

Under the Shadows of Ideology: Theology and the Study of Religion under National Socialism, Marxism, and Capitalism

Introduction

"It could have been Germany's century", remarked Fritz Stern almost two decades ago, as together with Raymond Aron he pondered both the expectations surrounding Germany's entry into the twentieth century and the actual results. And in a very real, but much different sense than Stern's, one of Germany's leading contemporary historians contends that indeed it was Germany's century (Jackel 1996: 7-8). In few other areas might this be more the case than that of religion. In historical scholarship of sources, in theoretical comparison of worldwide materials, and in the century-long struggle surrounding the role of religion as servant of or to modern nation-states, Germany has been a leading contributor. As a result, the monopoly of theology over the forming and directing of the study of religion, extending through the era of National Socialism and well into the period of the two Germanies, had its back broken. Yet precisely because of the outcome in these three fields of endeavor, one must wonder with Jackel how to judge the value of Germany's efforts over the past one hundred years.

How different it was for Franz Schnabel, one of the grand old masters of German historiography, to write the history of Germany's religious thought and struggles during the nineteenth century (Schnabel 1936, vol. 4: *Religiöse Kriifte*)! In casting back over that tumultuous period, the names were obvious, the competing parties were well known, and the directions were clear. Beginning with Johann Michael Sailer and the Catholic Enlightenment, Schnabel could easily wander over the *Tilbinger Schule* and Johann Adam Mohler, make sure he mentioned the role of history together with Ignaz von Dollinger and Karl Joseph Hefele, touch upon the Cologne Turmoils and the Gorres-Circle; he could ensure Protestant representation by beginning with Friedrich Schleiermacher and Freiherr von Stein, cross to the problem of the Prussian State Church, move to the struggle between orthodoxy and pietism in both church and state (the Brothers Gerlach, especially Leopold and Ludwig), point to the *Leben Jesu* movement (David Friedrich Strauß, Ferdinand Christian Baur) and the rise of liberal Protestantism. Though his detailed study takes the reader only up to mid-century and the watershed of 1848, one might well argue that the century's second half, incorporating such figures as Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, Theodor von Zahn and Franz Overbeck, and such events as the First Vatican Council, the *Kirchenkampf*, and the rise of socialism, was made up chiefly of the first half's further development and maturation. Forgotten would appear to be the world of German Judaism, prominent in figures from Salomon Ludwig Steinheim to Heinrich Graetz and reflected in the polemics of Heinrich von Treitschke, Richard Wagner and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. That the world of religion in Germany, embedded solidly in an historical framework stretching back many hundreds, if not over a thousand years, might suffer intrusions from without, even destabilizations from competing forces, was apparently not easily admitted by Schnabel's otherwise sovereign historical imagination. How different our task if we strive to relate the twentieth century's story of religion and its study in Germany!

Prior even to World War I, Germany's religious scene was already in a state of turmoil. Overbeck, Friedrich Nietzsche's intimate colleague and one of the "fierce" critics feared by younger scholars everywhere, had already announced a profound bankruptcy in Europe's theological world (Overbeck 1873). At the turn of the century, just before he died in 1905, Overbeck went one step further and presented himself as an example of precisely such failure. He had, he dictated to his private journal, lived a lie for over thirty years. Professor of church history at the University of Jena and then of theology at Basel, Overbeck had found his day of retirement in 1897 a moment of profound joy: no longer did he have to "pretend" to his student audiences that he was a representative of Christian theology and history. "No one", he confessed, "can have sinned more profoundly against the moral demand of Protestantism, and especially of contemporary philistine Protestantism, than I have: *To serve god in one's profession*. In the eyes of contemporary theology", he continued, "with the wisdom of its *momlity of professional service*, there can naturally be no more unuseful servant than I, who was only concerned with protecting myself from my profession." The reason for this harsh self-judgment was surprisingly simple: Overbeck had, to his own mind, never performed as a theologian. "I felt myself to be completely incapable of functioning as a representative of Christianity." In other words, for Overbeck contemporary Christian thought had become "modern" and thus separated from its one essential component, a divinely guaranteed revelation of god's will. In the language of James Joyce, he no longer believed it (Bernoulli 1919: 228; 8).

