

nur partiell ist, d.h. dass traditionelle Diskurse neben den aufgebrochenen weiterexistieren“ (S. 592).

Wer sich über Forschungsstand und -perspektiven der kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte zum Thema „Kirche und Zweiter Weltkrieg“ umfassend informieren möchte, dem sei der vorliegende Band sehr zur Lektüre empfohlen.

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Kevin Spicer C.S.C., Ed. *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence and the Holocaust*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, published in Association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Washington, D.C., 2007, 329 p., 29.95 \$, ISBN 978-0-254-34873-9

This anthology of twelve essays is testament to the renewed interest of historians in the role of religion during the Third Reich and provides historical data for theologians (and philosophers) interested in Jewish-Christian relations and Holocaust Studies. The essays are the fruits of a summer workshop organized by the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that convened historians, theologians and philosophers in Washington DC in 2004 to examine the role of Christian (and Jewish) theology in the rise and reign, resistance and defeat of National Socialism. They provide new material on church policies and the activities of religious actors during the Hitler regime and enliven the debate over the continuity of Christian theological anti-Judaism and racial political antisemitism. The collection broadens this debate beyond the German context and includes analysis of the Danish Lutheran church (Thorsten Wagner), Polish Catholic views of Rabbinic Judaism (Anna Łysiak), the Romanian Orthodox Church (Paul A. Shapiro), the interventions of US Catholic representatives (Suzanne Brown Fleming) as well as Jewish Orthodox portrayals of Christianity (Gershon Greenberg).

Only recently have historians turned to the role of religion, and specifically theological teachings, as motivating factors in people's support of, opposition to, or accommodation with National Socialism. Previous generations of historians tended to focus on economic, political, social, military and educational factors, neglecting the role of Christianity as an ethical and spiritual force in people's lives. This scholarly neglect by historians allowed the maintenance of the myth that the churches had somehow survived unscathed by the corrosive effects of National Socialist antisemitism. The theological core of Christianity remained pure and untouched by a hatred that legitimated genocide. Even theologians engaged in Jewish-Christian dialogue and theological critiques of the Christian "teaching of contempt" (Jules Isaac), while well aware of its centuries-old, deep theological roots, tended to emphasize the difference between religious anti-Judaism and the racial politics of antisemitism.

One disciplinary difference between the historians and theologians is striking: The theologically-trained contributors (and I include here Kevin Spicer, C.S.C. and Elias Füllenbach, O.P, who are historians and also members of religious orders) present the history of the churches' collaboration in antisemitism and cooptation by the Nazi state as a story of "failure" and "renewal." The historical record buttresses calls for the theological renunciation of Christian anti-Judaism. For instance, Catholic theologian Robert Krieg of Notre Dame University, concludes his critical analysis of prominent German Catholic theologians (Bartmann, Adam, Rahner, Guardini) by pointing out that all "four theological factors that contributed to the anti-Jewish bias in Catholic views on Jesus and Judaism in the early twentieth century no longer have the backing of the Church's official teachings" (68). The failure of German Roman Catholic theologians to mount any effective resistance strengthens arguments for vigilance against the pernicious poison of theological antisemitism. Similarly, Donald Dietrich maintains that German Catholicism's failure "contained the seeds of reform that would lead to renewal in Vatican II

and beyond" (98). Critical historical analysis serves ecclesial reform and theological revision. Theologians turn to history in order to ascertain the validity and truthfulness of particular Christian teachings. Christian triumphalism and anti-Jewish supersessionism, albeit pervasive in Christian thought and church practice throughout centuries, is invalidated by the Holocaust. Auschwitz becomes a challenge for theologians to confront and eradicate anti-Judaism as the "left hand of Christology" (Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*).

Not surprisingly, the historians refrain from making such theological claims. For Matthew Hockenos, the eventual repudiation of the German Protestant Mission to the Jews at the Berlin Weissensee synod of 1950 proved to be a 'momentous victory for the small group of churchmen who had tirelessly and courageously struggled, some since 1933, for the Church to rethink its historical, practical and theological relationship to Jews and Judaism' (194). To Hockenos this "unprecedented and momentous" rejection of Christian supremacy and supersessionism is the result of internal, institutional power struggles rather than a theological clarification, reform or renewal of Christian teachings.

