed to begin their training for the priesthood in the diocesan seminary near Munich. But a year later he was promoted to the Faculty of Theology at Munich University, still being rebuilt after the war. In 1951 both brothers were ordained, and Josef served a short time as a curate in a down-town parish in Munich city. But in 1952 he was recalled to the seminary and asked to teach dogmatic and fundamental theology, which remained his interest thereafter. In 1959 he was promoted to the Faculty of Theology at Bonn University in the heart of the Catholic Rhineland, and subsequently became Dean of the Faculty at Munster in north Germany. In 1966 he was invited, at the suggestion of his colleague Hans Kung, to move to the venerable university of Tübingen, but then three years later preferred to return to Regensburg in his native Bavaria.

It was during this period that he was summoned to be an advisor to Cardinal Frings of Cologne at the Second Vatican Council, and subsequently a member of the International Theological Commission. At first he shared much of the excitement at the new ideas which the Council produced, but subsequently became alarmed by what he believed were the prevalence of humanistic notions, which obscured the orthodox traditions of the Catholic faith. Thus he welcomed the reform of the Catholic liturgy including the introduction of the vernacular for the Mass, but deplored what seemed to him to be the loss of the sense of transcendence.

In May 1977 he was appointed Archbishop of Munich, and a month later was made a Cardinal. He was obviously regarded as a steady hand, who would keep in check some of the more turbulent hotheads even among the clergy, while opening up new avenues for spiritual formation which had been abandoned during the Council's repercussions. A year later he was summoned to Rome twice to take part in the Conclaves which elected both John Paul I and John Paul II. The latter Pope soon found that Ratzinger would make an

excellent working partner, and in 1981 called him back to Rome to become the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This is one of the more important of the Vatican's positions, since it entails making sure that bishops and priests are upholding the Church's traditions in their sermons and writings. The office is committed to maintaining the orthodoxy of Catholic traditions, and ensuring that the Church in all parts of the world is keeping in step with each other and with the Pope as its spiritual head in Rome. Formerly this office was called the Holy Inquisition, and had an evil reputation. But in the past century its function is limited "to promote sound doctrine, to correct errors, and to guide back to the right path those who are in error." The office has no physical or disciplinary powers, no police force, and needless to say no jails. All it can do is to appeal to the bishops to call any alleged offender to heel. Ultimately, it has no weapons besides argument and appeals to the faith.

Necessarily, such an office, and such a function, however gently exercised is bound to seem repressive. Ratzinger's authority appeared to be too conservative to the more liberal or radical thinkers in the Catholic ranks. Hence he gained the description of being God's policeman. His first controversy came with the liberation theologian from Brazil Leonardo Boff, who ardently championed the so-called Liberation Theology, which made extensive use of Marxist theory. He was called to Rome and urged to keep silent – a reproach which many of his followers resented. So too some of the more controversial issues affecting the church, such as celibacy of priests, the ordination of women, abortion, papal dogma and homosexuality, soon enough came to rest on Ratzinger's desk. Frequently the critics believed that their views would have prevailed if only God's policeman had not suppressed them. But he made clear that Church doctrine was not something which could be altered to suit any one's special interests or wishes. The Church did not and does not exist as a kind of self-service supermarket for the purpose of self-realization. Ratzinger's task was to ensure that this truth was upheld.

In some ways, he was a perfect foil to Pope John Paul II, whose charismatic personality, especially in the early years of his reign, proved most appealing. The Pope from Poland had an uncomplicated human directness, openness and warmth, which made him immediately likeable. By contrast, Ratzinger was far more reserved, studious, careful in his speech, and not at all gregarious. The media played up this difference, depicting John Paul in the star role, while his right-hand man could be depicted as a cold, repressive and conservative German. The fact is, however, that for twenty-three years the two worked in close harmony. On several occasions, as he grew older, Ratzinger begged John Paul to allow him to retire. He hoped to be able to return to Bavaria, and to share his house there with his brother who had been the conductor of the famous Cathedral Choir in Regensburg. But John Paul would not permit this, so he was obliged to soldier on. If, on the one hand, this lengthy period of office enhanced his authority, it also gave rise to increased criticism from those who believed the Church was caught up into an inflexible, or outdated, pattern of operation. Particularly in Germany, the media and much of the avant-garde intelligentsia regarded the Church as having failed to seize the opportunities for complete reform after the Second Vatican Council, or were increasingly hostile to any form of transcendent belief. Even some German Catholics were notoriously critical of the Pope and opposed to Rome. These were burdens which Ratzinger had to bear.