This announcement of a "hidden" life that amounted to a betrayal of Christian theology struck like a bombshell, making public at the end of World War I what had already been in process, namely the breaking of theology's stranglehold on the study of religious thought in Germany. But Overbeck was not the only such indicator. The early part

of the century was awash with movements and energies that pushed traditional Christian thought to the back seats. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), for example, who had labored for over a decade on the edition of Goethe's scientific writings, became first the leader of the Theosophy Society's German section, only later to fall out with his colleagues over the proclamation that Krishnamurti was to be acknowledged as the new Cosmic Teacher. By 1913, he had founded the Anthroposophical Society with its headquarters in Dornach (Basel), where he oversaw the construction of his temple for the celebration of a new, and distinctly non-Christian knowledge (the famous "Goetheanum"). The emphasis on knowledge was important: rather than a revelation, as in Christianity, Steiner pushed for the development of human knowledge as the way to the spiritual or immaterial reality of both humanity and the world (Steiner: 1904, 1910, 1924).

Steiner's influence was extensive, stretching into the ranks of the theologians. Friedrich Rittelmeyer (1872-1938), a New Testament exegete, found Steiner's direction inspiring. He gathered about himself a circle of followers, founding the "Christian Society" (*Christengemeinschaft*) in 1922. Based on a radical reinterpretation of Christianity's traditional seven sacraments, the goal of this group was to meld Catholicism and Protestantism into a "third church" whose teaching was to be based on the replacement of the fundamental notion of creation by that of emanation (Rittelmeyer 1920).

More striking in their deviation from Christian theologies were the various secret societies that seemed to shoot up like mushrooms around the First World War. Perhaps the best known of these were the three organizations often linked to the later rise of Hitler's National Socialism. Prominent is the *Oreio Novi Templi*, founded by Lanz von Liebenfels, whose creation was clearly directed toward an Aryan-heroic, race-based cultic religion; not only was Hitler supposed to have been influenced by Lanz, but also Lord Kitchener and Lenin were claimed as enthusiastic followers. Lanz himself was perhaps an even more bizarre figure than his new order. A onetime Cistercian monk, he claimed to have had an affair with a Jewess named Liebenfels; he took her name for his. He translated the Psalms under the guidance of a radical reinterpretation based on his physiognomical studies and ended up understanding the Christian sacraments as part of a racially based mythology. The result was a series of rituals and liturgies surrounding the Holy Grail, pointing to the rise of a new human race which was to be outfitted with electro-magnetic-radiological organs just as the primeval human race had been. Lanz, who died in 1954, had indeed assembled a large and impressive yet disconnected group of followers and disciples, but the influence of his new order is difficult to trace with any precision (Ach-Pentrop 1977: 11-14).

More shadowy is the *Armanenschaft* founded by Guido von List. Having begun his "contemporary incarnation" in 1848, List proclaimed himself early on as the rediscoverer of ancient Aryan wisdom. At the turn of the century he penned his Germanic catechism dedicated to the fundamentals of a German worldview; he even hoped to see this book used in the German school system! By 1911 he had received, so he reported, news from the "High Tarnhari" that his researches had indeed captured the ancient tribal traditions; for the first time in 3000 years, the *Armanenschaft* had reappeared. By the time List died in 1919 he had formulated a series of prophecies that became the core of his followers' beliefs: in the 1920s some of them still spoke of a "new Germany" as an Armanen empire, foretold the collapse of papal Rome, and attacked the Pauline Christianity represented by Protestantism (Ach-Pentrop 1977: 15-18).

Rudolf von Sebottendorf's Thule Society and Thule Order, however, are probably the best known of these early secret societies. Just who he was remains unclear: Sebottendorf, Rudolf Glauer, Erwin Torre, Rudolf or Adam Glandeck, or someone else entirely. He appears to have been born in Saxony ca. 1875, and in his youth to have worked in Turkey. Here he encountered Helen P. Blavatsky's "Secret Teachings" and, thus, the Thule myth. During the war, his adventures were many, and after the war he is reported to have been in Germany, Turkey again, Mexico and survival, and that something *new* must be devised to ward off even more traumatic events than World War I. Long before 1945, 1918 is experienced as the ultimate "zero hour" (*Stunde Null*: a war lost and a country occupied; a German emperor and a Prussian king lost in one sweep of a pen; a republic (or republics) in place whose workings no one really understands; a shattered economy with suffering to spare; and a society flooded by disappointed and humiliated troops with little to look forward to. This moment of loss and beginning is the point of departure for grasping the course of religion's study in Germany during the twentieth century.