This disciplinary difference becomes most evident in Steigmann-Gall's contribution. As a historian, Steigmann-Gall points out that prominent Nazi ideologues "employ(ed) a strongly Christian language when describing their enmity for Jews" (291). He concludes that Christianity was far from antithetical but rather deeply implicated in Nazi antisemitism. He rightly chides Christian apologetics that had framed the "sins of the church... as omission not commission," but his undifferentiated and blanket use of the term "Christian" is troubling. Although many leading Nazis borrowed heavily from "Christian rhetoric and logic" (300), they did not speak as Christian theologians. Their rhetorical use of a "Christian frame of reference" (304) does not yet turn them into Christian spokesmen. Since Steigmann-Gall refrains from making normative distinctions between true and false, orthodox and heretical, the term Christian loses specificity and meaning.

As Rainer Bucher has shown in his book *Hitler's Theologie*, Hitler consistently embraced a strong metaphysics and considered himself chosen by God and committed to submit to the grand designs of his destiny. But Hitler's political theology of an omnipotent God who grounded the *völkisch* community and demanded sacrifice, obedience and courage, while employing Christian symbolism and rhetoric cannot be called Christian. Although baptized Roman Catholic and never excommunicated, Hitler's God was nevertheless not identical with the Christian God. For Rainer Bucher, finding and contesting this line between true and false God-talk, is the distinctive (and still eminently necessary) task of the theologian. Spicer's book opens this important dialogue between history and theology and we should hope that this exemplary interdisciplinary inquiry into the religious dimensions of political life will continue in the future.

Let me turn to a second and more critical point. I am concerned by the conspicuous lack of reflection of gender and the troubling absence of women in this volume. Ironically, and maybe beside the point, the USHMM Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies hosted a concurrent workshop on Gender in Holocaust Studies in the summer of 2004. Unfortunately, there seems to have been little sustained collegial exchange and dialogue. Instead, this book engages in an age-old reduction of religious life to its patriarchal dignitaries and male authorities. Popes, male Protestant and Catholic theologians, priests, rabbis and ministers are the (almost) exclusive focus of scholarly concern. The absence and invisibility of half of the Christian and Jewish communities distorts the very definitions of and reflection on *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence and the Holocaust*.

Since I am most familiar with the German context, I will try to make my point in those essays, but similar objections can be raised in the other essays analyzing differently national and religious contexts. Within the German context, the lack of attention to gender obscures the link between the failure of church leaders to take a public stance against antisemitism

and the prominence of women activists who made pleas, issued reports and initiated appeals for interventions. The institutional powerlessness of those who actively campaigned on behalf of Jews and non-Aryans was often compounded by their gender. Some of the most outspoken condemnations of antisemitism came from women who acted without authority, without ordination and church office. They were easily ignored by the hierarchy. And I fear that they might be again ignored by scholars who fail to employ a critical gender analysis. Two examples shall demonstrate this dynamic:

Elias Füllenbach, O.P. begins his essay on “Shock, Renewal, Crisis: Reflections on the Shoah” with a 1937 Memorandum on the *Christ’s Church and the Jewish Question*, that was signed by 14 “renowned Catholic theologians and politicians” (201). This list of Catholic leaders and dignitaries is exclusively male. Füllenbach then traces the circuitous road in the change of the official Roman Catholic position (at II Vatican Council) along the theological writings of Karl Thieme who was one of the initiators of the Memorandum “Christ’s Church and the Jewish Question” that condemned Christian antisemitism in 1937. He follows Thieme’s theological thinking into the post-war period and identifies him as the theological driving force behind the Freiburg Circle, a group of committed Catholic intellectuals and activists who lobbied on behalf of Jewish-Christian dialogue. “It was above all Karl Thieme who determined the contents of the *Freiburger Rundbriefe* in its formative years” (211), writes Füllenbach. This sidelines the role of Gertrud Luckner, who was arguably the most outspoken and prominent voice for theological change in Jewish-Christian relations in Germany. During the Third Reich, she had been instrumental in organizing a national, clandestine rescue network for which she was arrested in March 1943 and sent to the women’s concentration camp of Ravensbrück. Füllenbach does not intend to minimize her merits and has been studying her in his dissertation. But his focus on **theology** has the unintended effect of minimizing the significance of religious activists, often women, who tried to influence but did