In April 2005 Pope John Paul II died. By this time Ratzinger had become Dean of the Cardinals, and hence was responsible for both the funeral and for the organization of the subsequent conclave to elect a successor. In his funeral sermon he gave his listeners a sharp warning against relativism and ideological fads, when nothing was recognized as having ultimate value, and the only final standard was the individual and his wishes. A faith that follows the movements of fashion and of the latest novelties, he observed, is not a constructive attitude. Instead a mature faith is one that is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ.

On 19 April, on the third ballot in the Conclave, Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope, and took the name Benedict XVI. The choice was momentous in several ways. Firstly, he was only the second non-Italian after 500 years to hold this office. Secondly, the choice of a German Pope after an even longer period marked a significant change and rehabilitation in Germany's international status. No longer would the awful shadow of Hitler's misdeeds be attributable to the whole nation. Thirdly, he had only three days before celebrated his

78th birthday. There could be no danger that his reign would last as long as John Paul II's. He was not going to rival John Paul's journeys around the world, visiting 129 countries and making 2500 speeches. His would be a more low-key modest reign, similar to his personal disposition. Where John Paul had sought to bring the Church to the world in large-scale personal appearances, Benedict would concentrate on the message, on the need to return to the essential revitalization of what is intrinsic to the Church's commission, to the way Christ intended the Church to be.

Of course Benedict was well enough aware that he would be obliged to deal with a whole range of problems left over from the previous reign. John Paul's well-publicized appeals against exploitation, oppression and poverty had brought headlines, but little obedience from even the faithful. And, on a number of important questions regarding the future of the world, the Catholic Church seemed to have missed the boat. Particularly on such issues as abortion, the rights of women in the Church, or the prohibition of contraception and euthanasia, the Church's stance was horribly compromised by the seemingly unstoppable scandals of clerical sexual aberrations in different parts of the Catholic world, including Canada. People's confidence in the institutional Church was waning year after year, when such matters seemed to be pushed under the rug. Even more damaging was the unverified rumour that Benedict and his advisors downplayed these scandals by implying that they were being drummed up by sensational journalists or greedy lawyers.

On the other hand, Benedict took office with certain clear advantages. His unusually long term of service at the highest rank of the Vatican bureaucracy meant that he was thoroughly familiar with the problems to be faced. He was better known to the five thousand bishops of the world church than any of his predecessors, and they in turn understood his theological authority and the directions he would give them in church politics. He had had years of pondering the great issues of faith and reason, or the ethical limits of modern science. His calm, persistent and logical way of working meant that he had thought out the implications of decisions in advance. He knew what was required, and if necessary could launch the kind of steps to deal with situations. Above all, he knew what it meant to be a Pope and what is expected of him. Thus although many observers wrote him off as another elderly interim Pope, Benedict XVI was ready to take up the reins of office, and give effect to his long-held convictions.

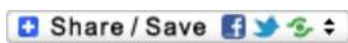
Benedict's elevation to the Papal throne necessarily meant that he left the prefecture of the Doctrine of the Faith. The result was an almost visible lightening of his personality. Instead of the harsh disciplinarian, he now appeared as a more gentle and approachable leader. And it was notable that the criticisms of the media became more tolerant. Whereas for years the prevalent ideology had poured scorn on everything to do with Christian belief, Benedict's thoughtful pronouncements of the subject of faith and reason recreated a new dialogue between culture and religion, which has helped many to recognize the validity of his arguments. His papacy has shown that his challenge has been understood, and he has succeeded in upholding an alternative model of Christian existence which rejects the individualism and relativism so widespread in late 20th century cultures. In this role, Benedict became a voice of conscience, summoning the faithful to be obedient to their traditions and loyal to their ideals. The predictions of some hostile critics that this aged, scholarly, conservative, uncharismatic Bavarian would only hasten the dechristianization of Europe have been confounded. Moreover, thanks to his highly efficient use of his time, he has been able to turn back to his first love – biblical studies. His recently published three volumes on Jesus are a valuable summary of other men's researches, but capped with the authority of someone who had reflected on these issues for many decades.