History versus Experience

In 1919, immediately following the end of the Great War, a young Protestant pastor, Karl Barth, published the first fundamental work of dialectical theology. In his *Letter to the Romans*, Barth proclaimed in the starkest terms his persuasion that god is totally other than all of creation and above all humanity; in other words, god is not the deity found in human culture (Barth 1919). For Barth, the result is clear: Christianity, as the announcement of this god's revelation, is not "reasonable", Aquinas' notion of analogy and Protestant thought's subjectivity are devious exaltations on the part of humanity. Barth called, therefore, for a return to a Bible that is not literature, not a social program, and certainly not an assembly of proof texts; rather, this sacred text is the word of a totally transcendent god to whom we as humans have absolutely no access unless it be granted by the divine.

The horror of the recent war led Barth to thunder a "no" to a god submerged, as he saw it, in human culture. Humanity's one duty, according to Barth, is to remain ready for god to grant some way to experience the divine

transcendent: there is simply nothing else to do. Faith according to Barth is god's dealing with us; it is completely distinct from whatever human functions we may experience, even so-called mystical or divine experiences. Theology, he thought, must begin with the courageous acceptance of the fact that god's having said something and done something is "totally" incomprehensible, imperceptible and unbelievable. Such a theology is deeply alienated from human culture: self-knowledge, psychology, history are all doable only separate from god; they are already an abandonment of god. If the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth could even be demonstrated, it has nothing to do with the transcendent moment in which the "word became flesh". Theology, in other words, is simply sermonizing.

One of the nineteenth century's towering scholarly figures, the church and doctrinal historian Adolf von Harnack, recoiled in revulsion at what he saw as dialectical theology's rejection of all he stood for. At a conference in Switzerland a year after the appearance of Barth's book, they both held lectures. Harnack was shocked at what he heard: there was not a single thought, not a single sentence with which he could agree. His rejoinder came in his famous "Fifteen Questions to the Detractors of Scientific Theology among the Theologians Themselves" (Harnack 1923a, 1923b, 1923c). This exchange made clear the key differences between the two scholars. Harnack was convinced that human reason could gain access to the divine; history was precisely the avenue to knowledge of god. Barth, of course, denied that any such knowledge could be achieved. Again, for Harnack, culture and its resulting moral codes could never be simply not the divine as Barth would have it. Indeed, Barth maintained that the gospel has as little to do with culture as it does with barbarism. Finally, for Harnack, religion had a directness and a simplicity that the complex terminology in Barth's dialectical theology obscured, at best, and falsified, at worst (Zahn-Harnack 1951: 413-418).

While Barth and Harnack fought over the role human reason might have in things religious and, therefore, to what degree religion might participate in public culture, a young New Testament scholar dropped a bomb on gospel studies. Rudolf Bultmann published his *History of the Synoptic Tradition* in 1921, just two years after Barth's study of Paul's letter to the Romans (Bultmann 1921). In pondering the textual problem of the sources available, shared or unique, to the so-called synoptic evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke), Bultmann enunciated the principles leading to his theory of "demythologization" (*Entmythologisierung*). Freeing biblical texts of their mythological accretions accumulated over the centuries and, therefore, making available to humanity the core and fundamental moments of the revelatory proclamation was, in Bultmann's eyes, the chief task of religion. Heavily influenced by Martin Heidegger—they both had taught together at the University of Marburg—Bultmann saw the existential message of Jesus to be the source of personal rather than collective redemption. In his most famous summation of demythologization, Bultmann claimed that it made no difference to a Christian if Jesus had ever been raised from the dead or not; rather, what was important is whether a Christian believes that Jesus was raised from the dead.

The heart of this controversy, a struggle that lasted far beyond its beginnings in the 1920s, lay in the degree to which institutional religion or churches should continue to retain value in post-war Germany. Indeed, since the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the central locus and point of departure for the study of religion had been theology. The reason for this lay in the fact that the Christian tradition posits an effective identity between itself and religion in general, i.e., Christianity's self-understanding places itself at the center of a full and genuine concept of religion. Everything else can only strive to achieve an identity with Christianity. And the home of Christian theology was the churches. Thus Harnack, and many historians with him, claimed that these institutions should maintain their privileged place in German society; a role for religion in the formation of culture and the guidance of political governance was, in their minds, essential. In contrast, Barth's dialectical theology made such a role radically doubtful; Bultmann's existential theology and program for rewriting sacred scriptures made that doubt seem certain.