not control the theological and political positions. Margarete Sommer of the *Hilfswerk Bischöfliches Ordinariat* in Berlin is another case in point. She tried to influence the highest ecclesial powers and submitted detailed reports, including a copy of the minutes of the Wannsee Conference, to Bishop Preysing, Cardinal Bertram and Pope Pius XII. But she failed to secure public statements of protest by the episcopacy.¹ Without critical attention to gender, scholars miss the theological contributions of lay activists and ignore more radical theological and political positions in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

In his history of the “German Protestant Church and its *Judenmission* 1945-1950,” Matthew Hockenos mentions not a single female name. While it is possible that the post-war institutions of *Judenmission* were an exclusively male affair, it seems unlikely. More likely, to my mind, is that we will eventually discover those women who worked behind the scenes and rarely received credit or public attention. Elizabeth Schmitz is a powerful example, a woman so forgotten, that her authorship of the 1935 Memorandum on the “Situation of German Non-Aryans” was unknown until 2004. In 1935, she wrote: “I am gripped by cold fear realizing that there are people, even in the Confessing Church, who feel authorized and even called to proclaim to Judaism that the current suffering caused by us in this historical situation constitutes divine judgment and grace. Since when is evil-doer allowed to maintain that his misdeeds constitute the will of God?”² Such a clear condemnation of Christian supersessionism and missionary exploitation of oppression continues to be extraordinary. Already in 1935 she warned of the potential for genocidal violence: “we have watched the destruction of

¹ Antonia Leugers, “Der Protest in der Rosenstrasse 1943 und die Kirchen,” in Antonia Leugers (Ed.). *Rosenstrasse 2-4: Protest in der NS-Diktatur—Neue Forschungen zum Frauenprotest in der Rosenstrasse 1943*. Mooshausen: Plöger Medien Verlag, 2005, 61-62.

² Denkschrift, September 1935, in Manfred Gailus, Ed., *Elisabeth Schmitz und ihre Denkschrift gegen die Judenverfolgung: Konturen einer vergessenen Biografie (1893-1977)*, Berlin: Wichern 2008, 211.

property once the houses were marked...when we begin to mark human beings, the logical next step is unthinkable. And no one will claim that such orders will not be executed just as promptly, without conscience and stubbornly, evil and sadistically as those implemented now.”³ Her Memorandum failed to rouse the synod of the Confessing Church. She also wrote impassioned letters to theologians, including Gollwitzer, Barth and Künneth, with varying success. In one letter, she thanked Gollwitzer for heeding her plea and condemning the burning of synagogues during *Reichskristallnacht* in his Sunday sermon. While scholars have taken note of Gollwitzer’s courageous sermon, the woman who goaded and pleaded with him remained hidden.

My larger point is that the organizations, networks, correspondence and conversations of these Catholic, Protestant and Jewish women must be included and rendered visible in our understanding of the history and theology of Christianity and Judaism. This may require an adjustment of theoretical frameworks in order to be able to take note of the informal theological productions and religious interventions of women. But the history of church and synagogue can no longer be considered adequate as long as half of their members remain obscured.

Apart from this – not minor – point, Spicer’s anthology convinces by its breadth and depth and is indispensable for all scholars in the field.

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Manfred Heim, *Von Ablass bis Zölibat. Kleines Lexikon der Kirchengeschichte*, München: Beck-Verlag 2008, 14,95 €, 461 S., ISBN: 9783406573569

Sein Hauptziel in den „Grund- und Aufbauwortschatz der Kirchengeschichte einführen, erste Begriffsbestimmungen

³ Denkschrift, September 1935, in Manfred Gailus, Ed., *Elisabeth Schmitz und ihre Denkschrift gegen die Judenverfolgung: Konturen einer vergessenen Biografie (1893-1977)*, Berlin: Wichern 2008, 225.