Speculating about the Conclave and the choice to be made by the 117 Cardinals entitled to vote would be risky. But, just because Benedict's resignation was so unexpected, even by his closest colleagues in the Vatican, so there was none of the usual speculation about the succession, as happened last time during the long-drawn-out decline of Pope John Paul II. Just for that reason, virtually nothing is known about the most likely candidates, whose biographies will now have to be rapidly researched. More significantly, the choice will surely rest on other factors, even if the traditional Catholic belief is that the Holy Spirit will make the decision. For one thing, will there be pressure to revert to an Italian Pope? Or alternatively has the time come for a non-European candidate to be

selected? Equally important is the question of qualifications. Many Popes have served in the Vatican bureaucracy, known as the Curia, often with distinction in high office, though few have been so enduring as Benedict with his nearly 24 years at the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The alternative would be to select a man who had held pastoral office as Archbishop or Cardinal in some distant See. In fact, we can discern a pattern here. Over the past fifty years, Pius XII was a Curial diplomat, but John XXIII a well-beloved pastor. Paul VI had also served in the Vatican's State Department, but neither John Paul I nor II had any such experience. Following Benedict's tight control from the centre, perhaps the time has come to choose an outsider, with a different perspective, even from a different continent.

When the Conclave is summoned, the cardinals will have to hurry to Rome, presumably this time by air, along with their attendants, and will be suitably housed for the duration. All will agree that it would be unseemly for the Conclave to be still continuing by the time Holy Week begins, i.e. on March 24th, so that the newly-elected Pope can preside over the Church's most solemn and significant rituals culminating with Good Friday's Three Hour penitential Mass, and the triumphant Resurrection service on Easter morning. The Cardinals' deliberations will therefore have not to be too long drawn out. But the preliminary meetings with their colleagues over dinners, the late-hour chats, the consultations in the various national colleges or with friends in high offices, are all part of the process to determine who is the most suitable choice. Many of the Cardinals will arrive with their own strong ideas about the future of the church, but will have to adjust these in order to reach a consensus on a single candidate. The secrecy with which the whole procedure is surrounded means that we may never know the exact reasons why the next Pope is chosen. And we would do well to be sceptical about the large number of Pope-watchers who are even now flocking to Rome to offer the public throughout the world their unrivalled but unformed guesses.

Pope Benedict's legacy will certainly be disputed in the years ahead. His critics, especially in the United States, will lay stress on the shortcomings of his failure to deal more trenchantly with the sex scandals affecting priests and bishops, or the seeming insensitivity towards their victims. Other critics, more aptly, point to Benedict's rigid stance against all proposals for change as refusing to recognize the need for internal reform in order to pave the way for true renewal. As Cardinal Avery Dulles pointed out, such an attitude turns the church into an obstacle rather than an inspiration to faith. Benedict's admirers, on the other hand, will point to his years of devoted service in an office which he held with great dignity, insight and perseverance. His example of a teaching papacy, and his legacy of theological writings, will be long remembered. His eight years as Supreme Pontiff were short and lacking in any historic turning points. But he can surely be given credit for the manner in which he broke the tradition of centuries and decided to retire. It will be a pity if Benedict's pontificate becomes best remembered for his manner of leaving it. Yet, we have no reason to suspect that this Pope emeritus in his retirement will seek to exercise power or influence from behind the scenes. Instead we can wish him a peaceful and fruitful period when he may be able to enrich us with further insights into the rich heritage of Christian thought, of which he was for so many years the guardian and expositor.



Tags: Benedict XVI, John S. Conway, Papacy

Conference Report: Catholicism in Germany: Contemporary History and the Present

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/conference-report-catholicism-in-germany-contemporary-history-and-the-present/>

CONFERENCE REPORT: CATHOLICISM IN GERMANY: CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND THE PRESENT

March 1, 2013 · by Mark Edward Ruff · in News and Notes, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

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Conference Report: Catholicism in Germany: Contemporary History and the Present (Katholizismus in Deutschland – Zeitgeschichte und Gegenwart), October 26 – 27, 2012, Katholische Akademie in Bayern

By Mark Edward Ruff, Saint Louis University, and Christoph Kösters, Kommission für Zeitgeschichte, Bonn

On September 17, 1962, a new Catholic historical association was called into existence – the Association for Contemporary History, or as it was known in German at the time, *die Kommission für Zeitgeschichte bei der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern*. To celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, nearly 200 researchers from various academic disciplines, journalists, clergymen, contemporaries and interested laity gathered at the birthplace of the *Kommission* at the Catholic Academy in Bavaria. From their meeting-place on the edge of the English Garden in Munich, they discussed its origins and steps for future research into German Catholicism.