Even more disturbing to a status-quo in the world of religion were the voices from the German-Jewish community. Above all, Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* caused eyes to roll (Rosenzweig 1921). A trained historian, to whom Friedrich Meinecke had once offered the opportunity for a *Habilitation*, Rosenzweig's experiences in the Great War led him to reflect profoundly on the philosophical and theological underpinnings of humanity's contemporary situation. In Part III of *The Star*, Rosenzweig acknowledged both Judaism and Christianity as religions of revelation, religions that have far more in common than differences, religions that must work together to focus god's redemptive work. For him, Christian faith is knowledge; for the Jew, however, faith is not the act of bearing witness, but rather the act of producing a witness; a Jew, according to Rosenzweig, does not believe in something, but rather is that faith itself. It is Christian faith, faith in something, that leads to the drive to conquer the world; it is a witness to the eternal path that leads to god. Jewish faith, on the other hand, actually produces eternal life by producing the Jewish people themselves (Rosenzweig 1921: sec. 369-370). Only these two traditions together, so argued Rosenzweig, would lead to overcoming the problem of history by establishing the absolute transcendent upon which all else depends (Greenberg 1997).

More radical yet was the voice of Hans-Joachim Schoeps, a young German-Jew from Berlin, who in the late 1920s fell in with Barth's dialectical theology and undertook a total refabrication of Jewish theology on the basis of humanity's primeval experience of creation. In his often overlooked early work, *Jewish Faith in our Time* (1932), Schoeps gave expression to his fundamental experience that his "existential structure", as he termed it, was Barthian Protestant, but that he was also a Jew (Schoeps 1932). This confusion, a living example of Rosenzweig's depiction, was made more critical by the fact that he was by then living in a National Socialist Germany in which the question of how he might gain access to a "god of grace" was growing more pressing by the day. As point of departure, Schoeps contended that the very basic truths of religion had already been eliminated from the existential understanding of western culture. The

only possible solution, at least as he viewed it, was to recover the most fundamental points of traditional religious thought, namely the revelation at Sinai. To do so demanded a dialectic between reason and faith; to reach an experience of creation, one must pass through the commitment of faith. Such an experience of creation, of god's freely given word that created the world and all existence, is also the basis for producing culture. In a controversy with Gershom Scholem, Schoeps made an "historical" confession to Germany and about the place of Jews in that Germany, outraging Scholem. But Schoeps was adamant: there is simply no longer a category of Jewishness which transcends the particular time and place of one's existence. The binding character of religious traditions and institutions was breaking down not only in the Christian communities but also in the Jewish (Lease 1995: 191-231).

In one decade, the place of religion had shifted in Germany's main communities. Both Christian and Jewish worlds understood the shaky ground on which their convictions rested and the even more uncertain foundations for social and political action. Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock had engaged as early as 1918-1919 in a dialogue for a mutual understanding of these two religions, but this remained substantially a theological debate (Rosenzweig 1935). Rudolf Otto had been primarily a theologian from the very beginning, and his most famous work, *The Idea of the Holy*, remains chiefly a theological tractate (Otto 1918). Joachim Wach, who had directed Schoeps' dissertation at Leipzig, also employed a theological point of departure for his monumental study of hermeneutical theory in the nineteenth century (Wach 1926-1933). Though these thinkers and teachers attempted to break with theology as the nineteenth century had understood it, they were unable to transcend the chief theological problem facing both Christianity and Judaism during the twentieth century: how to resolve the difficulties and problems of their survival and triumph in the age of modernity. As a result, new attempts to study religion were succeeded by efforts either to recover the certainty of an earlier time or to create new theologies that would replace what no longer effectively functioned. In either case these communities were ripe for co-optation. And that is precisely what happened.

Harnack had sought both a message and its history; thus he had placed the emphasis for doing theology and, therefore, religion on origins and continuity (Harnack 1900). Karl Barth had instead focused on the relationship between the human and the divine and, therefore, on the dialectical exchange; thus his emphasis landed on revelation and on immediacy, the true sources of relationship, and not on Harnack's history. In creating the world of demythologization, Bultmann had established existentialist faith as key, not historical reality; thus he underscored kerygma or proclamation.

These Protestant battles were paralleled in the Catholic world by a neo-Thomist revival and its Aristotelian categorical thought structure in response to the Modernist crisis at the turn of the century. Romano Guardini, cycling between his Italian and German roots, featured a cultural "experience" at the heart of his theology, thus leading to detachment for the individual in the face of the institution.

In German-Judaism we have seen that Franz Rosenzweig, but also Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem, represented an *Erinnerungstheologie* in which a recovered past is transferred to the present; thus they laid their emphasis on Zionism, orthodoxy and history. Hans-Joachim Schoeps, on the other hand, tried to derive a Jewish identity precisely as German from the dialectical theology of Barth, building on the nineteenth-century Jewish thinker Steinheim and his notions of creation from nothing and the search for a forgiving god.

All of these Weimar-period experiments came to a crashing end with the arrival of National Socialism as the governing ideology in Germany. In many ways, this movement assumed the form of a theology, dedicating its energies to resolving the traditional problems encountered up to that moment in the examples we have surveyed. As a political theology, National Socialism borrowed heavily from its competitors, seeking right from its assumption of power to establish Hitler as standing in direct lineage to the Messianic figures of the Jewish and Christian traditions. In its teachings on god and human nature, National Socialism took a quasi-gnostic position, viewing the divine in a dual role (both as source and creator of reality and as the legitimator of the redemptive process), while humanity is subject to outbreaks of weakness and sin, to be overcome only by the iron discipline of party commitment.

Not only in doctrinal positions, however, did National Socialism emulate its religious rivals. Institutionally the Party became church-like in its role as the agency of redemptive power. There were sacraments, too, with a particular emphasis on blood as the cleansing agent. Finally, the act of redemption was conditioned, even determined by sacrifice, thus allowing the Party believer to transcend death (Lease 1995: 137-188).

This does not mean, however, that Hitler's movement joined with the churches to manipulate the world of religion in Germany of the 1930s. Quite the contrary, Hitler maintained a genuine distance from both Protestants and Catholics, and instead slowly but surely sought to dry them up, establishing at the same time his political party as an adequate substitute for the traditional religious organizations. Only with the end of the war did Hitler plan for the full elimination of any other religious structures in Germany. Thus those individual theologians, ministers and priests, bishops and cardinals who entered into the National Socialist camp—one can think of Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Althaus and Ethelbert Stauffer among the Protestants; Michael Schmaus, Michael von Faulhaber, Adolf Cardinal Bertram, and Joseph Lortz among the Catholics—rarely if ever brought groups with them. Even Abbot Albanus Schachleiter, surely one of the more bizarre appearances in an era full of unique personages, failed to swing the opinion of any large group (Scholder 1977: particularly 110-123). Though there were overtures from professional theologians—one thinks here of the pamphlet series *Reich und Kirche* in which especially Lortz and Schmaus appealed for cooperation with National Socialism, pointing out the many similarities between this political ideology and Roman Catholicism; or of Karl Adam's attempt to

link German *Volkstum* and Catholicism (Lease 1995: 145-151)-it was clear that National Socialism was not about to permit itself to be co-opted by the religious organizations of Germany; if anyone were to be co-opted, it would be the churches themselves.

Post-1945: The Constitutional Status

Though there was concern after the collapse of the National Socialist regime of collaboration between religious and church figures and Hitler's government-Cardinal Faulhaber's annual birthday greetings to Hitler had not been forgotten and theologians such as Schmaus underwent denazification processes-there was also surprising energy on the part of the churches to help rebuild the shattered country. By 1948, the religious communities felt strong enough to battle the politicians for some fundamental changes in the relationship between church and state in Germany. This was especially the case in regard to West Germany's *Basic Law* (the German constitution, adopted 1949) then being composed by the so-called Parliamentary Council. Particularly the Catholics were eager to see strong guarantees of confessional schooling anchored in this document. The political leaders, however, saw these issues as far too sensitive for such open discussion and opted instead for leaving them to the individual states for regulation after the *Basic Law* was in effect. The struggle was joined.

Chief among the matters fought over was the question of parents' rights. Mainly a Catholic focus, the point of contention was the demand on the part of the Roman Church that parents had a right to have their children educated at state-financed schools by Catholic teachers and in a Catholic atmosphere-in other words, state-supported confessional schools. The final resolution of this struggle-that schools would provide religious instruction but parents had the right to decline it for their children (*Basic Law*, Article 7)-certainly did not meet the Catholic demands. And when Konrad Adenauer himself, former Lord High Mayor of Cologne, let the matter of confessional schools drop, he was soundly criticized by Catholic parties for having "betrayed" his faith; even in the face of papal intervention by Pius XII, Adenauer refused to budge.

The legalization of church-state relationships did not fare better in the *Basic Law*. Though the churches were asking for far more, the most they received was a reiteration of the Weimar Constitution's "church articles". The chief change lies in the fact that the federal government is to remain strictly neutral in all matters pertaining to church-state relations; it is the individual state that has authority to legislate in this sphere. There is no official "state church", the relationship between the two institutional areas was left purposely vague (*Basic Law*, Article 140).