The dozen panelists took up three major questions: What historical context led to the founding of this historical association? How did its subjects for research and its historical methodologies change over five decades? What can a historical retrospective of this association tell us about future directions for research into German Catholicism? The conference focused on three distinct eras – the Nazi era, the “long sixties,” in which scholarly work into the church’s past under National Socialism received a decisive impetus, and finally the present. In some of its panels, scholars from the latter two eras were paired up. Younger historians offered a look back at the debates, controversies and trends that shaped the Association’s founding and activities in the 1960s; they were immediately followed by commentaries from historians, theologians and sociologists whose work began in earnest from the late 1950s through the early 1970s. A closing podium discussion allowed the audience to pose questions directly to a group of five scholars of contemporary religion and debate the state of the field.

The founding of the *Kommission für Zeitgeschichte* served as the point of departure for the conference. Mark Edward Ruff (St. Louis) placed this seminal event within the context of the historical controversies over the Roman Catholic Church’s past during the Nazi era. It was the battles of the legal status of the Reichskonkordat from 1933 and the controversies over unflattering reinterpretations of the Catholic past from critics like the legal scholar and historian, Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, and the American

Catholic sociologist, Gordon Zahn, that helped catalyze its founding between 1959 and 1962. Ruff was followed by Hans Maier, the CSU politician and scholar, who discussed the limitations of Catholic resistance during the Third Reich.

Antonius Liedhegener (Luzern) argued that organized lay-Catholicism helped consolidate the church's acceptance of democracy in the "long sixties." These lay organizations accepted the increasingly pluralistic society of the Federal Republic of Germany and played a powerful role in solidifying German civil society. Presenting an array of statistical data from public opinion polls, Liedhegener criticized those interpretations which focused on the role of protest movements in 1968 in securing support for a "second founding of the Federal Republic." The ensuing discussion made clear that his mental shift was facilitated by new understandings of religious freedom that emerged out of the Second Vatican Council and of the new role for the "church in the world."

In the second section, "The Future of Research into Catholicism," Frank Bösch (Potsdam) focused on the relationship between the media and German Catholicism. Bösch argued that the media itself underwent a process of fundamental transformation during the long sixties. It was not an impartial commentator summarizing events as they occurred but an independent actor with its own agenda. In providing its own interpretation of religious messages and calling for different forms of spirituality, the new media world helped pluralize the world of German Catholicism. It gave a loudspeaker to alternative voices that in the preceding decades had scarcely been heard. Franziska Metzger (Fribourg), in turn, focused on the transformation of religious and theological semantics.

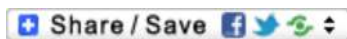
In the ensuing discussion, some in the audience questioned the extent to which transformations in religious vocabulary were specific to the domain of Catholicism: were they part of a larger societal transformation? Others were troubled by the methodologies derived from cultural history and linguistics. Is it no longer possible to speak of "Catholicism" as a coherent subject for inquiry, particularly as it became increasingly pluralized by the late 1960s and old forms of political Catholicism became a relic of the past? This discussion was intensified by Matthias Sellmann's (Bochum) analyses of present-day Catholicism. He laid out a picture of the transformation into which the church had been forced by modern society. Since the late 1990s, the Roman Catholic church has gone from being perceived as an "institution" with a specific religious mission to fulfill to an "organization" with no homogenous and controllable social form.

On the second day of the conference, five young scholars — Thomas Brechenmacher (Potsdam), Franziska Metzger, Ferdinand Kramer (Munich), Thomas Großbölting (Münster), Olaf Blaschke (Heidelberg) and Harry Oelke (Munich) — took to the podium to discuss perspectives for future research. They all agreed that comparative religious history that crossed denominational and national borders was necessary, so long as scholars did not lose sight of the peculiarities of Catholicism. They also called for further work into the history of gender and religion.

The conference closed with a dialogue between the two chairmen of the *Kommission für Zeitgeschichte*, Wilhelm Damberg (Bochum) and Michael Kißener (Mainz) over what the panels and discussions about new methodologies and research subjects could signify for the future of their institution as it enters into its next half-century of life. Both concluded that questions about religious and ecclesiastical change from the 1960s through the 1970s will move to the center of historical research into Catholicism, the need to further pursue the history of the church and of Catholicism under the totalitarian dictatorships of the 20th century notwithstanding. Damberg and Kißener accordingly noted that questions about the Catholic milieu and its formation in the 19th century will recede in importance. In light of these changes, they insisted that it will remain necessary for the *Kommission* to continue publishing the many volumes of church documents, for which it gained a strong reputation already in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Rather remarkably, there was little to hear about the Second Vatican Council itself, which began just a few weeks after the *Kommission* was founded in September, 1962. One might also speculate how differently the discussions and panels might have unfolded had Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation in October 2012 rather than in February 2013. All in all, however, the

conference provided a valuable opportunity to take stock of the state of the field at what seems to be a moment of transition.



Tags: Catholicism in Germany, Kommission für Zeitgeschichte, Mark Edward Ruff

Conference Report: German Studies Association Conference, October 4-7, 2012, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/conference-report-german-studies-association-conference-october-4-7-2012-milwaukee-wisconsin/>

CONFERENCE REPORT: GERMAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 4-7, 2012, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

March 1, 2013 · by Kyle Jantzen · in News and Notes, Volume 19 Number 1 (March 2013) · Edit

Contemporary Church History Quarterly

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Conference Report: German Studies Association Conference, October 4-7, 2012, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

By Kyle Jantzen, Ambrose University College

Once again this past year, the German Studies Association conference included a number of interesting panels or papers devoted to contemporary church history.

The panel “Questioning Nazism as a ‘Political Religion’” offered new research relating to debates around the questions: was National Socialism a fundamentally anti-Christian political movement? Was Nazism itself a political religion, a rival to traditional forms of Christianity? Or, as Richard Steigmann-Gall has argued, was the Nazi Party led by politicians who understood themselves as Christians and even attempted to forge an unorthodox partnership with German Protestants and (to a lesser extent) German Catholics? Three papers approached these questions from complementary directions. Beth Ann Griech-Poelle examined how Nazi ideologues viewed one of Germany’s allies, General Francisco Franco, whose collaboration with the Spanish Catholic Church inspired commentary which was sharply critical of “political Catholicism.” Daniel A. McMillan argued that secularization constituted a significant cause of the Holocaust, in part because the concept of Nazism as a political religion helps explain why the Holocaust, more than any other genocide, was driven by ideology divorced from “practical” considerations. Kyle Jantzen explored the efforts of a Berlin Protestant pastor to fuse Christianity and National Socialism, provoking opposition from both

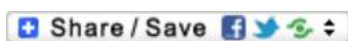


Nazi Party activists and leaders of the pro-Nazi German Christian movement, in the process revealing the many complexities of the relationship between National Socialism and organized religion.

In all, four members of the *Contemporary Church History Quarterly* editorial team presented papers in three panels scattered throughout the conference. Along with Griech-Polelle and Jantzen, mentioned above, Robert P. Ericksen presented “Antisemitism through the Lens of Denazification: Examples from Göttingen University,” as part of a panel which considered postwar assessments of pro- or anti-Nazi activities during the Third Reich. Here Ericksen continued to develop his recent research on the failings of the denazification process, highlighted by cases concerning German academics. Finally, Steven Schroeder presented “‘The World Will Not Leave Us Alone’: Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Germany, 1945-1949,” one of the papers in a panel on “Discourses of Victimization and Reconciliation Amid the Rubble.”