One remarkable feature of this situation is the requirement that the state maintain theological faculties at the state universities for the education of both Protestant and Catholic clergy. In practice, of course, this means that the faculty so appointed enjoy a solid freedom from the control of the appointing church; since the faculty member is a state employee, the church cannot remove or otherwise inhibit a faculty member from exercising teaching and research duties at a later date. "It is very difficult", my *Doktorvater* once observed, "to become a German professor; but it is very easy to be one." Such total intellectual freedom has led to some notorious confrontations-one thinks almost immediately of Hans Kling at Tübingen-but in addition, it is hard to imagine Johann Baptist Metz, Karl Rahner, Walter Kasper, or even Karl Lehmann having continued to thrive in post-war Germany if the Roman Church had been the sole deciding voice in regard to their professional careers.

On the Protestant side, it is unlikely that Bultmann, Ernst Kasemann, Herbert Braun, Helmut Gollwitzer or Hans Werner Bartsch would have survived their bishops' objections if they had not enjoyed civil freedom. For German Catholics, of course, such intellectual freedom meant that an extremely high-powered group of German thinkers was in a position to play extraordinary roles in the Second Vatican Council during the mid-1960s.

But perhaps the most unusual feature of the relationship between church and state in Germany is the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany had committed itself to perpetuating the annual cash grants in payment for the deprivations suffered due to the secularization in 1803, now almost two centuries ago! Most other European countries reimbursed the churches for their losses but did so by means of onetime cash settlements. In Germany, however, these state indemnification grants have continued annually since the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire; the Weimar constitution reconfirmed this arrangement, the National Socialists honored it as did also the occupation powers, and it is still maintained by the Federal Republic's *Basic Law*. Even more unique is the fact that these funds, though they have grown in size over the years, are substantially enhanced by the authority of the churches to levy taxes; the state governments operate as tax collectors, taking 3 to 4 percent as a fee for doing so.

Before the war, this tax was set at a level of 3 to 4 percent of income tax; when the Federal Republic was created, it was set at 10 percent. These rates can change, of course, since they are set by the churches themselves! The figures are hard to come by, but in one example, the rate went up some 800 percent in the State of Hesse over the first 15 years of the Federal Republic's history. One of the first requests made by the Brandenburg Evangelical Church after the unification in 1989 was, not so surprisingly, for tax monies. Such apparent moneygrubbing has led, especially after the 1960s and the demand for reform in other institutions, to an increasingly negative image of the churches. For Germany's Catholics, however, this meant that the German church was able to bankroll a considerable amount of the Second Vatican Council's expenses during the mid-1960s, allowing that event to continue to conclusion and avoiding pending bankruptcy. Yet another result has been a rising number of legal departures from church membership. Since one is registered in a church at birth, the church tax is automatically deducted as soon as a person earns income. The only way to avoid this is to resign formally from the church. Heinrich Boll, Germany's Nobel Prize winner in Literature, fought a two-year battle with the Catholic Church in Cologne over his right to refuse to pay taxes but not to be forced to leave the church. He lost the case in 1972.

More important, however, has been the development of a body of legal theory designed to support a cooperation between state and churches in Germany that is directed to sustaining the Christian basis of its society as a whole. Some Protestant churches have even entered into treaties with various states in an attempt to codify this contention. One extremely potent fallout of this development was the early and continuing efforts on the part of the Christian Democrats to revise staffing of the civil service along confessional lines. In a new Germany, the argument went, Catholics and Protestants should be equally represented in public service. By the end of the 1950s, however, the intervention of the Roman Catholic Church on behalf of confessional parity was so open as to be scandalous. Many recalled that appointment in the civil service based on confessional membership was in violation of the *Basic Law* itself (*Basic Law*, Articles 3 and 33). The current treatment of the Scientology organization in Germany, and above all its inclusion on employment applications in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, reflect the previous experience. In all official discussions of Scientology, it is never referred to as a religion or religious organization but rather as a criminal one (though charges against Scientology's practices have yet to be proven in court) (Spotts 1973: especially 183-207).

As these various battlegrounds illustrate, the study of religion in post-World War II Germany was still centered in the theological faculties. Prefacing the struggles over a constitutional role of the churches in determining such public matters as school instruction, taxation, and church membership, was the 1947 debate in the Roman Catholic community regarding precisely the question of who is in and who is out of the church. Central to this dispute was the debate revolving around the issue of sacramental effect versus voluntary choice. As a result, the discipline of canon law, long a stepchild even in Catholic university faculties, was pitched forked into dogmatic prominence. The foundation of the Munich Institute of Canon Law and the role attached to canonical science in deciding theoretical and dogmatic questions, both events anchored in the work of Klaus Morsdorf (e.g., Morsdorf 1952), accelerated this process.

By the 1960s, the world of the study of religion in Germany's theological faculties was marked by a vigorous anthropology of a divinized humanity (incarnational theology), particularly prominent in the work of Schmaus (Schmaus 1954, 1979: Vol. 1, parts 1 and 2). Metz represented a radical version of this vision in his ontology of belief (Metz 1968). It was Rahner, however, who gave this direction a special flavor with his notion of the "anonymous" Christian, an attempt to universalize the identity of Christianity with religion while at the same time striving to serve as religion's counterpart to the capitalistic/democratic extension concluding in the "end of history" (Rahner 1962: 154; Fukuyama 1992). This recovery of a key theme from the German study of religion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was matched also by Kung's work, best seen as a throwback to Otto and Wach, on the one hand, and a furthering of Rahner's universalizing direction, on the other. More directly theological was Jürgen Moltmann's use of the category "hope" in order to make sense of the so-called "religious" experience (Moltmann 1964). All of these undertakings were not only in the main theological exercises, but were designed to make the economic/social order of the capitalistic or market-economy West more bearable, if not outright acceptable.

In eastern Germany, the study of religion was tolerated at the universities as part of the theological programs for

sustaining the churches (Schafer 1999). This process of co-optation underscored the view that such study serves primarily, if not exclusively, as a confirmation of the proletariat's victory. New Testament.. exegesis that probed the social conditions of Christianity's beginnings (theology!), on the one hand, and historical studies that demonstrated the overcoming of religion on the other (e.g., of Thomas Muntzer), were effectively at the core of such work. Esoterica, of course, were also tolerated; Kurt Rudolph's ground-breaking work on Mandaeen gnosticism, for example, or Hans-Martin Schenke's editions of Coptic gnostic texts, including some key codices from Nag Hammadi, earned their authors privileged positions (Rudolph 1977).

Exceptions to a theologized study of religion were, of course, to be found. Carsten Colpe, who began his work as a theologian, moved during the 1950s and 1960s to an extremely subtle and finely tuned comparativism that was both theoretically sophisticated and materially rich in breadth and extent (Colpe 1961, 1980). Otto Kuss, on the other hand, made a move from classical New Testament exegesis (Kuss 1957-1959) to a profound critique both of Christianity and of religion in general, based primarily on his much earlier studies of Plato, Socrates, and Nietzsche (Kuss 1981, 1983). For their efforts, both have been largely ignored in the world of religion studies in Germany: Colpe has been treated as an outsider while Kuss was classed as a pathological perversion by his colleagues in the Munich faculty of theology.

After the 1920s, there has scarcely been a Jewish presence in Germany worth mentioning. That is now changing. The presence of two major research institutes dedicated to the study of German- and European-Judaism-the Steinheim-Institut in Duisburg and the Mendelssohn-Institut in Potsdam, both founded by Julius Schoeps, son of Hans-Joachim Schoeps is one concrete sign of the growing influence of the Jewish community in Germany. Though it is unlikely that the numbers will grow substantially, the strong representation of Jewish studies in various forms at many universities, and the public influence exercised by such skillful persons as the late Ignaz Bubis, former chair of the Jewish Council in Germany, guarantee that increasing attention must be paid to the fundamentally non-Christian religions now in Germany. This is all the more the case in regard to the Islamic presence represented by Germany's Turkish population. Germany no longer possesses, if it ever did, only a "Christian soul". Uke countries everywhere, but especially in Europe, these religions from other countries, other cultures and other identities are forces that must not only be reckoned with, but must be understood and respected.

Well known in Germany since the turn of the century, fundamental evangelical churches have thrived since at least the 1920s. Eberhard Arnold's Sannerz commune in the Rhon is one example, and now Reinhard Bonnke is a fresh case. Dedicated initially to the conversion of Africa, Bonnke has now moved his world-wide headquarters to Frankfurt, and among his latest actions is a German language blitz campaign during which he hit every postal address in German-speaking Europe with a pamphlet containing his evangelical message. The success has not yet been tabulated but already the mainline (Protestant and Catholic) churches are alarmed.