Another panel of interest was “The Work of the State and the Work of God: Religious Groups, Social Vocation, and State Violence.” Martina Cucchiara of the University of Notre Dame presented her paper, “Beyond the Concordat: Women’s Religious Negotiation of Free Spaces in Hitler’s Germany.” She discussed the notion of selective accommodation—complying with externals such as the Hitler Greeting and embracing the Nazi vision of community, nationalism, and heroism, while downplaying racial and antisemitic aspects of the regime. Stephen Morgan, also from the University of Notre Dame, contributed the paper “Between Reservation and Extermination: Rhenish Missionaries and the Herrero Genocide,” which explored the complex and compromised relationship between the German missionaries and the Herrero people. Missionaries approved of the reservation system, because it made the Christianization of the African people somewhat easier to accomplish. When the Herrero War ended this experiment, missionaries adapted to the changing conditions, but in the process lost credibility both with Europeans who found them too friendly to the Herrero and with the Herrero, who did not appreciate the missionaries’ encouragement to cease their rebellion. In the end, the missionaries were caught between their Christian interest in evangelism and the government’s interest in mobilizing colonial labour. Suzanne Brown-Fleming, another member of the *Contemporary Church History Quarterly* editorial team, commented ably on the papers, noting the common process of Christian adaptation to state interest and ideology and pointing out that—at some point—selective accommodation simply turns into assent.

One other paper of interest was James McNutt’s “‘They sought world domination ... so he died’ Adolf Schlatter, Deicide, and *Der Stürmer*.” McNutt compared Streicher’s and Schlatter’s racial and theological attitudes towards Jews, noting linkages between racial hatred and religious antipathy. He argued that Schlatter was an important figure in German Protestantism, and that his social alienation of Jews contributed to their defamation as the evil other, enemies of God, and allies of Satan.



Tags: Beth Ann Griech-Polelle, German Studies Association, Kyle Jantzen, Robert P. Ericksen, Steven Schroeder, Suzanne Brown-Fleming

New Sources on the Roman Catholic Church and the Holocaust: Summer Research Workshop for Scholars

SourceURL: <http://contemporarychurchhistory.org/2013/03/new-sources-on-the-roman-catholic-church-and-the-holocaust-summer-research-workshop-for-scholars/>

NEW SOURCES ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE HOLOCAUST: SUMMER RESEARCH WORKSHOP FOR SCHOLARS

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New Sources on the Roman Catholic Church and the Holocaust: Summer Research Workshop for Scholars, August 13-24, 2012, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

By Mark Edward Ruff, Saint Louis University

This seminar held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from August 13-24, 2012 brought together ten scholars and archivists from Italy, Canada, France, Israel, Poland, the United States, and the Vatican. It was convened by Charlie Gallagher, SJ, Assistant Professor of History at Boston College, and Mara Dissegna, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Modena.

Its keynote address, “The Tribunalization of History,” was delivered by Alberto Melloni, Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Modena. Melloni examined how it came to be that history on this subject has so often been written in the style of “tribunalization,” or that of a judge on a tribunal. Scholarship on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the first half of the 20th century, he argued, has often consisted of presenting indictments, mustering up evidence for and against the accused, delivering verdicts of guilt or innocence, imposing sentences and, even on occasion, informing the public of what form restitution should take. For Melloni, this outcome was hardly surprising. The legwork for later scholarly analysis was often done by war crimes tribunals convened by the victorious Allies, the Israeli government and the West German government.

Since many of these, including the Nuremberg trials, the Eichmann trial of 1961, the Frankfurt war crimes trials and the trial of Klaus Barbie in 1987, occupy a permanent place in the popular imagination, those writing about the Roman Catholic past invariably fell back on courtroom semantics. The German playwright Rolf Hochhuth, who denounced the silence of Pius XII in his play, *The Deputy*, had his major character voice an indictment with the emotions of a state prosecutor: “A Deputy of Christ who sees these things and nonetheless permits reasons of state to seal his lips — who wastes even one day in thought, hesitates even for an hour to lift his anguished voice in one anathema to chill the blood of every last man on earth — that Pope is ... a criminal.”

For Melloni and the participants in the seminar, it became an imperative to overcome the distinct limitations to this mode of tribunalization, and most notably, its reliance on simple dichotomies of guilt and innocence. Transcending these limitations ultimately necessitates historicizing the process of tribunalization itself. It is the historian’s duty, they concluded, to become aware of present-minded agendas that have shaped scholarship, including those of the current day. The battles over the past have shaped not just interpretative frameworks but the actual evidence itself which has been handed down to our generation of historians. In the postwar era, for instance, the actors from the years of Fascism and National Socialism compiled their documents and wrote their personal memoirs in response to allegations about the Roman Catholic Church’s complicity with extreme right-wing movements.