It is not simply a question any longer of how Germany will handle the increasing number of revelations about the "unofficial agents" working for the Stasi in former East Germany who were church pastors. Or a question of how Germany will come to regulate-if it ever does-the question of how the churches are financed. The question that is instead paramount to the state of religion in Germany touches rather on how Germany's citizenry deals with the fact that it is losing its Christian identity faster rather than slower. More and more, those who are Christian by choice will not be firmly encamped in one or the other of the two main churches; and more and more, there will be those who reject any religious identification; and perhaps, most crucial, more and more, there will be those

who are deeply religious in a tradition and history that have nothing to do with Germany's past.

In other words, the institutions that have determined to a great extent the study of religion in twentieth-century Germany, namely the churches, have steadily lost power since the unification of 1990. This is particularly the case regarding economic resources (i.e., money). Recent public struggles and debates over whether stores should, much less may, stay open for shopping on Sunday and the more parochial fight within the Roman Catholic community over whether the church should continue to remain involved with abortion counseling and the issuance of certification to that effect have confirmed the churches' declining influence. The increasing pressure from the Turkish communities throughout Germany to have Islam officially recognized as a religion co-equal with the Christian religions/ churches, on the one hand, and the consequent action of introducing Islamic instruction into the schools, on the other, have broken the notion of a Christian monopoly regarding the study of religion at the universities. As we have seen, the fight over Scientology and the question of whether it constitutes a "religion" or not has opened the doors on the study of religion as an academic enterprise separate from Christian claims to an exclusive identification with religion. The result has been the founding of institutes for the study of religion at various universities, frequently parallel to already existing theological faculties (e.g., Munich, Marburg), and sometimes with an even greater autonomy (e.g., Greifswald, Freie Universität Berlin, Leipzig).

The twentieth century has seen an incredibly vibrant but extremely varied array of contesting religious communities, systems and institutions, all vying for power and control in the society and culture at large. All the more surprising, then, that the study of religion has remained largely so conservative and opposed to change. This struggle has, at times, been violent and destructive beyond almost anyone's imagination; at other times, and in some figures, it has been extraordinarily tolerant and nurturing. However it has played out, though, the fight by religion and its study for a role in governing and determining Germany's fate has been a central factor. There is nothing on the contemporary scene to lead one to expect anything else in the future.

the United States. In 1933, he published a book (Sebottendorf 1933) which landed him in a National-Socialist jail. After his release, he supposedly returned to Turkey where he spent World War II working for Admiral Wilhelm Canaris and the German intelligence service. On the day of German capitulation in 1945, he committed suicide.

But how accurate this biographical information is remains uncertain.

Other stories have Sebottendorf founding the *Germanen-Orden* in the Four Seasons Hotel in Munich; later the *Thule-Orden* joined with the *Germanen-Orden*. In 1919, during the revolt and turmoil surrounding the Council-Republic of Bavaria, seven Thule members were among the hostages shot in jail. Supposedly most, if not all of the highest ranking members of the NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) were also Thule members. For its teachings, the Thule Order was rumored to be derived from the Caucasian magician, George Ivanovich Gurdjieff; but just as firm are the claims that it was the thought of Lanz and List that lay at its base (Ach-Pentrop 1977: 18-21; also Howe 1967, 1972; Goodrick-Clarke 1992).

This brief look at Germany's early twentieth-century religious pluralism makes the differences from the nineteenth century all the more crass. Not that the previous age had not possessed its deviations and oddities; it had those aplenty. What is important to note is the new century's breaking out from the theological straightjackets that had occupied its predecessor. In polemical terms, the controversies between Catholics and Protestants, looming so large on the nineteenth century's stage, are now but some among many others. Such a challenge to the hegemony of theology in defining what counts as religion in modern Germany had, of course, important consequences. Chief among these was the clear perception that influencing, even participating in the exercise of, political power was now more necessary than ever. In other words, with diminishing theological weight came the ever increasing effort to theologize religion and to churchify society.

Short of a massive, probably multi-volume study, one cannot hope to capture every moment in Germany's twentieth-century experience of religion and its study. On the other hand, every selection will certainly leave out someone's "favorite". I want to propose nevertheless a series of conflicts and controversies that illustrate my general reading of the entire period. There is no linear developmental line to be discerned; the narrative is rather an account of jerky movements, recoveries and dead-ends. Over all, however, hangs the conviction that things are going to hell in a handbasket, that alliance with political power is necessary to institutional