Seminar participants were able to demonstrate just how pervasive criticisms of the church's conduct were already in 1945 and, in some cases, between 1933 and 1945. Archival documents and first-hand historical accounts were thus put together with this criticism in mind at the close of the war and again in the 1960s and 2000s. The eleven volume set of papal documents commissioned by Pope Paul VI, *Actes et documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la période de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, were a response to the criticisms of Rolf Hochhuth. The 2005 opening of the papers from the pontificate of Pius XI, and in the not-too-distant future papers from the pontificate of Pius XII, was the result of growing public criticisms in the late 1990s and early 2000s that took the shape of books like John Cornwall's, *Hitler's Pope*.

Participants in this seminar were also given the opportunity to draw upon photocopies and microfilm reels from the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. These documents originally came from the Vatican Nunciatures, or Vatican embassies in Munich and Berlin, the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Affairs of the Ecclesiastical Extraordinary in Bavaria, the U.S. State Department, the British Foreign Office regarding Palestine, the Archive for the Fascist Office for Demography and Race, the Central Italian State Archives, the Swiss Police Jewish Refugee Records and the Second Vatican Council.

Though the research interests of the participants were chronologically and geographically eclectic, several recurring themes — Vatican diplomacy, clerico-Fascism and Zionism — gave the seminar a larger unity. What was the relationship of the Vatican to the Fascist regime in Italy and the National Socialist regime in Germany? To what extent did individual Roman Catholics evince attitudes and policies that diverged from positions of the official church? How did Roman Catholic attitudes towards Jews and the Zionist movement change between the 1910s and the 1960s in Italy, the United States and Germany?

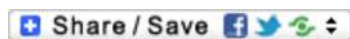
The individual presentations in the seminar, in turn, addressed aspects of these questions. James Mace Ward presented an account of Reverend Josef Tiso, the enigmatic Slovak nationalist fluent in Hungarian who moved from being a nationalist priest to become a fascist leader of a European state. Between 1923-1930, Tiso became increasingly anti-Semitic, a stance which he, however, could turn on or off depending on the needs of the moment. At the same time, Tiso was consumed with the “defense of the Church,” and his ideas were strongly rooted in Catholic social teachings.

Robert Maryks presented an account of Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, a Jesuit priest and architect of the 1929 Lateran Accords which created the Vatican. He met with Mussolini more than one hundred times. Like Tiso, Tacchi-Venturi was a complex figure. He supported the 1938 Italian racial laws and the building of walls between Jews and Catholics. But at the same time, he tirelessly dedicated much of his energy and time to helping the victims of Mussolini's racial laws. He provided aid to every Jew who applied to him for assistance. He furnished passports, secured the release of Jews from concentration camps and facilitated the “Aryanization” of baptized Jews.

Charles Gallagher focused on Charles E. Coughlin, the well-known “radio priest” from Detroit who aligned himself with Fascist theories and fascist propaganda. Gallagher aimed to modify the existing picture of the Canadian-born radio-priest which relied primarily on documents from official church archives. New documents from Jesuit and Protestant archives, Gallagher pointed out, paint a different picture. They make clear that various leaders of the Catholic church in America had concluded that he could be considered a Fascist – but they repeatedly refused to identify him as such publicly.

Mark Edward Ruff focused on the role of Johannes Neuhäusler, the cathedral canon of the archdiocese of Munich who led an illegal courier service to the Vatican between 1933 and 1941. He supplied Eugenio Pacelli and others with documentary evidence of the Nazi state's persecution of the Roman Catholic Church. One of Neuhäusler's couriers, the Munich lawyer Josef Müller, also was involved in the circles in the German army plotting to overthrow Hitler. Through Müller and others, Pope Pius XII became involved in a plot to launch a coup in 1939 and early 1940.

Mara Dissegna, Adrian Ciani and Paolo Zanini focused on the question of the Vatican's relationship to Zionism. All noted the Vatican's strong opposition to the establishment of a Jewish homeland. A mass held in Boston to protest the creation of the Jewish state in the late 1940s, for instance, drew tens of thousands of participants. Piero Doria and Claire Maligot, finally, both examined the Second Vatican Council's reappraisal of traditional positions towards Judaism and other world religions.



Tags: Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, Mark Edward Ruff, New Sources on the Roman Catholic Church and the Holocaust, Summer Research Workshop, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum